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2505 B.E.

APRIL 1962 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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THE EDITOR,
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EDITORIAL

WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT

*Sabbapāpassa akaranam.
Kusalassa upasampadā.
Sacittapariyodāpanam,
Etaṃ Buddhānasāsanam.*

(Dhammapada, V. 183)¹

*To refrain from all evil,
To do what is good.
To purify the mind,
This is the teaching of the Buddhas.*

We should first understand what demerit is and the root of demerit, what merit is and the root of merit. What, now, is demerit (*akusala*)?

Bodily action (*kāya-kamma*)

1. Destruction of living beings is demerit
2. Stealing is demerit
3. Sexual misconduct is demerit

Verbal action (*vacī-kamma*)

4. Lying is demerit
5. Tale-bearing is demerit
6. Harsh language is demerit
7. Frivolous talk is demerit

Mental action (*mano-kamma*)

8. Covetousness is demerit
9. Ill-will is demerit
10. Wrong views are demerit

What is the root of demerit?

Greed (*lobha*) is a root of demerit; Anger (*dosa*) is a root of demerit; Delusion (*moha*) is a root of demerit. Therefore, the three kinds of de-meritorious actions are due to greed, or to anger, or to delusion. These three roots are like three great currents of force, for they are sweeping each one of us down along the road to misery, just as the swift current of a river

will carry with it all the logs which have fallen into it.

Greed

Of the three currents, one is greed, desire for sensual pleasures, wealth, rank, etc. Greed is in all of us like a raging thirst, and the greedy man always says: "I want", "I must have", "I cannot do without". He may be heard to say that, if he were as rich as some neighbor whom he envies, he would be perfectly satisfied. Give him the particular amount of wealth that he has set his mind upon, and he will find some still richer man to envy, and be as discontented as ever. A Persian poet says: "A small coin of silver makes a beggar contented: Faridun with his kingdom of Persia is half satisfied".

Our tendency to remain discontented in spite of success and prosperity arises from the insatiable nature of our desires. We are depressed by the fear of losing our possession and at the same time we are dissatisfied as long as there is anyone in the world richer than ourselves. What is beyond our reach seems valuable till we get it, and when possessed, loses its value.

This is unfortunately the character of most men. Greed makes us selfish, so that we think only of our own need for gratification. The selfish man aims at obtaining as much happiness as he can for himself and does not care whether other people are happy or miserable. In order to attain his object, he tries to appropriate as large a share as possible of the good things of the world. Whenever he has an opportunity of doing so, he enjoys himself, even when his enjoyment is obtained at the expense of his fellow-men. All over the world we find the selfish taking an unfair share of everything and trying their best to use others as means to the attainment of their pleasure.

Greed is like a thick fog such as we have in London sometimes, when we cannot see our

¹ Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Buddha Vagga, V. 183, p 41, 6th. Syn. Edn.

way clearly before us. Sometimes at sea on a foggy day the people cannot see what lies ahead and two ships will collide and, perhaps, both sink. When men are blinded by desire, they are carried away by a powerful current and they do not realize whither they are going. Where there are many who are blinded by desire for the same things, there is jealousy and rivalry. As they act to satisfy their desires, they hurt and harm one another. The result of it is suffering.

Anger

The second current which equally leads us to misery is anger, hatred or ill-will. It is that instinct in us, which resents an action of another which challenges our right to what we desire. Our natural instinct is to try and dominate others, and we want others to obey our will while suppressing their own. When someone opposes his will against ours, our action is like that of a dog with a bone when another dog approaches. We are irritated in many ways and our anger may at first be slight, but, if it is allowed to go on day by day, it grows into a deep hatred. When a man is angry, he is "beside himself" and being swept along by a torrent of hatred. It is due to anger that disputes arise between one individual and another, and between one nation and another. Such people as are blinded by anger cannot see that "hatred ceaseth not by hatred, but by love". They regard war as the only ultimate way of settling national disputes. The armies of great nations are larger than they were ever before in the history of the world, and there seems little prospect of the establishment of the reign of universal peace. Although the principle that "Might is Right" no longer prevails in the relations between individuals, it is still considered natural to appeal to it when one nation quarrels with another. War remains as the greatest relic of barbarism in the midst of modern civilization, and the 'progress' of science is every year leading to the discovery of more powerful instruments for the destruction of human life and property. In the world at the present day universal conscription is almost universal and the younger members

of almost every family are compelled by law to serve in the army. Under such circumstances war spreads far wider desolation than when it is waged between a limited number of men who have voluntarily adopted the profession of arms. In every war a large number of families are reduced to destitution by the destruction of their property or by the loss of those on whom they depended for support. This is the result of anger.

Delusion

The third current, which carries us to misery, is delusion, ignorance. The state of greed as well as that of anger is always accompanied by delusion, as delusion is the primary root of all evil. It is far more subtle than greed and anger, and when a man is hypnotized by it, he cannot, distinguish between right and wrong, he can see no good in any noble action. Nothing is safe from his scoffs and sneers. Neither a sense of duty, nor filial love, nor sacrifice in any form can win a word of praise from his lips. On the contrary, he wants to be praised and is hurt if he is not properly appreciated. He thinks much of himself and continually plans to feed his ambitions for personal happiness. The spirit of loving-kindness and charity departs from him. He is deaf to all prayers and appeals for mercy. He has no sense of duty towards his fellow-men. If he helps others, he does so that he may get them into his power and thereby increase his gains. Under the influence of delusion he is determined to have what he wants, no matter who suffers, and he dislikes those who hinder him or get ahead of him. He may occasionally gain advantages from those who cannot avoid coming into contact with him and who fear to provoke his resentment. But such advantages are conferred without goodwill, and those who can do so will be inclined to avoid his society. Perhaps all men turn against him and the world does not want him any longer. He then blames them, saying: "What I have done is perfectly right, but people are too ignorant to realize it, or too wicked to agree to it". He does not know that it is the poison in himself, which has upset the world.

An old story may serve as an illustration in connection with delusion which arouses anger. Once, a big bear with her three little cubs was looking for something to eat in the jungle. They saw a beehive in a trough under a tree, from one branch of which a big log was hanging just over the trough. The bears wanted to get at the honey, but the log was in the way, so the mother bear pushed it and they all began to eat. The log swung out and came back hitting her on the head. She grew very angry and knocked it away violently. It went out further than before and came back with such force that it struck one of the little cubs to death. The mother, now furious, struck at the log with all her force. It swung out, came back with a great rush, struck her again on the head and killed her. Who killed the bear? Strictly speaking, her delusion, which made her think that the log was her enemy. Through her delusion her anger arose to make her fight against the log which hit her. The log could not hurt her unless she set it in motion, but the poor old bear did not know that. When a man is carried away by the current of delusion, he becomes brutal and barbarous. The sense of a common humanity fades from his mind.

It is due to these raging torrents of greed, anger and delusion that nations fight with nations, kings fight with kings, priests with priests; the mother quarrels with the son, the son with the mother, the father with the son, the son with the father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, friend with friends. We talk about peace and yet we create confusion. We long for happiness and yet we attain unhappiness. Why? Because we are like logs carried along helplessly by the current of greed, anger and delusion. If we are to revive the sense of a common humanity and find happiness, we must step outside the torrents. How? The Buddhist technique is to still the racing torrents of greed, anger and delusion by a careful self-culture. "Save thyself by thyself" are the words of the Buddha.

To plan our meritorious action, we should first understand what merit is and the root of merit. What, now, is merit (*kusala*)?

Bodily action (*kāya-kamma*)

1. To abstain from killing is merit
2. To abstain from stealing is merit
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct is merit.

Verbal action (*vacī-kamma*)

4. To abstain from lying is merit
5. To abstain from tale-bearing is merit
6. To abstain from harsh language is merit
7. To abstain from frivolous talk is merit

Mental action (*mano-kamma*)

8. Absence of covetousness is merit
9. Absence from ill-will is merit
10. Right understanding is merit

What is the root of merit?

Absence of greed (unselfishness) is a root of merit. Absence of anger or hatred (love) is a root of merit. Absence of delusion (wisdom) is a root of merit.

These three roots are also called the seeds of nobility within us, seeds that with careful, determined cultivation, will grow into sublime powers. These powers have lain latent within us and they cannot grow till we find them out and make our heart soft and warm with love for them to grow.

Unselfishness

For this, we must forget ourselves and substitute the world for ourselves. There is no evil in wanting universal happiness and peace. The evil arises when our desires are only for ourselves and not for others, or not in the sacred interests of truth. When we desire such things as we can share with others, our desires become wiser and more unselfish. Unselfishness includes not only a feeling in the heart, but also the performance of those outward actions by which that feeling is manifested, but the internal feeling is essential. It is the desire to put others perfectly at their ease, to save them from every kind of discomfort and do all we can to promote their happiness. The

unselfish man puts himself in the position of others and tries to identify himself with all. He regrets what he has done or has omitted to do, and he has an earnest desire to do better in the future and to make amends for the wrong that has been done. He desires not to make himself a burden on his fellow-men, but a blessing to them by making them happy. His unselfish disposition promotes social intercourse and adds to the pleasure of others. He appreciates benefits conferred on him and feels joy at the kindness of his benefactor to whom he has a great desire to return those benefits or to give something more, when possible. By being unselfish, we develop in ourselves the sense of sympathy. We cannot enjoy happiness worthy of the name without being in sympathy with our fellow-men. Our happiness soon palls if we have no congenial companions for whom we can feel an affection. In every case our happiness is rendered more intense and more permanent by being shared with friends. Therefore, the best way to be happy is to make others happy. Every kind act is twice blessed, and blesses him who gives and him who takes. If we are to promote the spirit of fellowship, we should forget our “I” in the service of all. We should do everything we can for the sake of others as trees bear fruit for the sake of others. In short, whatever deed we do, whatever word we utter and whatever thought we think, should be for the good, peace and happiness of not only ourselves, but others. The result of this is peace, happiness and friendship.

Loving-Kindness (Mettā)

To promote the spirit of world-fellowship, we must make the seeds of loving-kindness grow in our hearts and minds till we are all love. To love one another, we should realize that we are all brothers. Brotherhood must be applied with justice, for justice also is a natural law. No judge has a right to use his power on a criminal to a greater extent than the law of the court—which is the representative of the natural law of justice—permits. If we do any harm to a person, we shall be paid back in the same coin. When we throw a stone into a pond,

the consequent movement reaches to the edge: Around the spot where the stone hits the surface, a number of rings arise. They grow wider and wider until they dash against the edges of the pond, and then the water moves back till it reaches the stone that has disturbed it. Just in the same way the effects of our actions come back to us and, if our actions are good, we shall have good effects, while, likewise, bad actions will produce bad effects. To produce good actions, love is essential, so we must love everyone, no matter what may be the color of his skin, whether he be rich or poor, wise or foolish, good or bad. We should love not only human beings, but all beings in the world. In the *Mettā Sutta*,² the Discourse on love, the Buddha says: “As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her child, her only child, so let him cultivate goodwill without measure among all beings. Let him cultivate goodwill without measure towards the whole world, above, below, around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing, or opposing interests. Let a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing walking, sitting or lying down. This state of heart is the best in the world.”

Most of us have not yet learned this lesson and, therefore, the sense of a common humanity has faded from our minds, the world is full of pain and cruelty, and all wild animals flee from us. There are a few who have learned this lesson. They love everything. No wild animal flees from them and even a tiger will roll at their feet as a pet cat does at ours. Why do our pet animals love us? Because we love them. If we learn this lesson, our enemies will become our friends and wild animals our pets.

Wisdom

Wisdom is the power of seeing things as they truly are, and how to act rightly when the problems of life come before us. The seeds of wisdom have lain latent in us, and when our

² Khuddaka Nikāya, Sutta-nipāta, Metta Sutta, p 301, 6th Syd. Edn.

hearts are soft and warm with love they grow into their powers. When a man has stilled the raging torrents of greed, anger and delusion, he becomes conscientious, full of sympathy, and he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings. He abstains from stealing and is upright and honest in all his dealings. He abstains from sexual misconduct and is pure, chaste. He abstains from tale-bearing. What he has heard in one place he does not repeat in another so as to cause dissension. He unites those who are divided and encourages those who are united. He abstains from harsh language. He speaks such words as are gentle,

soothing to the ear and which go to the heart. He abstains from vain talk. He speaks what is useful at the right time according to the facts. It is when his mind is pure and his heart is soft by being equipped this morality (*sīla*) that the sublime wisdom grows. Knowledge of the properties of the magnetic needle enables the mariner to see the right direction in mid-ocean in the darkest night, when no stars are visible, just in the same way wisdom enables a man to see things as they truly are and to perceive the right way to real peace and happiness, Nibbāna.

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Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation At Thathana Yeiktha

Part I.

(A talk by Myanaung U Tin, broadcast from Burma Broadcasting Service on Monday, the 27th November 1961.)

I was asked by several friends of mine why I did not broadcast any talk in the series “Thoughts on Buddhism” during the last three months or so. I simply replied that I was rather busy. Now I must tell them that I was residing at Thathana Yeiktha during the Buddhist Lent, from the full moon of *Waso* to the full moon of *Thadingyut*, doing Vipassanā Meditation exercises under the personal guidance of Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā Pucchaka, Mahasi Sayadaw, and his able assistant meditation instructors. Tonight I propose to explain the system of meditation at that meditation Centre.

The system is based on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.³ Hence it is known as Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā. Meditation. At the very beginning of that Sutta, the Buddha addressed the monks thus: “This is the *only way*, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

What are the four foundations?

- (1) The Contemplation of the Body.
- (2) The Contemplation of Feeling.
- (3) The Contemplation of Consciousness.
- (4) The Contemplation of Mental Objects.

Before I explain the system I should like to tell you that I have been in fairly close touch for some considerable time with several meditation centres: Thathana Yeiktha, Dhamma Yeiktha, Soonloon, Webu, Mingun and Mohnyin Centres, but I must confess that until my arrival at Thathana Yeiktha on the full

moon day of *Waso* this year. I had not devoted myself solely to meditation for any length of time. Hitherto I was more interested in the study of the Buddha-Dhamma. However, as time went on I realized that practice of the Dhamma must be made most seriously in a systematic manner. I had on my conscience two verses from Dhammapada.

Verse 19. Though much he recites the sacred texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless man is like a cow-herd who counts others’ kine; he has no share in the blessings of a recluse.

Verse 20. Though little he recites the sacred texts, but acts in accordance with the teaching, ridding himself of craving, hatred and delusion, possessed of right knowledge, with mind well freed, clinging to nothing here or hereafter, he shares in the blessings of a recluse.

In these two verses, ‘the blessings of a recluse’ means ‘the four stages of Sainthood’ namely: *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi* and *Arahanta*.

The Buddhist meditation is of two kinds: (1) Development of Tranquility (*Samatha bhāvanā*), and (2) Development of Insight (*Vipassanā-bhāvanā*). In other words, *Samatha bhāvanā* is to develop Samādhi (concentration) and *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* is to develop *Paññā* (wisdom). In this talk, we are concerned with *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* only.

Why must we do *Vipassanā* meditation or develop insight? Because insight reveals the truth of impermanence, suffering and impersonality of all physical and mental phenomena of existence, the realization of which will lead to *Nibbāna*.

What is *Nibbāna*? *Nibbāna* is absolute extinction of that life-affirming will manifested

³ Dīgha Nikāya, Mahā Vagga, ‘Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta’, p 231, 6th Syd. Edn.

as craving, hatred and delusion, and clinging to existence, and therewith also the ultimate and absolute deliverance from all future rebirth, old age, disease, death, from all suffering and misery.

How can we develop insight? Insight comes through meditation upon *rūpa* and *nāma*: physical and mental phenomena of existence, or, in other words, upon *Pañcupaādāna-kkhandhā*, five aggregates of existence for clinging. This meditation is called *Vipassanā*, as distinguished from *Samatha*. No meditation is *Vipassanā* unless it focusses upon matter and mind, or upon the various elements of existence comprised in the five aggregates of existence.

When the new yogis arrive at Thathana Yeiktha, Mahasi Sayadaw gives to them a discourse on the method of practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā* meditation. Nowadays, they listen to a tape recorder in the presence of Mahasi Sayadaw who adds but a few words at the beginning as well as at the end. The discourse is given in Burmese but it has been translated into English, and those who are not conversant with Burmese can listen to the English version.

In this talk, I can produce only the salient points of the discourse.

Anyone who sincerely desires to practice *Satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation so as to attain insight—*Vipassanā-ñāṇa*—so earnestly urged upon us by the Buddha, should, in the first place, give up worldly thoughts and actions during the training. He should, at the same time, strictly observe *sīla* or the rules of discipline prescribed for lay-disciples or monks respectively. Purity of character is essential. It is the first step leading to the development of insight.

Nibbāna is supreme. *Magga*, the way to *Nibbāna*, is also supreme. An intensive course of training in *Satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation would surely lead the yogi to *Māgga ñāṇa* and *Nibbāna*. The yogi should begin his training by first devoting himself to the Buddha, keenly

appreciating His supreme qualities. The yogi should thereafter transmit his *mettā*, all embracing loving-kindness, to all living beings.

At the beginning, it would be best to adopt the sitting posture with crossed legs. The yogi might feel more comfortable if he kept his legs apart without pressing against each other. Those who are not used to sitting on the floor may sit in their usual manner.

The yogi should try to keep his mind on his abdomen. He will then become aware of its ‘rising’ and ‘falling.’ Soon the upward movement, due to in-breathing, and the downward movement, due to out-breathing, would be clearly felt. Then a mental note ‘rising’ for the upward movement, and a mental note ‘falling’ for downward movement should be made as each movement occurs. For the beginner, it is the easiest method of developing *Sati* (attentiveness), and *samādhi* (concentration of mind).

The capacity to know individually each successive occurrence of *nāma* and *rūpa*, that is to say, all mental and physical processes whatsoever, occurring at each of the six sense organs—the mind, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the bodily touch—can be acquired when the contemplation is fully developed. For a beginner whose *Sati* (attentiveness) and *samādhi* (concentration) are weak, it is difficult to be aware of all the mental and physical processes as they occur at each moment. He might be at a loss to know how to concentrate and beware of each passing moment. He might waste time searching for objects, grasped by his mind, at each single moment. Now, ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ of the abdomen is always present. There is no need to search after it. It is therefore an easy exercise for a beginner to attend to these movements and be aware of them as they occur. For that reason it is the basic exercise prescribed for him.

While he is occupied with noting mentally ‘rising’ and ‘falling’ of the abdomen, intervening thoughts, intentions, ideas,

imaginings etc. might also occur. Such mental activities should not be ignored but followed up, as soon as they occur, and a mental note made of each by whichever term it is known to the yogi and awareness maintained. Here is an illustration. If he imagines, he should make a mental note 'imagining'. If he is thinking, he should note it as 'thinking'. If he is intending, he should note it as 'intending'. If his mind is wandering away from the object of his meditation, that is his abdomen, he should note it as 'wandering'. If he sees an image, a light or a color, he should make a mental note 'seeing'. Such noting of mental occurrences should be carried on until they fade away. After their disappearance, the yogi should come back to his abdomen and make mental notes of 'rising' and 'falling'. Should he intend to turn his neck, he should be aware of his intention as 'intending' whilst in the act of turning the neck 'turning'. Again, if he intends to straighten his neck or back, 'straightening'; while in the act of straightening 'straightening'. These body actions should be carried out very slowly. Immediately afterwards, he should revert to abdomen.

As the yogi has to contemplate in one specific posture (either sitting or lying down) at a stretch, he might have a feeling of stiffness or tiredness in his body or of a pain or an ache in individual limbs. If so, he should be fully aware of the spot or the limb where such a feeling occurs and carry on his contemplation by noting 'tired' or 'paining' or 'aching' as the case might be in a regulated manner, neither slowly nor fast. Most likely, such a feeling would become feeble and gradually cease altogether. On the other hand, it might grow stronger till it becomes unbearable. Now, if the yogi intends to change his position and so ease the pain or the ache, he should first make a mental note of his intention to do so, such as 'intending' and then proceed with the necessary movement in order to change his posture, each detail of the change being noted. Here is an illustration. If the yogi intends to lift his hand or leg, he should be aware of his intention as 'intending'; while engaged in the

act of lifting a limb 'lifting'; while in the act of stretching 'stretching'; while in the act of bending 'bending'; while in the act of lowering 'lowering'; and when a touch is felt 'touching'. All these actions must be carried out slowly so that all the relevant details might be noticed. As soon as the body is settled in a new position, the yogi should occupy himself with the prescribed contemplation of the abdomen.

In certain cases, unbearable pains are felt as soon as one gains *samādhi* (concentration of mind). As soon as contemplation is stopped, such pains or sensations cease. On resuming the practice, they might return as soon as concentration is restored. These pains and sensations should not be taken seriously. They are not a form of illness. They are merely common occurrences in the body. They are not noticed because one is occupied with noticing the objects which are attractive and interesting. As soon as one's concentration is developed, his attentiveness becomes keener and aware of these pains or sensations. Armed with this knowledge, the yogi should proceed resolutely with the practice until he overcomes them and they cease.

If the yogi intends to stand up, he should mentally note 'intending'. When he has stood up, he should make a mental note 'standing'. If he looks ahead 'looking'; if he is walking 'walking' or 'left', 'right'. And whilst walking, it is important to be aware of every movement of each single step, from the beginning to the end: 'lifting', 'pushing forward', 'putting down'. If he is drinking he should note 'drinking'; if he is eating 'eating'. As a matter of fact, he must be aware of every action, however trivial.

If the yogi should feel sleepy or drowsy, he should make a note of sleepiness or drowsiness. During sleep, no contemplation is, of course, possible. However, with practice, the yogi will come to know that he needs not more than four hours' sleep. Contemplation starts from the moment of waking to the moment of falling asleep. It is possible to at a

certain stage the yogi will not feel sleepy at all, and go on contemplating day and night.

In this talk, perforce, I have to leave out a considerable portion of Mahasi Sayadaw's discourse. Now let us summarize. Whether good or bad, the yogi should contemplate every mental occurrence, and be aware of it. Whether big or small, the yogi should contemplate every movement of his body and limbs, and be aware of it. Whether pleasant or unpleasant, the yogi should contemplate every

feeling, and be aware of it. Whether pleasant or unpleasant, the yogi should contemplate every object of his attention, and be aware of every impression grasped by his mind. The yogi, who is thus occupied fully with contemplation throughout day and night, would certainly develop his concentration so as to gain the much coveted stage of *Udayabbaya ñāṇa*, in no long time, and attain the higher stages of *Vipassanā ñāṇa*, right up to the Final Achievement, *Maggā Ñāṇa* and *Nibbāna*.

Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation At Thathana Yeiktha

Part II.

(A talk by Myanaung U Tin, broadcast from Burma Broadcasting Service on Monday, the 22nd January 1962.)

On the 27th November 1961, I gave a talk from here on *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā* Meditation at Thathana Yeiktha. I have already dealt with the preliminary discourse of Mahasi Sayadaw, in which the method of practising *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā* Meditation is explained to the new disciples on their arrival at Thathana Yeiktha.

In this talk, I propose to give more information about the meditation course as well as about Thathana Yeiktha.

There are five sets of rules and regulations for the guidance of Meditation Instructors and the disciples. They relate to (1) Bhikkhu Meditation Instructors, (2) Laymen Meditation Instructors, (3) Bhikkhu disciples, (4) Lay disciples, and (5) Management and maintenance of Discipline. For want of time I shall be able to deal only with the rules and regulations relating to lay disciples and maintenance of discipline at the Centre and that briefly.

A lay disciple is allotted a room by the warden-in-charge. The Centre is divided into two parts, one for bhikkhus and laymen and the other for nuns and laywomen. Two separate buildings with modern conveniences

are set apart for those who come from overseas or abroad, one for men and the other for women.

A lay disciple is required to observe Eight Precepts, one of them being voluntary abstinence from taking any solid food after midday until next dawn. Apart from six hours, at the most, for sleep, the rest of twenty-four hours should be spent in Vipassanā Meditation. Reading, writing, and purposeless talking are to be avoided. Visitors are not disallowed but must be reduced to a bare minimum, and none is allowed between 12 noon and 5 p.m.

The meditation course varies from a minimum of 6 weeks to approximately 10 weeks, depending on the progress of the disciples. Free accommodation is provided, but food is obtainable at a reasonable rate per day. Food is not strictly vegetarian but vegetarian food is also available. Some disciples have their food sent from home, some take their food at the meal hall as paying guests, and others, particularly woman disciples, cook their own food. Yogi Aid Society provides, free of charge, a weekly ration of uncooked rice and wood fuel to any yogi who is willing to receive it. All the kyaungs and houses are furnished with electric lights, running water

and other modern conveniences. Each kyaung or house is under the control of an assistant warden, responsible to the warden-in-charge, as also to the Presiding Sayadaw.

Thathana Yeiktha is run by Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organisation but management and maintenance of discipline are in the hands of Mahasi Sayadaw and his Senior Monk Disciples. From its inception, some 15 years ago, Thado Thiri Thudhamma Sir U Thwin has been the President of the Organization. Prime Minister U Nu and several prominent persons have been most closely associated with the Centre. Because of this high patronage, there has been a misconception in certain quarters that Thathana Yeiktha gives priority to those of so-called higher social standing and guests who come from abroad. Nothing is farther from the truth. As a matter of fact, admission to the Centre is determined solely on the disciples' sincerity of purpose, irrespective of social standing, race or nationality. While primarily for Buddhist, non-Buddhists in real earnest for meditation are also welcomed.

It may be pointed out that one of the rules is that the disciples undergoing training are required to present themselves daily at the appointed time at the fixed place for the purpose of reporting their experiences in practical meditation.

This daily examination or interview is most essential in that the slightest deviation of a disciple from the right track can be detected at once and his or her steps will be righted forthwith. Instructors can also know the progress or otherwise of the disciple and accordingly give words of advice, explanation and encouragement. Instructors note down in their books important particulars relating to each disciple, and when they are satisfied with his or her progress they recommend him or her to Mahasi Sayadaw for hearing the final discourse, in which the Sayadaw explains in detail the sixteen stages of insight leading to *Maggā Ñāṇa*, *Phala Ñāṇa* and *Nibbāna*, as also the qualities of a *Sotāpanna*. In conclusion, he advises the listening disciples to

determine by their own experiences the stage they have reached, and that, if they feel they have not successfully finished the course, they should continue their efforts for achievement, but on the other hand, if they feel that they have realized the truth, they should behave in a manner befitting a *Sotāpanna*. The Sayadaw emphasizes that the decision of status can be made by nobody save the Buddha, but the disciples who have actually realized the truth know for themselves that they have done so, and they will entertain no more doubts or perplexities but possess Right View, the view that will remain unshakable forever. It may be observed that *Sotāpannas* are at the lowest rung of *Ariya* ladder, and since they have not yet reached the final goal, they too must strive on with diligence as enjoined by the Buddha.

During my three months' stay at Thathana Yeiktha I was not allowed to read any book or journal. However, before I left the Centre I came upon a book by Rear Admiral E.H. Shattock of the British Navy, with the title "An Experiment in Mindfulness". He was at the Centre in 1957. He is not a Buddhist but is interested in Buddhist meditation. I also got an old copy of "The Middle Way", the journal of the Buddhist Society of London, which contained an article on *Satipaṭṭhāna* Meditation Centres in Burma" by Mr. Colin Wyatt who was at Thathana Yeiktha in 1957. He is a Buddhist.

For the benefit of those who came from abroad for a course of Buddhist meditation as well as for the benefit of the Western-educated Burma nationals, I propose to cull a few passages from the book and the article I have just mentioned. I am reproducing them because from my own experiences I know that their views are sound.

I quote Admiral Shattock first. He writes: "We need to do two things: to cultivate the feeling of abstracting ourselves from an outside world into an inner seclusion where security is self-generating and strength is in acquiescence rather than in activity; and to

develop a permanent insulation from the shocks and tensions of modern life.”

“Meditation is a real practical occupation: it is in no sense necessarily a religious one, though it is usually thought of as such. It is itself basically academic, practical, and profitable. It is necessary, I think, to emphasize this point, because so many only associate it with holy or saintly people, and regard it as an advanced form of the pious life.”

“*Satipaṭṭhāna* is a method of mind training initiated by the Buddha. It is simple, so simple in fact that its very simplicity turned out to be one of its main difficulties”.

“In Western terms, Thathana Yeiktha is a Staff College for mind training, and, with its austere living routine and long hours of work, a pretty tough one.”

“Every student had an interview from a trained monk every day, in which he reported progress and difficulties: This was very necessary, as much to prevent a student becoming discouraged through apparent lack of progress as to help him over the obstacles that would be encountered.”

“The reduction of eating helped towards relaxation by giving the body less work to do in digesting and eliminating, and the intake was quite enough for the body’s needs.. I certainly did not feel particularly hungry or that I was suffering from lack of sleep.”

“The Sayadaw warned me not to over-tire myself and that strain and tension were to be avoided.”

Mahasi Sayadaw impressed me immediately as a man of remarkable presence. I felt that here was a man of great understanding and sympathy, and one who could have no narrow conception of truth. I felt enveloped by an authority that sprang not from ordering but from being. The dignity that was so apparent in all the Sayadaws (I may repeat the words *all the Sayadaws*) was an obvious product of the lack of conflict between the physical and spiritual man, and the

completeness with which their whole nature was dedicated to living in peace, and in confidence that the path they were following would lead them to release from attachment and to achievement of the final goal of *Nibbāna*.”

Now I quote Mr. Colin Wyatt. He writes:

“Let me say right away that what the average Westerner understands by the word ‘Meditation’ about as much resembles the real thing as playing with tin soldiers does actual warfare. To get an appreciation of the technique and application of meditation, solid concentration for periods of not less than sixteen hours a day for at least two weeks are essential. It takes at least three such days before the mind can be said to be even faintly under control.

The study of *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā* calls for serious application by a serious student, who is willing, ready and able to withdraw entirely from the world for at least a month, preferably three to four. He must be free from present worries or business, past regrets, and with no plans or business or personal affairs brewing up in the immediate future, which may tend in any way to preoccupy the mind in the present.

Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā is the cultivation of intense ‘awareness’ and ‘one-pointedness of mind’ as spoken of by the Lord Buddha in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. Its object is the complete understanding and awareness of all mental, sensory, physical and psychological processes in the mind and body, culminating in the direct and ‘immediate’ realization of *anicca* and *anatta*, of impermanence and of the non-existence of a separate self or ego.”

“The daily interview with the Master is vital for he can at once detect signs of overstrain, however well-meant, and halt them before the disciple does himself harm.”

“It (the Meditation Centre) is more like a school of applied psychology than any conventional religious school.”

“It (the Meditation System) is sound, sensible, practical and straight-forward, with no mysticism or emotionalism of any sort whatsoever.”

“Language presents no problem, as the Master has an excellent interpreter who has himself studied there.”

On this point, Admiral Shattock remarks, “Mahasi Sayadaw understood most of my English; he was able to read the language well but I never heard him speak a word”.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that there are now at the Centre two or three monks who speak good English.

Now I must also make references to what the Westerners say about the noise or din that assails the disciple at Thathana Yeiktha. Admiral Shattock writes: “Day and night were punctuated by the howling of dogs, bells, and motor horns; and during the day the continuous calls of large black crows in their thousands added to the hubbub.

I wondered how on earth it would be possible to meditate in that babel.”

Mr. Colin Wyatt writes, “The average Oriental is conditioned from birth to noise, and is left unperturbed by strident noises that are literally agony to Occidental ears. Thathana Yeiktha is close to several small villages, and on a main road with a small bazaar, as a result all day long the air is filled with strident canned music broadcast from rival loudspeakers. . . . Likewise the monks, in the kindness of their hearts, dole out rice to stray dogs, as a result of which the compound, some square half mile, is inherited by several packs totaling some fifty dogs, which sleep in the day, while the loud speakers are blasting” away but bark, howl, yap and fight all night long. Frankly, there is more noise throughout the twenty-four hours in the average meditation centre than in Piccadilly Circus in

the rush hours. The Burmese are quite unconscious of the effect this perpetual strident racket has, on Western ears, and once they realize its very adverse effect they will do something about it.”

I have heard similar complaints from other Western disciples, and I have every sympathy for them. I fully agree with them that loud-speakers and barking dogs are sources of distractions. Because of them, I must confess, I nearly ran away from the Centre. However, I know from personal experiences that what in Buddhist terminology are called *nivarana* or hindrances are far more terrible than these distractions. There are five kinds: (1) Sensual craving, (2) Ill-will, (3) Sloth and torpor, (4) Restlessness and worry and (5) Doubts or Perplexities. Here, I must confine myself to distractions. I can do no better than quote once more Admiral Shauock. He writes: “I would find all sorts of distractions leading my mind away from the business in hand. It was necessary from the start to establish who was the master, and never let oneself willingly be side-tracked into day dreaming or other thinking. I was given instruction on how to deal with distractions at the first interview. *Satipatthāna* teaching takes these things, so to speak, in its stride and when they are particularly persistent even makes use of them as temporary subjects of meditation. The effectiveness of the simple method employed soon becomes evident, and introduces the first feeling of confidence that the goal is to be won.”

Now I conclude with one more quote from Mr. Colin Wyatt’s article. He writes “But the Western student can rest assured that he will be welcomed, be he serious, with open arms and heart and every kindness, and there must be few peoples so happy and kindly and anxious to go out of their way to help the foreigners as the Burmese.”

Buddhism in East & West

By A German Buddhist, Bhikkhu Dhammañkara (Hans. Bloeker. Ph. D.),

Aparagoyāna Vihāra, Kabā-Aye.

Because of the failure of Christianity as a religion of faith becoming petrified with dogmatism, ritualism and mere preaching, tens of thousands or perhaps hundreds of thousands of thinking and educated people in the West are in great need of, and seek, a new explanation of their present life, which would enable them to master their existence peacefully. They look to Buddhism, because they have heard something of the teaching of the Buddha through the many translations of the greater part of Pāli Canon into different European languages. If they are interested in Buddhism, it is mainly in the pure Dhamma, as it is preserved in Theravāda Buddhism, not in Mahāyāna sects, for in the latter they would find all those miracles and speculative things which they know from Christianity and have left behind. Some people may also be interested in Zen, but only as an effective meditation practice, as they believe. “In our age”, says J. Goldbrunner in his book: *Individuation I*. London 1955, “the man of high moral and intellectual standards no longer wants to follow a faith or rigid dogma. He wants to understand and to know, he wants to have the first-hand experience for himself.”

In four respects the Dhamma of the Enlightened One is especially attractive for the Westerner:

1. The Buddha represents himself as a man only, not as god or a heavenly being.
2. His teaching is reasonable and will stand every test of experience.
3. Freedom of thinking is distinctly expressed in His teaching.
4. Each person must work out his own salvation (see Dham 165).⁴

“The Buddha”, says Soma Thera in the Wheel Publication No 5. “never wished to extract from His disciples blind and submissive faith in Him or His teachings. He always insisted on discriminative examination and intelligent inquiry. In no uncertain terms He urged critical investigation. When He addressed the inquiring Kālāmas in a Discourse that has been rightly called the first charter of free thought:

“It is proper for you, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain: uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon tradition; do not go upon hearsay; do not go upon correspondence with scripture; do not go upon cogitation; do not go upon specious reasoning; do not go upon approval of a thought-over notion; do not go upon a person’s seeming ability; do not go upon the thought: ‘The ascetic is our teacher’. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: ‘These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; these things undertaken and observed lead to harm, to ill’, abandon them. (Ang. Nik. Vol. I. p. 188/193 P.T.S.)⁵

And here we find another dialogue between the Master and the disciples: “If now, knowing this and preserving this, would you say: ‘We honor our Master and through respect for him we respect what he teaches?’—“No Lord”. — “That which you affirm, is it not, O disciples, only that which you yourselves have recognized, seen and grasped?” —“Yes, Lord.”

“The Buddha”, continues Soma Thera in the above publication, “faced facts and refused to acknowledge or yield to anything that did not accord with truth. He does not want us to recognize anything indiscriminately and

⁴ Khuddaka-nikāya Dhammapada. Verse 156. p. 38. 6th Syd. Edn.

⁵ Aṅguttara-Nikāya, Tikanipāta Kesamutta Sutta, p. 189, 6th Syd. Edn.

without reason. He wants us to comprehend things as they really are. He exhorts each individual to put forth the necessary effort and work out his own liberation with diligence.”:

“You yourselves should exert yourselves.
The Buddhas only show the way.

(Dhammapada 276)⁶

“Be ye islands unto yourselves. Be ye your own refuges, have recourse to none else for refuge. Hold fast to the Dhamma as an island. Hold fast to the Dhamma as a refuge. Resort yourselves to no other refuge.”

There is no greater cultural contrast in this world than between Western civilization and the religious cultures of the East. All Westerners in the East and all Easterners in the West have experienced it likewise. Oswald Spengler says in his well-known morphology⁷ of History ‘The Decline of the West’, vol. I, XLVI, “Buddhism, which only a mere dabbler in religious research could compare with Christianity, is hardly reproducible in words of the Western languages. World- peace, Humanity and brotherhood of Man, none of this comes anywhere near the strange profundity of the Buddhist conception of Nirvana.”—In spite of this saying able and intuitive scholars of the West have translated and ably reproduced important parts of the Buddha’s teaching, so that the West has become very attentive and has taken great interest in the Dhamma. But the differences between East and West continue nevertheless.

The Easterner who has become a Christian can without doubt be a good Christian, but he will surely be a different sort of Christian from the Westerner. The convinced Buddhist of the West will be in the same way different from the Buddhist of the East.

It is a widespread opinion in the Theravāda countries that Buddhist mission work, which in ancient times was carried to the east and to the

north, must be taken to the west now. Although, from a religious standpoint, the Christian Churches are on the decline, they are still ‘very active, and their influence and power in European public life and society is still quite strong, especially in the country. Spengler, who is by no means an authority in Buddhist matters, wrote nevertheless already before the last world war that Buddhism, “rejecting all speculations about God and cosmic problems” would be the right “gospel for the city intelligentsia”, because it is un-metaphysical and akin to modern psychology.” That is quite true. The accelerated communications of our age of science and technology are a great help to all mission work. It should therefore be the endeavor of all Buddhists in both East and West always to refer back to the actual word and spirit of Lord Buddha himself.

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⁶ Khuddaka-Nikāya Dhammapada, Verse 276, p.52, 6th
Syd. Edn

How To Teach Buddhism To Children

By Dr. Helmuth Klar of Heidelberg, Germany.

The Problem

The problem means in particular: "How can Buddhist parents best teach their own children Buddhism, since they will seldom have the opportunity to teach it to other children, let alone the children of non-Buddhist parents?" As I do not wish to theorize, I shall speak only from practical experience with my own children, and so of Western children in general. It is moreover particularly the Western child which is exposed to a Christian or materialistic environment, and hence is in need of a carefully considered Buddhist education. In a Buddhist country, steeped in its centuries-old Buddhist tradition, the position of a Buddhist child is (or should be) far easier. In such a favorable environment a good and effective Buddhist educational system may have developed. But even if it had it would be a great mistake for us, as Westerners, to copy it without due consideration. We live in entirely different conditions and so cannot take such an important problem as Buddhist education too lightly. Our Great Teacher, the Buddha himself, has taught us to see for ourselves, to examine and draw our own conclusions, and not to believe blindly in others. Just as everyone must work out his own salvation so must we evolve a Buddhist educational system suitable for Western conditions. Naturally any advice or suggestions which other countries can give will be thankfully accepted. We hope to receive many such proposals and to hear of other people's experiences.

Imitation

The educational programme depends very much on the age of the child, or children. The good example of the parents is the most important part of any education and if the parents live in accordance with the Dhamma this will be the surest guide to the children, whatever their age. Children develop the faculty of observation to a high degree and imitation is with them an important factor. We

should not neglect this fact. Everything depends on how much the parents themselves succeed in realizing the Dhamma in their everyday life, in making Buddhism a living thing, and not just something to talk about.

External Help

Together with imitation, externals play an important role during childhood. No Buddhist household should therefore be without a *Buddha-rūpa* (image), or at least a picture of the Enlightened One. It is a good idea to let each child have a small *Buddha-rūpa* of its own before which it can offer regularly flowers, incense and lights (the 'lights' are, in India, little coconut oil lamps, sometimes in colored paper shades, sometimes candles.) But it is vital that we see to it that the child does not come to worship the image itself, but that it pays devotion to the Buddha as the greatest Teacher of mankind. For although we must not develop any system of rites, we must not neglect the fact that a simple ceremony such as this brings Buddhism closer to the hearts of children. To adult Buddhists rites are more a fetter than a help, in so far as they are apt to make us think that we have achieved something merely by the performing of them. The philosophical aspects of Buddhism, although essential for adults, are generally too deep for children to grasp. But as externals help our children towards the Buddhist way of life we may make use of some simple ceremony. Children love the spectacular, and the regular offering of flowers, incense and lights, helps to develop such good habits as veneration and respect.

The Use of Festivals

Children always enjoy festivals, and since non-Buddhist children have so many, Buddhist children may be allowed their *Upasatha*-day once or twice every month. This day should be made quite different from an ordinary day, different even from an ordinary Sunday. As it

is not always possible in Western countries to keep the new- or full-moon day itself, parents may choose the Sunday nearest to it and make that day a festival. Workaday life must stop on this *Upasatha*-day, and everyone should be intent on observing the *Sīlas*. Parents should teach their children the Dhamma or influence them in that way. Now how can this best be done?

As already pointed out, this depends very much on the age of the children. In this article I will speak of children aged about ten years, as my two boys are now this age. Parents with younger children may simplify what follows, and those with older children can expound the Dhamma a little more deeply. A lot depends on the children's abilities and their perceptive faculties. (A translation of the Dhammapada and such little collections as Bhikkhu Sīlācārā's Lotus Blossoms will prove inspiring sources from which to study).

From time to time the father can read one of the Buddhist legends or a story from the *Jātakas*, the tales of rebirth. There is no reason why these beautiful tales should be neglected so long as the moral of the story be stressed and the amoralities carefully explained away. Since children have to learn so much about Greek mythology in school and the cruel fighting between the Greek gods and other gods, why should we avoid telling our children the *Jātakas*? These stories will introduce them into the Indian way of thinking and the concepts of *kamma* and rebirth will find a natural place in their minds. And since an understanding of *kamma* and rebirth requires a minimum of intellectual reasoning, the ideas can be taught even to children. In fact the whole teaching of the Buddha could be taught to children if only we could present it in the right way. To abstain from teaching our children Buddhism is a great mistake, and it is incongruous that some Buddhist put much stress on such a thing as vegetarianism, while neglecting to give their own children a Buddhist upbringing.

Buddhist Education a Duty

In any other religion the education of children in that belief is quite self-evident and takes a predominant place. So why should it be otherwise with Buddhism? It may be answered that Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion. But is not Buddhism also a way of living? And it is just this way of living which we have to impart to our children. If the position of Buddhism in the modern world is not so good as it was in former times, this is due to the fact that we have neglected the education of our children. What I should especially like to stress in this article is that a Buddhist education in Western countries is possible, and since it can be done it must be done. I am fully aware that we are far from the establishment of a Buddhist educational system, but a start has to be made, and this article is a contribution to the problem, which is already being discussed in many Buddhist communities.

But there is another reason why we should try to make Buddhist education a reality. In Oriental countries a Buddhist enters monkhood, the *Saṅgha*, not only to "work out his own salvation" but also "for the continuance of the *Dhamma*". But as in most of the Western countries, there are no regular Buddhist missions from the East, we lay-Buddhists of the West must give our share towards upholding the *Dhamma* here. To teach our children Buddhism is part of that duty. It would be unfair to hold Eastern countries responsible for not giving us Buddhist education. It would mean waiting until such missions were not only established in all Western countries but had learned the western languages thoroughly and understood the problems peculiar to Westerners. Until this time we must help ourselves as best as we can in the most efficient way that we can.

Buddhist History

In addition to the *Jātakas* already mentioned, we should tell our children about the life of the people during the time of the Buddha, their social structure, the historical

background of Early Buddhism, the history of Buddhism in general, and how the “Wheel of the Dhamma” rolled over the whole of India and beyond.

Explaining the Dhamma

The children’s mind will gradually grow into the spirit of Dhamma, while developing an understanding of the basic doctrines of Buddhism. The parents can then read some easy *Suttas* to the children. e.g., those concerning the basic five *Sīlas* and what a lay Buddhist ought to do and ought not to do, more particularly the discourses of the *Anguttara*, the “layman’s *Nikāya*”. This is all within the grasp of children. In addition some easy stanzas from Dhammapada may be read:

“All tremble before punishments, all fear death.

Comparing others with oneself, kill not
neither cause to kill. (Dhp. 129)

To refrain from all evil, to cultivate the
good,

To purify one’s thoughts—this is the
Teaching of Buddhas.” (Dhp. 183)

Buddhism is not so complicated as some of us are apt to think, and furthermore we are right to presume that a child of Buddhist parents had kammic tendencies which caused it to be born as a child of such parents, and so there is every reason why it should be given a Buddhist education.

Learning by Heart

As children learn things easily by heart we can give them the five *Sīlas* and the Triple Refuge to learn, perhaps even in Pāli. It is a good idea for the children to learn some of the stanzas of the Dhammapada in their mother-tongue, such for example as:—

“He abused me, beat me, overpowered me,
robbed me—in those who harbor such
thoughts hatred will never cease. (Dhp.
3 and the two following stanzas).

“This is an old rule—not just a rule of
today—‘they blame him who sits silent,
they blame him, who speaks much, they
even blame him who speaks little.’”

“There is none in the world who escapes
blame. (Dhp. 227 – also Dhp. 228).”

Dhp. 129 (already quoted), and the four
following stanzas.

The more a child learns by heart from the Pāli Canon the more it will profit from this knowledge when it can understand the deeper meaning. This does not mean that a child should learn sentences which it does not understand at all, but the knowing of such simple things as the above will stand it in good stead as it grows up.

Uposatha-Day

Uposatha-days are the days par excellence for the children to recite the stanzas they have learnt, and for the parents to explain the Teaching of the Buddha. But we must be careful not to over-exert the children, especially on such occasions as this, for the capability of children to pay attention for any length of time is very limited. The *Uposatha*-day should be on the contrary a festival to which they eagerly look forward. We should therefore take them for a walk, or even an excursion, and not hesitate to play with them. While walking happily through fields and woods we may teach them to observe nature and see life as it really is. When Prince Siddhattha drove out of his palace garden he saw old man, a sick person, a corpse, and on the last occasion, a monk. In a similar manner we should take the children out from the safe and narrow confines of our household, out into the troubled world.

Buddhist children should not be brought up in a world corresponding to the walled palace-garden in which Gotama grew up. Such excursions into nature will give ample opportunity for our children to see what life is really like. They will see that nature is “red in tooth and claw”, each animal fighting and eating the weaker. They will see too how hard

are the living conditions of most people. Children are generally not aware what it means to be old, sick or dying. We should give them, little by little, a proper understanding of these things. We should teach them at the same time to practice *Mettā* and Compassion towards our fellow-sufferers. Smaller children are often cruel to animals because they do not realize what they are doing. Here everything depends on the parents noticing such things early enough and making the children understand what they are doing. Buddhist parents should be very careful that their children avoid all cruelty to animals. The Buddhist child should always respect an animal as a living-being and not merely as a source of food. On our excursions into the countryside we should have many opportunities to show children how to be sympathetic and full of loving-kindness towards both man and animal, and this, not only by words, but what is more essential, by deeds.

Like a good Scout our child should be taught to help an old woman to carry a basket or to push a hand-cart. He or she should save an ant that has fallen into a puddle, or carry to the deep water some fish which are dying in a far too small pond where they have been left by high water. There are so many opportunities where even a child can show that it is practicing Buddhism in following the example of its parents. It is of the utmost importance for Buddhists always to bear in mind that knowledge is not enough. Only knowledge and conduct can assure us of the fruit of Nibbāna.

Buddhism the Religion of Compassion

Buddhism is moreover the religion of compassion, and we should never forget to present it to our children as such. The Buddha taught the Dhamma out of compassion for the world. Just as the All-Compassionate One made *Karunā* a central part of His Teaching, so we should not neglect this fact by making discussion the main part. If we only succeed in teaching our children *Mettā* (friendliness, active interest in others), *Karunā* (compassion) and *Muditā* (sympathy) we shall have

succeeded in doing what we can best do. *Upekkhā* (equanimity) is also important, but rather difficult for children to grasp.

The Buddha as Our Model

We should not make the path for our children too difficult, for this will discourage them. Everything depends on the psychological sensitivity of the parents. They themselves must know how far they can go. The Buddha always knew just how to address people—He spoke to the ordinary person in different way than to the philosopher, and we can learn much from His example. He was the greatest psychologist as well as the greatest philosopher. How could it be otherwise with a Fully-Enlightened One? Therefore we who wish to teach Buddhism must learn it thoroughly ourselves. This is of course an indispensable condition which is so evident that I had nearly forgotten to mention it.

Study Your Children's Character

The Buddha taught the Dhamma to kings and beggars, to landowners and peasants, to warriors and merchants, to free men and slaves, to philosophers and courtesans. He knew thoroughly the sociological structure and the problems of His country as well as the character of every different type of person. In the same way we should try to study the character of our own children in order that we may teach them the Dhamma in the most effective way. Being reborn in our family they are under our trusteeship as it were. Although they are separate, independent beings we are responsible for them. They were not given under our trusteeship by some divine power but have put themselves under our trusteeship. They are reborn in our family because of our similarities to them. This makes it easier for us to understand their characters, an indispensability in the teaching of Buddhism. Therefore it should not be too difficult for the parents to make their children acquainted with the Teaching of the Buddha and this fact should encourage all Buddhist parents. If the parents cannot teach their children Buddhism who else can succeed in this most important

task? For, as already pointed out, there is no better gift we can give our children than this gift of *Dhamma*. As the Buddha himself said: “*Sabbadānaṃ Dhamma-dānaṃ jināti*”, “The gift of the Dhamma excels all other gifts.” (Dhp. 354).

Immunity against Christianity and Materialism

In order to keep the mind of our children open to the light of the *Dhamma* we must pay careful attention that they are not drawn into the nets of materialism or into the belief in an omnipotent God. Since European Buddhist children are growing up in an environment of the two extremes, materialism and Christian faith, we must explain to them the difference between Buddhism and Christianity in particular, and Buddhism and any other kind of philosophy in general. We must point out the singularity of the Teaching of the Buddha as the middle way between the two extremes, and so make our children immune to outside influences. As Christianity and materialism are the two main influences in the West, we should point out the fallacies of materialism and acquaint the children with the basic teaching of Christianity. This would include a knowledge of the Christian churches, Christian rites and ceremonies, choral singing and so on. Otherwise, as the children grow up and especially during the romantic period of puberty, such things may make a greater and more dangerous impression on them. It is therefore better that they should already be acquainted with these things than that they should discover them by their own initiative. Musically inclined children should be introduced very early to worldly singing so that they may not be fascinated too much later on by hearing choral singing and church music. In this and many other ways we have to consider the psychological environment of school children. In Germany for instance, Christmas plays a very important part in family life, even among non-Christian families. Buddhist children will naturally ask: “Why haven’t we such a nice festival?” Actually

Christmas is more of a family festival (the ancient German Yule), celebrating the shortest day of the year and the beginning of the sun’s ascendancy. Originally the festival of Yule had nothing to do with Christianity, and it is in this way that it is still celebrated by many Germans, and thus it should be explained to our Buddhist children.

Self-Responsibility

Self-responsibility is a focal point of Buddhism and we must stress its importance over and over again, for the unbiased mind of the child will understand it. Every evening, when other children are praying to “God,” Buddhist children should spend a little time in meditation and in reflecting over the things they have done that day. If they find they have not thought, spoken and acted in conformity with the Teaching they should see how to avoid this mistake another time. If they find they cannot get rid of some bad thought or action, then their parents should help them so that they can go to sleep with the resolution to do better on the morrow. In the morning they can begin the new day by reflecting again over their resolution. In this way the children will be able to develop the powers of their own mind, purifying them by the cultivation of “good” or skillful thoughts, words and deeds. So, even at an early age, they will grow beyond the Christian dogma of purification by the grace of an all-forgiving God or through one of his priests. The law of kamma will show the children more clearly than anything else that every thought, word and deed carries within itself both the seed and the fruit and the only thing we can do to rectify “wrong” or unskillful conduct is to do better in future while trying to avoid that which we have done wrong in the past. Complete self-responsibility is the mark of the mature mind, and when our children develop this quality in themselves it will prove their surest and safest guide through life and will prove a natural bulwark against faith-religions on the one hand and the shallow philosophy of materialism on the other.

There are many other things which have to be considered by Buddhist parents in relation to their children. At meal times, for example, when Christian children thank a Creator God for their food, Buddhist children can reflect on the fact that there are many people who have not so much and such good food as they have. They should never be allowed to be critical of their food; their "tastes" should never be mentioned so that prejudices are not stimulated. Lay people should eat what is on the table in the same way as Bhikkhus eat whatever is put in their bowl, merely to nourish the body. But as children grow they must not have any dietetic restrictions in essential foodstuffs.

In this article I have been able only to give a small outline of Buddhist education. Actually each section needs an article to itself. I hope I have succeeded in showing Buddhist parents the dangers of educational indifference towards their children. If so I shall not hear again the inexcusable opinion of some Buddhist parents: "Our child can choose its religion later on, just as we did; we have no right to influence it." "Later on"? After the

influences of Christianity and materialism have worked on the child unopposed, it may when it grows up no longer have a free intellectual choice! How can we expect the child to find the Way by itself? Buddhas are awake to the Dhamma without the external help; but all other people need guidance and instruction. This is why Buddha said to His disciples: "Go ye, O bhikkhus and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O bhikkhus. the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure." (*Vinaya Mahāva ga.*) We are fully aware that laymen are no bhikkhus, but since there are so seldom any bhikkhus in the West, laymen can play their part in proclaiming the Dhamma. Buddhist parents have not merely the right to influence their children in the Buddhist way of thinking, but it is their duty so to do, and that thoroughly and thoughtfully. The best gift for the world is the gift of the Dhamma. What Buddhist parents would take the responsibility for depriving their own children of this gift?

Sabbadānaṃ Dhammadānaṃ Jināti!

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The Middle Path

By The Ven'ble Sayadaw U Thittita, Pathamagyaw, Aggamahāpaṇḍita.

The Eightfold Path which the Buddha preached in His first sermon is known as the Middle Path because it is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Optimism tends to over-estimate the conditions of life, whereas pessimism tends to under-estimate them. To plunge on the one hand into the sensual excesses and pleasures of the ordinary worldly life is mean, degrading and useless. On the other hand, extravagant asceticism is also evil and useless. Self-indulgence tends to retard one's spiritual progress and self-mortification to weaken one's intellect. The Path is a Middle Way between the pairs of opposites, and the doctrine of the "Way" may only be grasped by an understanding of the correlation and interdependence of the two. Progress is an alternating change of weight or emphasis between the two. Yet, just as a fencer's weight seems ever poised between his feet, resting upon either foot only for so long as is needed to swing back the emphasis, so on the Path the traveler rests at neither extreme, but strives for balance on a line between, from which all opposites are equally in view. All extremes beget their opposites, and both are alike unprofitable.

For all people the Middle Way of a good life lived in the world is in every way best and safest. The Buddha said: ⁷ "The two extremes are not to be practiced by one who has gone forth to the higher life as a Bhikkhu (who renounces the world). What are the two? That conjoined with passion, low, vulgar, common, ignoble. And that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble and useless. Avoiding the two extremes, the Buddha had gained the knowledge of the Middle Path which gives sight and knowledge and tends to calm, to insight, enlightenment.

Now, what is the Middle Path which gives sight? It is the Eightfold Path, namely right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right attention and right meditation. Of these the first two form a starting point for the journey of life. Then follow three having to do with outward conditions and then three having to do with inward conditions. The immediate goal is to attain control of the mind; with this control all individual desire can be, and will be, rooted out and ended. The ultimate goal is the ending of all dissatisfaction and suffering through the attainment of perfect enlightenment, perfect wisdom.

The first step along the Path toward the goal is right understanding. This involves an understanding of the Four Noble Truths, namely the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the ceasing of suffering and the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. What now is suffering or pain? Birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair are painful. To be separated from pleasant thing is painful, to be in contact with unpleasant things is painful and not getting what one wishes is painful.

Life is full of sorrow unless man knows how to live it. On the physical plane, birth, old age and death cannot be avoided, but there is another sense in which life is often sorrow, but a kind of sorrow that can be entirely avoided. The man who lives the ordinary life of the world often finds himself in trouble of various kinds. It would not be true to say that he is always in sorrow, but he is often in anxiety, and he is always liable at any moment to fall into great sorrow or anxiety. The reason for this is that he is full of worldly desires of various kinds, not at all necessarily wicked, but desires for worldly things; and because of these desires he is tied down and confined. He

⁷ Samyutta Nikāya, Mahāvaggasamyutta, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, p 368, 6th Syd. Edn.

is constantly striving to attain something which he has not, and when he has attained it he is anxious lest he should lose it. This is true not only of money but of position, power and social advancement.

There, are other objects of desire; for example, a man or a woman desires affection from someone who cannot give it to him or to her. From such a desire as that comes often a great deal of sadness, jealousy and much other ill-feeling. You will say that such a desire is natural; undoubtedly it is, and affection which is returned is a great source of happiness. Yet if it cannot be returned, a man or a woman should have the strength to accept the situation and not allow sorrow to be caused by the unsatisfied desire. When we say that a thing is natural, we mean that it is what we might expect from the average man. But the student of Buddhism must try to rise above the level of the average man, otherwise how can he help that man? We must rise above that level in order that we may be able to stretch a helping hand.

The Second Noble Truth is the cause of suffering. We have seen that the cause of suffering is always desire to possess and desire to preserve things possessed. The Buddha says that man's sense of possession is his greatest enemy, for the desire for accumulation steals from him his reason and intelligence. To be attached to a thing is to be sad at the loss of it. To despise or hate a thing is to be unhappy at the approach of it. Selfish desire for a worldly material object results in sacrificing spiritual treasure to secure the desired object which is probably of little value. Therefore selfish desire destroys the sense of Value, for selfish desire places worldly possession above wisdom, and personalities above principles.

Some people sorrow when they find old age coming upon them, when they find that they are not so strong as they used to be. It is wise for them to realize that their bodies have done good work, and if they can no longer do the same amount as before, they should do gently and peacefully what they can, but not worry

themselves over the change. Presently they will have new bodies, and the way to ensure a good one is to make such good use as they can of the old one, but in any case to be serene, calm and unruffled. The only way to do that is to let all selfish desire cease, and to turn the thought outward helping others as far as one's capabilities go.

Now, the Third Noble Truth, ceasing of suffering. We have already seen how sorrow ceases and how calm is to be attained; it is by always keeping the thought on the highest things. We may live in this world quite happily if we are not attached to it by foolish desire. We are in it, but we must not be of it, at least not to such an extent as to let it cause worry, trouble and sorrow. Undoubtedly our duty is to help others in their sorrows and troubles, but in order to do that effectively we must have none of our own selfish desires. If we take this life with philosophy we shall find that for us sorrow almost entirely ceases. There may be some who think such an attitude unattainable. It is not so. We can reach it, and we ought to do so, because only when we have attained it can we really and effectively help our fellow man.

NIBBĀNA

The cessation of craving or selfish desire means the removal of all causes of suffering, for all the others group themselves about this one root-factor; the result is called Nibbāna. The Pāli term *Nibbāna* is formed of *Ni* and *Vāna*. *Ni* is a negative particle and *Vāna* means craving or selfish desire. *Nibbāna* therefore literally means absence of craving. It may also be defined as extinction of lust, hatred and ignorance.

Now the predominance of this negative explanation of the Buddhist goal, *Nibbāna*, resulted in the mistaken notion that it is "Nothingness" or "Annihilation". Nevertheless we do find in the Pīṭakas such positive definitions of *Nibbāna* as "Highest Refuge" (*Parāyana*), "Safety" (*Tāṇa*), "Unique" (*Kevala*), "Absolute Purity" (*Vīśuddhi*), "Supramundane" (*Lokuttara*),

“Security” (*Khema*), “Emancipation” (*Mutti*), “Peace” (*Santi*), and so on.

The Sanskrit root “*Va*” means to “blow” and the prefix “*nir*” is used to denote “off” or “out”, being parallel to the Latin “*ex*”. Hence *Nīrvāna*, in its Sanskrit form means the “blowing out”. What is blowing out is understood to be the flame of personal desire. *Nīrvāna* is therefore not negative because it is the blowing out of the passive part of man, of his wishing tendencies. It is freedom, but freedom not from circumstances, but from the bonds with which we have bound ourselves to those conditions. The man who is strong enough to say, “Whatever comes I accept as best” becomes free, because he now lives in the process of spiritual evolution of himself, not in the pleasure of personality, and he can make use of all things for the purpose of that spiritual evolution.

Freedom does not mean that one can do everything that one can imagine, that one can defeat a lion with a slap of the hand. It contains no such aggressive conceptions when properly understood. Some people may say that freedom of the will would mean that they would do anything they wish, but they forget that those very wishes restrict their freedom. Freedom means that one cannot be made slave to anyone or anything. A free man is able to use freely anyone or anything as a useful thing. Nothing, however, can use this man as its slave, because he is free from personal desire, and free from resentment, anger, pride, fear and impatience, which arise through selfish desire. Such binding emotions are blown out like so many candles. The man is free on earth. He has reached *Nibbāna*⁸ in this world.

The Fourth Truth is the Way leading to the end of suffering. It is the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path. So, the best way which leads to the end of all sorrow is the Middle Path.

Now let us proceed to the discussion of the other steps of the Path. The second step is right

thought. We should think about right things and not about wrong things. We can have at the back of our minds always high and beautiful thoughts. Right thought must never have the slightest touch of evil in it; there are some people who would not deliberately think of anything impure or horrible, and yet they will cherish thoughts which are on the brink of that—not definitely evil, but certainly a little doubtful. Wherever there is anything which seems in the least suspicious or unkind, it must be shut out. We must be quite sure that our thoughts are only kind and good.

There is another meaning of Right Thought, and that is correct thought. So often we think untruly or wrongly of persons just because of prejudice or ignorance. We get an idea that a certain person is a bad person, and therefore that all he does must be evil. We attribute motives to him which are often absolutely without foundation, and in doing so we are thinking untruly of him, and therefore our thought is not right thought. We are looking at one side of the person and we ignore the other side.

By fixing our attention on the evil in the man instead of the good, we strengthen and encourage that evil; whereas by Right Thought we might give just the same encouragement to the good side of that man’s nature.

The third step is Right Speech, and here again we should speak always of good things. It is not our business to speak of the evil deeds of others. In most cases the stories about other people which reach us are not true, and so if we repeat them our words also would be untrue. Even if the story is true, it is still wrong to repeat it. In a family if a husband or a wife or a son or a brother did something wrong, we should certainly feel that it would be wrong to advertise the misdeed of one whom we loved to many people who would not otherwise hear of it. We should speak with regard to others as we should wish them to speak with regard to us. Some people allow themselves to fall into exaggeration and inaccuracy, and they make little things into enormous stories; surely that

⁸ Sa-upādisesa Nibbāna = Nibbāna with the aggregates of existence still remaining.

is not Right Speech. They also have the idea that when one meets a friend one must keep talking all the time, or the friend will be hurt. With the idea of seeming smart, they keep up a stream of constant half-joking or sneering talk. They must always be showing everything in a ridiculous or amusing aspect. Certainly all that comes under the heading of idle words. If we must talk, at least we might say something useful and helpful. Speech must be kindly, direct and forceful, and not silly.

The fourth step is Right Action. We see at once how these three steps necessarily follow one from another. If we think always of good things, we shall certainly not speak of evil things; if our thought and speech are good, then the action which follows will also be good. Action must be prompt and yet well-considered, and it must be unselfish. We should do what we can to help others. We do not live by ourselves. We live amongst others, so that whatever we think or say or do will necessarily affect a great many people. We should remember that our thought, our speech and our action are not merely qualities, but powers we possess to use; all are meant to be used for service, and to use them otherwise is to fail in our duty.

The fifth step is Right Livelihood, and that is a matter which may touch quite a large number of us. The Right Livelihood is that which causes no harm to any living thing. That forbids such trades as those of a butcher or fisherman; but it reaches much further than that. We should not obtain our livelihood by harming any being and therefore we can see that the selling of alcohol is not a right means of livelihood, because the seller is living on the harm he does to other people. The idea goes yet further. Take the case of a merchant who in the course of his trade is dishonest. That is not a right means of livelihood, because his trading is not fair and he is cheating the people. When you trust a doctor or a lawyer you expect to be treated fairly. In the same way the customer comes to the trader, and therefore the latter should be as honest with his customer as the lawyer or the doctor is with his client or his

patient. You have a right to make a reasonable profit in the course of your bargain, but you must also look to your duty.

The sixth step is Right Endeavour, and it is a very important one. We must not be content to be negatively good. What is desired of us is not mere abstinence from evil, but the positive doing of good. When the Buddha made a short statement in a single verse. He began by saying "Cease to do evil", but the next line runs: "Learn to do good". Every person has a certain amount of strength, not only physical, but mental, and can do a certain amount of work. Every person has also a certain amount of influence among his friends and relations. That influence means power, and we are responsible for making good use of that power. All about us are children, relations, employees, and over all of these we have a certain amount of influence, at least by example. We must be careful of what we do and what we say, because others will copy us.

The seventh step is Right Attention. Vigilant attention leads us to see correctly and to attain a point of view from which we see beyond the pairs of opposites. He who does not practice attention is the plaything of the *multiple* influences with which he comes into contact; he is like a *drifting* cork which is at the mercy of the waves. He unconsciously submits to the action of his physical and psychical environment.

We should be conscious of our movements and acts, both physical and mental. Nothing of what goes on in us should escape unnoticed. We should be conscious of the feelings which arise in us and recognize them. When the power of attention is enhanced, and one has reached the point where one misses none of the phenomena which arise in oneself, one proceeds to investigate them and to search for their causes. He will be aware of his anger when he is angry, and find the cause of it, and foresee the result of it. In this way he will check all his feelings, envy, sensuality, anxiety, *etc.* If he performs a charitable deed, he also should question himself as to the

motives which he obeyed. The result of this kind of question will often be a powerful influence to minimize selfish moral values.

The practice of perfect attention is a means of learning to know oneself to know the world in which one lives, consequently to acquire Right Understanding.

Another practice under this heading is the exercise of the memory, for example, at the end of each day one recalls the actions which one has performed, the feelings which one has experienced, the thoughts which one has entertained. The examination is conducted backwards, that is to say, beginning with the last thought one has entertained, and working back until the first moment after waking. The aim of this exercise is simply to teach us to allow none of the things which our senses have perceived, or the ideas which have passed through our minds, to become obliterated. This practice of memory, when fully developed, will result in attaining the knowledge of remembering former births.

The eighth step is Right Concentration. It is the right concentration of thought upon a single object. Meditation is to be practiced only after concentration. In concentration we start with simple objects, and in meditation we carry the clear conception of that simple object to the higher mental and intellectual levels. To make it clear, imagine someone pouring water from above into a jar. If there are many holes round the bottom and sides of the jar, the water will run out, but if the holes are all filled in, the water will rise. Most of us are like the jar full of holes, ready to leak, so that we cannot

concentrate our thoughts. Meditation is like the pouring of water, concentration is like the filling of the holes. Concentration makes our consciousness steady without leakage and meditation fills it with clear vision and wisdom. By meditation on the chosen object, you will observe that object clearly and understand the function of it in conjunction with other things. By meditation, therefore, we enlarge our knowledge and wisdom.

When your meditation is fully developed it opens up ways of intuition and many supernormal powers which some people call occult powers. These powers may be obtained even before one reaches the state of *Nibbāna*. In a way it is true that they are occult powers because they are hidden from those who have not developed their minds in this way. On the other hand these powers are not occult because they are not hidden from those who have sincerely and strenuously practiced right meditation. They just form an extension of the powers used in ordinary life. By the powers developed, you can see things which you cannot see otherwise, because your consciousness, thoughts, are very pure like a polished mirror which reflects everything that appears in front of it. If the surface of a mirror is not clear, you can see nothing in it. In the same way, without meditation your consciousness and thoughts may be mixed up with selfish desire, hatred and delusion, but when they are purified and developed by means of meditation, you will see things as they truly are and your wisdom will shine forth.

What Buddhism Means To Mankind

By

Ven. C. Nyanasatta Thera.

Buddhism, that is to say the knowledge of the Teaching of the Buddha, came to Europe at the end of the 18th century at a time when modern science had made such progress that established religions in the West were not only looked upon with suspicion but even became unwanted, criticized and fought against.

Now Buddhism from the beginning of the 19th century was studied in the West by unprejudiced scholars who saw in it a system fit for the new world—a scientific Teaching not contradicting but rather conforming to the demands of reason and confirming science and modern learning.

It was the Renaissance, the revival of the study of Greek philosophy, literature and art, that shook the medieval attitude to the then established Church in the West, and from the criticism arose the Reformation. In the classical Greek literature there are frequent references to Persia. Hence, as soon as the West had mastered the Greek stores of knowledge, Persian began to be studied by specialists in the beginning of the seventeenth century; and in the beginning of the 19th century, when interest even in dead languages such as Egyptian created a Comparative Science of Languages, Persian, Sanskrit and Pāli began to be studied by scholars all over the world. The study of these languages and their literatures led to the comparative study of Religions. Many of the students of Comparative Religion, though not particularly fond of any religion, looked with favor upon Buddhism in the West, for it seemed to them Atheistic. But besides the scholars, the Theosophists supported Buddhism for its stress on spiritual values and pointing to inner experience of enlightenment not based solely on reason or sense experience and logic or the scientific method.

What Buddhism means to the Western world we can best see from what the West lacks and ought to be given: *A New Way of Life* that may bring Peace and Happiness into the Life of Men who cannot find their satisfaction in their ancestral religion and are not fully satisfied with scientific and philosophic knowledge about life and man's place in this world. What appeals to the Western world in Buddhism is its rationality, the application of the scientific method in dealing with facts that had been before either not understood or considered to be accepted on mere faith. In Early Buddhism blind faith is discouraged, irrational dogmas and articles of faith are unknown; the Buddha as we know him from the *Pāli Texts* expects us all to enquire into, test, experiment with and verify the truth of the Dhamma by direct knowledge. Buddhism can be studied as a science and an art, and the Buddha appears to the best educated section as the eminent Master of both the Science and Art of Life, Suffering and the Ceasing of Suffering, and of the Noble Path that leads to the Cessation of all Suffering, the noble eightfold path that is to be applied, trod and realized by the student of Buddhism. It is in this aspect that the Dhamma is studied by *The Friends of Buddhism in the West* and the educated classes in the East, and we shall confine our present exposition to this aspect of Buddhism.

The Science and Art of Buddhism

Dictionaries and textbooks define *Science* as a body of *systematized knowledge of a particular department of nature or mind*, Science has the following characteristics: it is restricted to a particular department, is general, systematic or methodical, accurate, reasonable and disinterested.

Art, on the other hand, is *a body of rules for the attainment of some practical end*. Art is

essentially practical, but is usually based on science. Science helps to know; art helps to do. There is an intimate interdependence between science and art. Education, for instance, is based on *psychology as the positive science of the behavior of living beings*. Navigation is based on astronomy; and agriculture is based on botany and geology. Logic, again, is both a science and an art, for it endeavors to discover the laws of thinking, and by application of these principles of valid reasoning it attempts to find the truth, of course only a formal truth, though Inductive Logic, also called *the scientific method*, does lead to new knowledge; and the Indian Logic declares that its object is to attain immortality. This must be one of the reasons why *Later Buddhism* in India laid such stress on its Logic.

Buddhism is both a science and an art. As science, it teaches the laws that govern our nature, our life. It teaches the Dependent Origination of our existence and of our existence and of the world of our experience, the *Five Aggregates of Existence: pañcakkhandha*, its special department of course is the Origination of Suffering and the Ceasing of all Suffering. To this end Buddhism teaches the *Structure of the Human Mind*, the working of our mind, and how the mind can be systematically cultivated, developed, in order to realize the *Deathless*; how to transcend all conditioned life and change, by attaining *Nibbāna* in this very life.

As an Art, Buddhism teaches us, among other things, how to attain the goal pointed out by the Science of Buddhism how to train ourselves so that the *Noble Eightfold Path* becomes to us a living reality by being trodden in our everyday life unto the realization of the Deathless (*amata*), that is to say *Nibbāna*. The Buddha is the scientist *par excellence* and the greatest artist as well. The *Arahant*, his perfect disciple, is the best artist, for he has applied the Science of the Buddha on himself.

We may also define science as the coordination of human experience in a systematic and logical form, the statement of

general laws of the world, their use in prediction, and further research on the basis of newly-won experience. Some students of science might rightly object to our calling Buddhism a science, by saying that science is concerned mainly with the physical aspect of the world, while the Buddhists, though they may claim some good results in some ways, sadly lack in scientific training, and some absurd things are taught in the *Pāli Books on Buddhism* mainly in the *commentaries*.

This objection is valid; but those who now reject Buddhism because of some irrational teachings found in the commentaries and portions of the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* as well, ought to bear in mind that all these non-rational doctrines or matters not strictly relevant to the pure Dhamma belong to Hinduism rather than Buddhism. These teachings were only later absorbed by the Buddhists in order that they might appear “modern” at that time when non-Buddhists believed in those things as a matter of fact. Cosmologies, for instance, are by no means integral parts of Buddhism, for the declared object of Early Buddhism is: Suffering and the Cessation of Suffering. Therefore if some *modern* Buddhists in Ceylon and Burma turn away from the “unscientific” Buddhism that prevails in some portions of the commentaries, and references to it even in the *Tipiṭaka*, they ought to know that the reference e.g., to a big worm that live in our stomach and swallows the first three or four morsels of food as we begin to eat, and when the stomach is empty the worm makes the big noise that is now known to be due to indigestion; or the stories of *Mount Meru* or *Sineru*, the *Lake Anotatta* and the rocks surrounding our *cakkavāḷa* world; and the measurements of the world and of the depth of the seas with the huge monsters leagues long:—all this is not the true Teaching of the Buddha but later additions in order to “modernize” Buddhism and keep it up-to-date at that distant period of time, some more than two thousand years ago, when simple delighted in such marvels. Just as we now use the modern expressions of *matter* and *energy*, *static* and *kinetic energy*, *relativity* and

atom and *atomic energy*, which generations hence may no more be actual and may cause the Dhamma being branded with unscientific attitude, so we must understand the language of the commentaries and portions of the Tipiṭaka as a means to making the Dhamma intelligible to the masses in terms of current language and conceptions. Buddhism loses nothing by casting aside all this irrelevant “science” of past ages, hence we need not worry about such unessential things as references to non-existent things or the parables, similes and metaphors used in the Pāli literature.

We usually identify science with physics and chemistry and the other branches based on mathematics and this physical or natural science, forgetting that science includes also the co-ordination of human experience in a systematic and logical form, the statement of general laws, their use in prediction, and further research on the basis of new experience in mental life as well, and hence Psychic Research, *Psychology*, *Sociology* and some other mental sciences are the other fields of scientific research. And it is here, as a mental science, that Buddhism not only holds its own, but even surpasses modern science. What now passes for “modern psychology” is Buddhism applied in psychological research, and Para-Psychology could be called applied Buddhism, though only few of those scientific psychologists acknowledge their debt to the Buddha.

The Buddhist Science of the Structure of the Mind, or the behavior of living things, and the Buddhist Applied Science for knowing the human mind as studying the behavior of living beings, and to experiment with the methods of training the mind, has its rightful place in the world. The Buddhist Art of Living according to *the Science of Buddhism* in order to test its truth and verify its claim to being “the only path to the purification of beings, and to liberation from all forms of suffering, to the attainment of direct knowledge and realization here and now of Nibbāna” is unsurpassed in the World today, though it is by no means

always easy to be a student and exponent of this science and art of Buddhism, and hence modern physical science is more attractive even to the Buddhists themselves.

The most striking feature of science is that it claims that the facts of science are most sound, real and concrete, and, as such, may be tested and verified everywhere on our earth by anyone sufficiently qualified. Science is the result of experience and knowledge gained during a long process of trial and error, and a new student of modern science cannot expect to master even his limited subject without years of considerable toil, repeated experiment and minute investigation. But in its highest reaches science shows us that the seemingly sound and solid world of our experience is but a *delusion*, a *bubble*, a soap film, though a little corrugated, empty space welded onto empty time. The Theory of Relativity makes on dizzy and afraid, that the very foundation of science, the ground under our feet, is being cut away from under our feet and we have nowhere to rest. Here science ends and Buddhism begins.

Like science, Buddhism too is not a divine revelation, but the co-ordination of human experience in a systematic and logical form and the statement of general laws of our mind and the world of our experience.

Though the Buddha founded this science more than 2,500 years ago, after using all the past results of similar sciences, and many of his eminent disciples added to the science their own life-long experience, the research, experimentation and verification in this science have been carried on all this time of its existence, even though this tremendous output of energy and work is not always apparent to outsiders. Some Buddhists naturally accept Buddhism dogmatically, without a desire to test and experiment with, and verify this claim of the Buddha’s science to being a real science, with a goal attainable in this very life, and the Abhidhamma being the result of the past research by master minds. It is not these who accept the Dhamma on mere faith without an

investigation, but the really qualified students of the Buddha-Dhamma and exponents of the Mental Science of the Buddha that can truly say that the laws and theory of Buddhism are perfectly sound, complete and verifiable.

When the Prince set out at the age of 29 on his six years course of searching for the solution of this problem, he first learnt, from the most competent Teachers of Philosophy, Concentration and mystical trance and higher direct knowledge. Not satisfied with their science and art, their goals and his own attainments won under their guidance, the homeless prince pushed his research further, beyond the limits of his time, and learnt elsewhere all the science and art relevant to his quest of truth. Then he experimented with all forms of the most rigorous ascetic practices, yoga discipline and self-torture as means to enlightenment.

He subjected his body and mind to the most severe forms of austerities, in order to verify their claim to being the path to enlightenment. After all these studies and experiments, the Buddha discarded the useless practices and discovered his own new Course and Path to Liberation and Enlightenment. After all his six years of intensive research, in the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, its origination from craving due to ignorance, its cessation by ending all craving, and the Noble Eightfold Path of virtue, culture of the mind and direct knowledge, is embodied the result of the Buddha's research, only waiting for us to be studied again, understood, applied verified by self-realization. That life is suffering; craving is the root cause of all our unhappiness; cessation of craving comes by the acquisition of direct knowledge about the worthlessness of the subjects of our craving; and that the practice of concentration and meditation by a mind trained in the observance of perfect moral conduct leads to insight into this truth and to direct knowledge of life, suffering, and to liberation from all ill; this is the science and art of Buddhism, this is what Buddhism means to mankind.

But unlike modern physical science, the science of Buddhism is concerned mainly with the mastery of life, after understanding the facts of human life, of the life most easily accessible to us, namely our own life, for this is the only object of which we may attain a complete mastery. Buddhism is the science of man striving for knowledge about himself in order to be able to understand others and lead others to liberation from all suffering. The research institutes, laboratories and operating theatres of Buddhism are the *Vipassanā Centers*, the Hermitages, the Monasteries far from the abodes of noisy men. It is here that the Theory of Buddhism learnt at the University in the Oriental Monastic Colleges and the Training Centers for the Bhikkhus and the Dhammadūtas and from Books in Pāli and other languages is put to a test, and the subject of this research and experimentation is the trainee himself, under the expert guidance of master in meditation. The University with the Seminars for Indology, the Oriental Colleges and the Training Centers for the Bhikkhus give the science, its theory. The application of this science is left to the post-graduate student and research scholar, and his whole life is or ought to be devoted to the verification of the Theory of Buddhism.

The Teachings of the Self-Enlightened One are now being studied, investigated, tested and appreciated by the scientists of the West. We do not know how much of the new results of modern discovery is due to the conscious or subconscious assimilation and application of Buddhist ideas by modern scientists. Impermanency of all formations insubstantiality of matter, and relativity or emptiness:—these are concepts found in Buddhism and science alike. But in Buddhism the direct knowledge of these laws, when properly applied, leads to the ending of all craving for the things of this nature, while science still uses these new discoveries for the material progress or destruction of the world.

The facts of Buddhism are real facts, and as such, verifiable by the student himself. But it is only the facts concerning our inner life that are

the subjects of the Buddhist research, and here Buddhism fills a gap in the mental life of mankind. In spite of 20–30 years of study and training at a school and College, the University or a research institute following the non-Buddhist method of work, the thing least known, understood and mastered by the student and master or lecturer in modern science is his own life, his mind and behavior. And just here Buddhism steps in and satisfies the modern educated man and woman by giving expert guidance in this kind of study and research. This is why the *Dhamma* according to the *Early Pāli Texts* of the Theravāda Tipiṭaka appeals most of all to men of science in the West. Here Buddhism is complementary science, and Psychotherapy is applied Buddhism, and could be more developed by taking more of the knowledge stored up in the Dhamma Books, especially in the *Abhidhamma* and Sections of the *Sutta-Piṭaka* and the commentaries and books like the *Visuddhi-Magga*, where they deal with meditation and higher culture of the mind.

For centuries past religion opposed science, and even today, though a truce between them had been arranged, the struggle between them continues in various disguises. Unlike most of other religions, Buddhism has nothing to fear from modern science, for it is not a revealed religion. Like the facts of science, the facts of Buddhism were realized by the Buddha after a long preparation and study, struggle with trial and error. Even if we abstract from the

legendary past lives of the Buddha, when he, as a Bodhisatta, aspirant to Enlightenment, trained himself for the highest enlightenment, in his historical earthly life as Prince Siddhattha Gotama, he had the best education that could be acquired by a Prince of that time. He spent much of his 29 years of life before renunciation in study, silent observation and reflection or reasoning about the problems of life.

The culmination of this process of thinking occurred after he had seen old age, disease, death, and the quest for a liberation from the suffering of a repeated rebirth or the cycle of rebirths. The old man bent with age, an ailing wretch by the road side, a corpse carried to the cemetery, and a homeless wandering student searching for knowledge and deliverance:—these were, according to an early legend bearing the marks of a real event in the life of the Buddha, the four sights that induced the Prince to reflect thus: “Why should there be suffering in the world? Why should man be born, mature, grow old and frail, ail and then die, in between undergoing sorrow, grief, lamentation, pain, sadness, despair, separation from what he loves, association with what he dislikes, what is repugnant to him, briefly suffering in many forms?” These were the problems that the Buddha set himself to solve when he went forth to discover the path or course to the liberation from all suffering of repeated rebirth.

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We Ourselves Must Make An Effort

*(A talk by Myanaung U Tin, broadcast from Burma Broadcasting Service
on Monday, the 5th March 1962.)*

A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. Why? The Dhammapada says, “He who has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, sees with right knowledge the four Noble Truths: Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Way that leads to the Cessation of Suffering.”

The Buddha is the Teacher, the Dhamma is the Teaching, and the Saṅgha is the community of His monk disciples, who learn, practice and propagate His Teaching.

The Buddha proclaims, “The Noble Eightfold Way is the only way. The Buddhas only point the way. You yourselves must make an effort.”⁹ The Noble Way is eightfold. (1) Right understanding, (2) Right Thought, (3) Right Speech, (4) Right Actions, (5) Right Livelihood, (6) Right Effort, (7) Right Mindfulness, and (8) Right Concentration. The Noble Way is called the Middle Way, the Way between two extremes: self-indulgence and self-mortification. The Middle Way is straight but to walk straight on that way is, obviously, not easy. How to make an effort ourselves in the workaday world is a problem that occupies many minds, including first class ones.

The Buddha has summarized the Middle Way in a beautiful verse, which means.

“To refrain from evil,
To do what is good,
To purify one’s mind,
This is the Teaching of all Buddhas.”¹⁰

Human beings are gregarious by instinct, and we live in societies or communities. For

purposes of social mode of life, there are two kinds of communication, namely, (1) intimation through body, and (2) intimation through speech. Let us now find out for ourselves whether the Middle Way is useful and beneficial for our daily life. We cannot do or speak as we like. If we do or speak in such a manner, we shall soon get into conflict and trouble. So one must be mindful of his bodily actions and speech. According to the Buddha’s Teaching, this is Right Mindfulness.

One has to think whether his bodily actions and speech are harmful or otherwise to himself or to others, or to both. These are Right Thoughts. If he knows the good from the evil, the wholesome from the unwholesome, then he has Right Understanding. If bodily actions or speech are harmful to him or to others, or to both, it behooves him to check himself. On the other hand, if they are beneficial to him, or to others, or to both, he ought to pursue them. In both cases, he makes a Right Effort. Because he refrains from evil and does what is good, his mind becomes tranquil and concentrated. It is Right Concentration. One’s livelihood involves bodily actions and speech, and if he earns it by Right Actions and Right Speech, then it is Right Livelihood.

In this illustration, which is applicable to all and sundry, it is not difficult to see that five component parts of the Middle Way can be, and should be, cultivated on all occasions and in all circumstances. They are Right Mindfulness, Right Thoughts, Right Understanding, Right Effort and Right Concentration. Right Actions, Right Speech and Right Livelihood form, so to speak, the base of the Buddhist pyramid. They are known as *Sīla*, morality or virtue. Because they comprise abstinences from evil, they are known as Three Abstinences. Right Mindfulness Right concentration and Right Effort form, so to speak, the middle of the

⁹ Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Magga Vagga, V. 274, 276. p. 52. 6th Syd. Edn.

¹⁰ Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Buddha Vagga, V. 183, p. 41, 6th Syd. Edn.

pyramid. They are the three factors of Samādhi, or Concentration. Right Understanding and Right Thoughts form, so to speak, the apex of the pyramid. They constitute *Paññā* or Wisdom.

What is meant by Right Actions?

- (1) To abstain from killing any being.
- (2) To abstain from stealing or taking what is not given.
- (3) To abstain from sexual misconduct, and
- (4) To abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs.

What is meant by Right Speech?

- (1) To abstain from telling falsehood.
- (2) To abstain from using harsh words.
- (3) To abstain from back-biting or inciting one against another.
- (4) To abstain from frivolous talk or talk that does no good to anybody.

What is Right Livelihood?

One must earn his livelihood which entails none of the three kinds of Wrong Action and four kinds of Wrong Speech. In other words, he must abstain from all of them.

In respect of the Three Abstinences, it may be observed that one is considered to have committed Wrong Actions or Wrong speech in the following events:

- (1) If he has himself committed the wrong action or speech.
- (2) If he has encouraged or incited the wrong action or speech by another person.
- (3) If he has appreciated or applauded the wrong action or speech by another person.
- (4) If he has agreed to or approved of the wrong action or speech by another person.

Virati-Sāla, that is Three Abstinences, is not adequate. In modern parlance, it is

apparently negative. This negative aspect of virtue should, however, be considered together with the four kinds of Right Effort, They are:

- (1) Suppression of evil that has arisen.
- (2) Prevention of evil that has not yet arisen.
- (3) Promotion of good that has arisen.
- (4) Cultivation of good that has not yet arisen.

What is, then, meant by Right Actions and Right Speech?

Let us take the Right Speech first.

- (1) The opposite of telling falsehood is telling truth.
- (2) The opposite of using harsh words is using polite or courteous words.
- (3) The opposite of back-biting is telling agreeable or endearing words.
- (4) The opposite of frivolous talk is righteous talk.

As regards the Right Actions, it may, perhaps, be better imagined than described. Ten kinds of evil conduct are mentioned in the scriptures. One should avoid them and do their opposites. Ten kinds of meritorious deeds are also mentioned. One should perform them. Nevertheless, it may be indicated that the opposites of killing are to prevent killing, to prevent cruelty and violence, to promote health, to look after the aged etc. The opposites of stealing are to give alms to the monks, to help the poor and the needy, to share what one has with his fellow-beings. In short, it is what the economists call, distribution of wealth. To prevent sexual misconduct and use of course, intoxicating drinks and drugs, of course by lawful means, say by persuasion or example, is clearly Right Action or Right Speech.

Now we must go on to *Samādhi* or Concentration. To achieve *Samādhi*, we shall have to do *Samatha Bhāvanā* or mind training. Indeed, mind is very difficult to control. The object of mind training is to concentrate the mind on one object to the exclusion of all

irrelevant matter. It is called 'one-pointedness of mind'. There are forty traditional subjects for contemplation with a view to attaining concentration of mind. In-breathing and out-breathing exercise is the most popular subject. The five hindrances to progress are (1) Sensual desires, (2) Ill-will or hatred (3) Sloth and Torpor, (4) Restlessness and Worry, and (5) Doubts. With the development of concentration, these hindrances disappear until the mind becomes tranquilized and pin-pointed. This is Right Concentration, as distinguished from wrong concentration one achieves at such pursuits as fishing and gambling. Incidentally an observation may be made that intoxicating drinks and drugs are detrimental to Right Concentration. It is said that power is also intoxicating, more potent and dangerous than drugs.

Right Mindfulness is the beginning point of Right Concentration. Through Right Effort, Right Mindfulness develops into Right Concentration. *Sīla* or Morality keeps guard over one's bodily actions and speech. It is *Samādhi* or Concentration that keeps the mind under control or, in other words, that trains the mind. However, concentration of mind, with its attendant tranquility, is not the be-all and end-all of the Middle Way. It is only means to an end, that is, seeing things as they really are, realization of Truth, and attainment of Nibbāna.

What is Nibbāna? Nibbāna is the final deliverance from the round of rebirths, decay, disease, death, from all kinds of suffering. Nibbāna is *Asaṅkhata Dhātu*, the unconditioned state, beyond of all becoming and conditionality. It is a positive state. It is the opposite of *Saṅkhata Dhātu*, the conditioned state, comprising all physical and psychical phenomena of the entire existence.

We are living in a world of illusions: illusion of perception, illusion of thoughts and illusion of views. We erroneously perceive impermanence as permanence, impurity as purity, evil as good, no-self as self. We think and hold views in the same manner. Because

of our illusions, we do not see things as they really are. We are engrossed in the unrealities which are described as Conventional Truth. We fail to analyze the realities which are described as Ultimate or Absolute Truth. There are four Realities (1) Corporeality, (2) Mind, (3) Mental Properties, and (4) Nibbāna. To put it in another way, physical phenomena and psychical phenomena of the conditional state, and Nibbāna, the unconditioned state, are realities. Names notions or concepts are unrealities.

We shall first deal with physical phenomena. According to modern scientific discoveries, even the atom is now regarded *not* as an ultimate particle but as a system of 1 to 92 or more (depending on the kind of atom) electrons surrounding in concentric 'shells'. The nucleus is considered a combination of protons and neutrons. These modern discoveries agree with the Buddha's teaching in respect of the so-called matter. We are given to understand that *aṇu* (that is atom) is divisible into 36 *paramāṇu*, each *paramāṇu* containing very many *kalāpas* or cells, which are made up of eight fundamental material qualities namely solid, fluid, heat, motion, color, smell, taste and nutriment. *Kalāpa* means a corporeal group, a combination of eight or more physical phenomena, and it can be perceived only by mind, and not by human eye, even with the help of the most powerful microscope. No attempt will be made to go into further details. It will be sufficient to observe that physical phenomena are subject to continuous change.

Now we shall deal with psychical phenomena. According to the Buddha-Dhamma, there are two kinds of psychical phenomena: mind and mental properties. Mind is classified into 89 kinds, and further into 121 kinds. Mental Properties are classified into 52 kinds. The only point that needs special mention is that the smallest psychic unit that is, a moment of consciousness, is not the same for two consecutive moments. It is a correlational system of its factors, functions or energies.

By now, it should be clear that both physical and psychical phenomena are in a state of flux or continuous succession of changes. They are of the conditioned state, as opposed to Nibbāna, the unconditioned state. We are living in the conditioned state and, therefore, our life is unsatisfactory; it is full of struggle, strife and suffering. Within physical and psychical phenomena of life cannot be found anything that in the ultimate sense could be regarded as Self, Ego, or Personality. These are the three characteristics of life: impermanence, suffering and impersonality.

Then, as Buddhists, or as those who are eager to practice the Buddha-Dhamma, it behooves us to make an effort in our daily life to see things as they really are. We must endeavor to comprehend the physical and psychical phenomena. We must also incline our mind towards the unconditioned state or Nibbāna. By and by we shall attain clear insight. The development of insight is called *Vipassanā Bhāvanā*.

The advantage of going to, or residing at, meditation centers for contemplation is obvious, but most of us who are in this world as well as of this world cannot find time to avail ourselves of this decided advantage. But we should not despair. We must first learn the technique of walking on the Middle Way in our daily life. If we cultivate the habit of refraining from evil, doing what is good, and purifying our mind, we would surely be able to penetrate the illusions that surround us. Nibbāna is not far off. The unconditioned state is contiguous to the cessation of the conditioned state. The Buddha assures us again and again that Nibbāna can be realized in this very life. The Buddha says, "*Ehi Passiko*. Come and see", which, in modern scientific language, means observation, experiment, and induction. The Buddha's approach to life and its problems is scientific, and it remains for us to walk straight on the Middle Way, the Way that leads straight to Nibbāna. Faith we must have in the Buddha, who points the way, but it is with intelligence that we ourselves must make and effort.

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THE PROCESS OF REBIRTH

By

U Khin Moun

What is rebirth? It is a natural automatic process of chain reaction that generates fresh existences in succession after death. When death takes place, the existence preceding death will become a past existence. Past existence, decay, death and rebirth constitute an automatic self-energizing dynamic process, the mechanism of which is exactly like that of the process of natural radioactivity. Although the process of rebirth is inherent in all animate and inanimate things of the universe of existence, yet this process particularly of the inanimate things is partially known only after the discovery of the process of disintegration or decay of the radioactive substances by Chadwick and Soddy, the famous English scientists in the year 1902. Let us, therefore, study nuclear physics briefly before we study the Buddhist Science of Rebirth.

We know that the Western scientists have discovered the natural process of “*JĀTT*”, “*JARĀ*”, and “*MARANA*”, i.e., rebirth, decay and death as a self-propagating interaction or an automatic chain reaction of physical particles (i.e., the *SAMSĀRA* of physical particles). For example, the radium, which contains 88 electrons, 88 protons and 128 neutrons has a certain life-period before it assumes a new existence after death. We are told that the half-life of one gram of radium is 1620 years. It means that it takes 1620 years for half of that one gram of radium to be reborn in successive existences to reach its final stage of rebirth process. At the end of the next 1620 years half of that half gram, i.e., 0.25 gram of radium, which is left reaches the end of the process of rebirth. This process continues at the same rate and at the end of this process the whole one gram of radium reaches the final stage of

the process of rebirth by becoming an entirely new element which is technically termed as the “stable isotope of lead”.

In fact the radium has to undergo a long process of rebirth by having rebirths in several different existences. After its first death the radium is reborn as RADON, which has 86 electrons, 86 protons and 136 neutrons.

As it lives for some time, gets old and eventually dies at the end of its life-span. The RADON is then reborn in its new existence in the form of RADIUM A., which has 88 electrons, 88 protons and 130 neutrons. After several existences it is reborn as POLONIUM, which has 84 electrons, 84 protons and 116 neutrons and it undergoes the same process of decay, death and rebirth until it has become the stable Isotope of Lead, which has 82 elections, 82 protons and 124 neutrons. We know that the atoms of the same element having the same chemical properties but different atomic weights are known as ISOTOPES. For instance, the natural uranium contains three isotopes, viz., U.234, U.235 and U.238. When the radium is reborn in its last existence as the stable isotope of lead, it is no longer subject to the process of rebirth. The *SAMSĀRA* of radium has come to an end. In the same way when a person attains *ARAHATSHIP*, he or she is no longer subject to the process of rebirth. The *Samsāra* of this person is said to have come to an end.

Furthermore the scientists have discovered the life-terms of a vast number of atoms. They tell us that their life-terms range from millionths of seconds to millions of years very similar to the life-terms of various types of celestial beings or gods in the higher planes of existence. We are told that the life-terms of the gods from *CATUMAHĀRĀJIKĀ* world to *ARŪPA* world range from 500 celestial years to 84,000 aeons. Thus the modern physical

science has brought to light the mechanism as well as the cessation of the process of PHYSICAL SAṂSĀRA.

Another discovery of modern physics that can help us to understand the working of the process of rebirth is the generation of high frequency electro-magnetic radiations used in radio communications. We learn from Field Physics that when something occurs at one point in space because something else happened at another point with no visible means, by which the cause can be related to the effect, it is said that the two events are connected by a field. If, for instance, we hear a radio speech, say, from Washington, D.C. in our radio receivers in Rangoon, we know that the two events in distant places are related as cause and effect and connected by a field. The speech in Washington, D.C. is certainly the cause and its reproduction in Rangoon is definitely the effect. It is a very clear demonstration of the process of CAUSE and EFFECT and cause and effect are almost simultaneous, because the radio speech in the form of electro-magnetic radiation from Washington D.C. generates an electro-magnetic field, that moves with the speed of light, i.e., 186,000 miles per second.

The radio speech from Washington, D.C. is reborn in Burma within the fraction of a second and the transmitter from Washington, D.C. and the radio receivers in Rangoon are in one field of high frequency electronic radiations. But the radio speech we hear in Rangoon is not the speech from Washington. They are not the same and yet not another. They are inter-related as cause and effect. The latter cannot be reproduced without the former. The radio speech from Washington, D.C. generates its prototype in the radio receivers in Rangoon.

In the same way, when the death thought radiation (*Cuti Citta*) of a dying person arises and vanishes as the last quantum of his mental process, the kammic forces of good or bad types latent in his death thought radiation, which is invariably conditioned by the mental

properties, such as: (1) ignorance or low power of understanding (*avijjā* or *moha*), (2) kammic activities (*saṅkhāra*), (3) craving (*taṇhā*), (4) clinging (*upādāna*) and (5) volition (*cetanā*) cause the generation of a conditioned rebirth thought radiation (*Paṭisandhi-Citta*) as a process of causal relativity by forming a mental field throughout the universe of existence similar to the formation of an electro-magnetic field generated by the broadcasting station at Washington D.C. all over the world. The kammic forces as mentioned above are rooted in craving (*taṇhā*) with its main associated mental property in the form of ignorance (*avijjā*), which is also associated with other allied mental properties, viz, contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), etc. As a matter of fact the above mentioned mental properties, i.e., (1) ignorance (*avijjā*), (2) kammic activities (*saṅkhāra*), (3) craving (*taṇhā*), (4) clinging (*upādāna*) and (5) volition (*cetanā*), which arose in a past existence as kammic forces are the causes that give rise to the generation of a renewed existence as a process of rebirth.

At the same time it will be found that the chain reaction of death thought radiation and rebirth thought radiation is exactly like the chain reaction of the radio-speech from Washington, D.C. and its reproduction in Rangoon. We shall also find that the main properties of thought radiations and the physical or electronic radiations are almost the same except the speed of movement or travel. In fact the difference is immeasurable.

If for instance, we just think for a moment about the Milky Way, which we see at night in the sky, our thought radiations reach there instantaneously. Whereas the swiftest physical radiation, which can travel at the rate of about 186,000 miles per second will take 25,000 years to go from this tiny planet to the Milky Way. The scientists have very recently found with the help of their huge radio telescope that the radio waves from the Milky Way being studied now by them left their source 15,000 years ago. This is the main difference between the mental energy and the physical energy.

Therefore, when a rebirth thought radiation is generated, a mental field all over the universe of existence will be set up without any lapse of time somewhat similar to the formation of an electro-magnetic field around our earth, which is now known to be a huge magnet.

A simple electric transformer is another electrical device that can demonstrate the working of the death thought radiation and the rebirth thought radiation as the process of rebirth by forming an active mental field. When an alternating electric voltage is applied to a coil, an electromotive force is induced or generated by varying the magnetic field accompanying the flow of alternating current and an electro-magnetic field is set up round this coil. If a second coil is brought into this electro-magnetic field, a similar electromagnetic force will likewise be generated in the second coil. Two coils operating in this way are said to be coupled and the pair of coils constitute a transformer. In just the same way a death thought radiation induces rebirth thought radiation by forming a mental field and these two thought radiations are said to be coupled. They also function like a transformer.

Another unique feature of radio communication that will throw more light on the process of rebirth is the principle of transmission and receiving. We know that the frequency of electro-magnetic radiations generated in the radio receivers must be equal to the frequency of the transmitted radiations. Reproduction will not take place, if these two frequencies are not equal. For this reason we have to tune our radio receivers to get different broadcasts from different wireless transmitting stations, which use varying frequencies for their transmissions. The electro-magnetic radiation generated by the transmitting stations is composed of quanta of electrical particles. These discrete electrical particles are made to arise and vanish in succession by an electrical device consisting of a coil and a condenser to generate inductive and capacitative reactances, and the number of times of arising and vanishing of quanta of electrical particles is

described as a frequency of cycles per second. Regarding this the Buddhist Science of Physical Process tells us that the natural automatic process of arising and vanishing of quanta of physical particles has a frequency of about fifty thousand million cycles in a split-second, and this process is technically termed as the *RŪPA ANICCA LAKKHAṆNI*. When the process of arising and vanishing of electrical particles is generated by a suitable electronic device, the momentary appearance of electrical particles in rapid succession is usually compared with the waves in a pond. If we disturb the surface of the pond with a stick, a series of ripples or waves starts from the stick and travels in a series of expanding circles over the surface of the pond. On the basis of this analogy the scientists usually prepare the graph of the alternating electric current as a “Sine Wave”, and measure the frequency of arising and vanishing of quanta of electrical particles in terms of the distance of the movement of these discrete electrical particles during certain period of time similar to the movement of the waves in the pond and the time taken in the formation of expanding circles of waves. They generally use “seconds” to measure time and “meters” to measure distance. They have found that these discrete electrical particles travel with a speed of about 186,000 miles or 300 million meters per second. If, for instance, we generate discrete electrical particles at the rate of, say, 20 million quanta per second, we shall find that the wave-length of these electrical particles is 15 meters. We know that the wave-length of transmitted electrical radiation from the broadcasting station at Washington. D.C. is about 15 meters, and if we want to hear the radio speech or music from there, we shall have to set the tuning condensers in our radio receivers to generate 20 million electrical particles per second. When our radio receivers generate an electromagnetic field composed of discrete electronic particles, which are arising and vanishing about 20 million times per second, this electro-magnetic field will mix with the electro-magnetic field generated by

the transmitter at Washington. D.C. Then these two electro-magnetic fields of equal frequency are said to be “RESONANT”, or to be “IN RESONANCE” or “IN TUNE”. In the same way the conditioned rebirth thought radiations always seek their corresponding receivers with similar qualities and properties. The rebirth thought radiation and the conditioned mental energy of the would-be mother are said to be ‘RESONANT’ or to be “IN RESONANCE” or “IN TUNE”. We shall, therefore, find that a rebirth thought radiation, which has the properties and qualities to send to rebirth as a human being will link with a human being by forming a mental field and be reborn as a human being. If the past mental, vocal and bodily activities of this newly born person are of good type, he or she will certainly be healthy, happy, kind-hearted, intelligent and good looking. If, however, another rebirth thought radiation has the qualities and properties to become an animal, it will only link with an animal and be reborn as an animal and so on and so on.

We shall also find that the rebirth thought radiation is exactly like the transmitted radio waves from the broadcasting stations. The transmitted radio waves are composed of two primary radio waves and the combined radio waves (used in radio communication) are technically termed as MODULATED WAVES. The two types of primary waves which are combined into modulated waves are (1) the high frequency carrier waves and (2) the low frequency audio waves. High frequency, carrier waves can travel long distances, whereas low frequency audio waves are the representations of the sound vibrations of the speakers or the musical instruments. Thus the audio waves are carried to the distant places by the carrier waves, which may be compared with the mental energy that carried the mental properties generated by the volitional activities of good and bad types. Similarly the rebirth thought radiation like the modulated radio waves is a compound of the basic mental energy and the powerful mental properties generated by various types of

volitional actions. Just as the sound vibrations from the broadcasting stations are reproduced in the radio receivers so also the mental properties in the rebirth thought radiations are reproduced in the new existence either as human or other living beings with varying mental and physical manifestations.

The discovery of atomic energy is also a great help to us to understand the mechanism of the process of rebirth. Before the dawn of the ATOMIC AGE, which actually began very quietly on the 16th, July 1945 when the first atomic bomb the world has ever produced was tested in the desert-lands of New Mexico, U.S.A., the people all over the world knew nothing about atomic energy. It was only after the explosion of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki during August 1945 that many people began to know about the extremely powerful atomic energy that is generated by the process of fission of the nucleus of an atom. To get an idea of the startling character of extremely powerful atomic energy, I would mention that if one pound of coal is completely converted into atomic energy on the basis of the formula of $E = MC^2$, it would produce about eleven billion kilo-watt hours of household electricity. Whereas by the ordinary method of burning or combustion, the same quantity of coal, i.e., one pound, would produce only about four kilo-watt hours of electricity. The rebirth thought radiation is nothing but a powerful mental energy like atomic energy. In fact the mental energy is definitely more powerful than the atomic energy. According to the Buddhist Science of Mental Energy, the life period of atomic energy is 17 times longer than that of the mental energy. It shows that the frequency of mental energy is 17 times faster than that of atomic energy. Both of them are in a state of arising and vanishing as a process.

ATOMIC ENERGY is the product of the process of chain reaction and the working of the process of chain reaction is very similar to the working of the process of rebirth. I have already mentioned that the rebirth thought radiation is a compound of the basic mental

energy and the mental properties generated by the volitional actions. In fact these mental properties were the components of the death thought radiation before they arose in the rebirth thought radiation. These mental properties are really the active agents that energize the death thought radiation to generate the process of chain reaction. If these mental properties are not present in a death thought radiation, that death thought radiation will have no potential kammic forces to give rise to the generation of a rebirth thought radiation. The atom, like the death thought radiation is also a compound of many primary physical particles, such as electrons, protons, neutrons, etc., which are active agents like the mental properties. The protons and the neutrons are closely bound together by the binding energy and this tightly bound packet is called a nucleus of an atom. By generating a process of chain reaction or nuclear fission the energy that binds the protons and the neutrons is released in the form of atomic energy. Chain reaction takes place when the inactive neutrons are made to become active agents to attack the nucleus of an atom as a self-propagating reaction. When the nucleus is split, we get the atomic energy. In just the same way the active mental properties generate the process of rebirth as a chain reaction. We are told that the first controlled chain reaction was achieved on the 2nd, December 1942 at the University of Chicago by bombarding the nucleus of uranium 235 with slow neutrons, although such experiments were done rather incompletely by Otto Hahn and F. Strassman of Berlin in 1938. Otto Hahn was, therefore, awarded the Nobel prize in 1944 for the discovery of nuclear fission.

From the above explanation we shall find that to appreciate the mechanism of the process of rebirth we shall have to realize the dynamic nature of both physical and mental phenomena. As a matter of fact nature abhors “FIXITY”, “IMMUTABILITY”, and “ETERNITY”, the meta-physical concepts of many speculative philosophers.

The idea of static, eternal or everlasting existence of something mental or physical is the outcome of the ideas of solidity, stability, fixity and immutability, and again these ideas are developed from the main idea that matter is static and indestructible. Therefore the primitive people were deeply engrossed in the juvenile concepts of “FIXITY” and “ETERNITY”. They believed that the hard, solid, static and indestructible atom was the brick of the material universe, because they felt as if what they believed must be true. Most of the people still believe many things that in fact have no basis except in the assertions of the ancients. But we are rather fortunate because the discovery of electron in 1897 by Joseph John Thomson, English physicist. who was born near Manchester in 1856 and who was the head of the famous Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge had greatly widened our power of understanding. I should like to say that J.J. Thomson was the founder of a new Age. The discovery of electron was really the main cause for mankind’s transition to new age, i.e., from the age of “FIXITY” to the new-age of “DYNAMISM”.

The concept of “FIXITY” is termed in Pāli as “*Ghana Saññā*”. Since the time of the discovery of electron the physical science has found many new facts about physical nature.

Scientists now tell us that if we could increase the size of an atom about 30 trillion times, the atom would appear as a solar system with a diameter of about 10 miles. Somewhere near the centre would be the nucleus about the size of a tennis ball. The electrons would be arranged in concentric rings around the nucleus, and each would be about the size of a hazelnut revolving about the nucleus in orbits. All orbital electrons and the nucleus as well are in constant and rapid motion. They also tell us that matter, which we find in one of the three conditions—solid, liquid and gaseous—is electricity or dynamic force. Apparently most of what we consider solid matter is not matter at all but empty space.

This is how the modern physical science has dissolved the primitive concept of “FIXITY”, which usually gives rise to the false concept of what the Buddhists call “*ATTA*”. The dissolution of the false concept of “*ATTA*” is defined as “*ANATTA*” therefore with the help of modern physical science we could realize the “*ANICCA*” *Lakkhaṇā* and “*ANATTA*” *Lakkhaṇā* of physical nature. Our misconception of “FIXITY” has disappeared in the light of modern physical science. We have cleared our doubts and perplexities about physical nature. We now have peace and tranquility so far as physical nature is concerned. The Buddhist Science of Physical Process, which teaches us that the primary physical particles are arising and vanishing with a frequency of about fifty thousand million cycles in a split-second is amply supported by modern physical science.

Now we shall study the Buddhist Science of Rebirth. The process of rebirth was discovered by Gotama Buddha while he was developing his mental energy to attain the supra-mundane knowledge to solve the problem of rebirth, decay and death. To appreciate his unique discovery we shall have to clarify first and foremost the meaning of the word “Mind”. We know that the concept of “Mind” like the concept of static atom originated during the age of “FIXITY”, when the people thought that every natural phenomenon including the process of dynamic mental energy was a static thing. Even today the word “Mind” conveys the idea of a static entity. From the concept of static “Mind” the ideas of self, universal self, soul, universal soul, universal or absolute mind, etc. have arisen. To support these ideas as true facts many theories were formulated. One of them states that there is an entity of the highest reality as the primordial cause of all existence, from which everything has arisen and with which everything again merges, either temporarily or forever. Today there are many people including deep thinkers, who have faith in this monistic metaphysical theory, which is based on the assumptions of “FIXITY” and

“ETERNITY”. It shows that even today many thinkers belonging to the orthodox school of thought are tenaciously clinging to these fantastic ideas of “FIXITY” and “ETERNITY” by inventing plausible and logical arguments to uphold their imageries as true facts, which they say, are beyond the power of understanding of human beings. We are rather uneasy to find that some of these thinkers have written books on Buddhism in English, and as they could get only a superficial idea of the Buddhist Scientific Philosophy with the background of their limited preconceived notions their interpretations of the basic discoveries of Gotama Buddha must necessarily be wrong. But these partially conversant writers are not to be blamed. Even Mrs. Rhys Davids, D. Litt., M.A., President of the Pāli Text Society. London, who had translated some of the Pāli Canon and commentaries into English could not see the difference between the Buddhist Scientific Philosophy and the Indian Speculative Philosophies she wrote in a book entitled “*Outlines of Buddhism*” thus:

“now it was with the matter of those possibilities of development that Buddhism, as an expansion of the Brahmanic teaching, sprang to birth.” (p.11), “....that Gotama was both teaching and expanding the immanent cult of his day”. (p.20), “let him (the reader) note, in the second utterance, the warning as I have called it above, that the words: ‘body is not the self; mind is not the self’ cannot rationally be said to imply that there is no self (or soul, or real ‘man’). As soon might I be held to be denying the existence of the captain, if said on looking at two sailors ‘you are not the skipper’. Yet this is just the inference that Buddhism has come to draw from this monition. This belongs to the after history.” (p.46).

If Mrs. Rhys Davids had a scientific turn of mind and realized the working of mental and physical processes, she certainly would not have committed herself in writing as above. It shows that an eminent and responsible Pāli scholar like herself after spending many years

in the study of the Buddhist literature could not overcome the Primitive conception of “FIXITY” which is the greatest antithesis of the most important doctrine of the Buddhist Scientific Philosophy. We cannot, therefore, by any means have a complete understanding of the working of the process of rebirth especially the way it will come to an end or the cessation of the process of rebirth, unless we can dispel the ancient superstitious belief in the existence of a static mind by acquiring the right knowledge of the mechanism of dynamic mental process.

Everybody knows by personal experience that all human beings have a process of incessant arising and vanishing of various kinds of thoughts one after another as a mental process energized by mental energy. Everybody also knows that all human beings have the feelings of happiness and grief, joy and sorrow, tranquility and worry, humor and sadness, satisfaction and frustration, love and hatred, kindness and cruelty, generosity and greediness, etc., which are the mental properties. The Buddhist Science of Mental Energy tells us that quanta of thought moments are in a state of arising and vanishing with a frequency of about 1,000,000,000,000 cycles in a split-second, i.e., 17 times faster than the frequency of physical process of arising and vanishing. It also tells us that mental energy is activated by the mental properties which are generated in turn by the resultant producing mental, vocal and bodily volitional actions of various types. The interaction of these three factors, i.e., (1) the mental energy, (2) the mental properties and (3) the resultant producing volitional actions generates a mental process. It may be emphasized that the mental energy (*Citta*) consciousness is a process of arising and vanishing in rapid succession of quanta of thought moments, which are termed in Pāli as “*cittakkhaṇa*” This mental energy as a process of arising and vanishing of quanta of thought moments is not a static and everlasting mind.

(1) The mental energy, (2) the mental properties and (3) the resultant-producing

volitional mental vocal and bodily actions are termed in Pāli as (1) *Citta*, (2) *Cetasika* and (3) *Kamma* respectively. It is very essential to realize that the mental properties (*Cetasika*) are really the mental forces, which energize the mental energy (*Citta*). To get an idea of the interaction of the forces of mental properties and the mental energy I would like to mention the process of the generation of atomic energy by another atomic energy. We know that there are two kinds of atomic bomb. One is called a nuclear bomb and the other is called a hydrogen bomb. The atomic energy of hydrogen bomb is generated as a process of fusion of heavy hydrogen into helium. This process of fusion is generated by the atomic energy, that is produced as a process of fission of the nuclei of the atoms of Uranium 235. It may be said that the fissioned atomic energy A generates the fused atomic energy B. In the same way the forces of mental properties (*Cetasika*) energize the mental energy (*Citta*) to become a mental process. Mental properties (*Cetasika*) and mental energy (*Citta*) combine like the combination of carrier and audio waves to become modulated radio waves as mentioned above. Therefore mental properties (*Cetasika*) and mental energy (*Citta*) arise together and vanish together with a frequency of about a trillion cycles in a split-second. It is also very essential to realize that the mental energy (*Citta*) of each and everybody except the Arahats is always in combination with the worst type of mental property (*Avijjā*) low power of understanding and (*taṇhā*) craving. This low power of understanding is the main resultant-producing mental property. Therefore all our mental, vocal and bodily volitional actions whether good or bad are of resultant-producing type.

Let us now study the process of the interaction of (1) the resultant-producing volitional actions, (2) mental properties and (3) mental energy.

As a first step we shall examine one of our daily common experiences. For instance, we see an object and we know that it is a motor car. When we know that this car is in good

running order, we have a strong desire to possess it, and to satisfy our desire we buy it after bargaining verbally. Let us analyze this process, which starts from the act of seeing an object to the act of buying it. We shall find that the act of seeing an object is the relation between the visual object and the eye-sight. If the eye-sight of an object is very distinct (*Ati-mahanta ālambaṇa*), it will create a deep impression on the *Bhavaṅga-Citta*, which may be defined as the moment of inactive conscious mental energy. Such moments are in a state of arising and vanishing as a process. This process of arising and vanishing of moments of inactive conscious mental energy is noticeable when a person is having a sound sleep without dreams. When the *Bhavaṅga-Citta* is interrupted by the sight of a physical object in the form of a motor car as mentioned above, two *bhavaṅga* moments arise and vanish, and another moment of inactive conscious mental energy termed as *Bhavaṅgu-paccheda* arises. It also vanishes and another moment termed as *Āvajjana* arises to turn to impressions at the doors of senses. When *Āvajjana* moment vanishes, a moment of active eye conscious mental energy arises, because the visual object in question, i.e., a motor car is presented through the eye door. This moment of active eye conscious mental energy is termed in Pāli as *Cakkhu-Viññāṇa*. At this stage the inactive conscious mental energy changes into an active conscious mental energy. Then contact (*phassa*) arises between the motor car in question and the *Cakkhu-Viññāṇa*. Because of contact (*phassa*), a feeling of delight (*somanassa vedanā*) arises. Because of delight, a strong desire (*taṇhā*) to possess the said car arises. Eventually this strong desire (*taṇhā*) impels us to perform the act of buying this car after bargaining verbally. This last act is a mental, vocal and bodily volitional action, which is termed in Pāli as *KAMMA*. The chain reaction of the above process is as follows:—

Distinct eye-sight of an object (*Ati-mahanta ālambaṇa*) — *Bhavaṅga-Citta* — *Bhavaṅgu-paccheda* — *Āvajjana* — *Cakkhu-Viññāṇa* — *Phassa* — *Vedanā* — *Taṇhā* — *KAMMA*.

This process is explained in Pāli as follows:—

‘*Cakkhun ca paṭicca rūpe ca upajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ tinnaṃ saṅgati phasso. Phassa-paccayā vedanā; vedanā-paccavā taṇhā.*”

Properly speaking the mental process between *Cakkhu Viññāṇaṃ* and *Phassa* has an uprising and vanishing of moments of mental energy to perform their respective functions. The first moment of mental energy just after *Cakkhu Viññāṇaṃ* has the function of receiving the sense impressions termed in Pāli as (*Sampaticchana*). The second has the function of investigating the sense impressions (*Santīraṇa*) the third has to determine the sense impressions (*Voṭṭhabbana*). The fourth is the impulsive force (*Javana*). Usually seven moments of mental energy arise and vanish to perform this function. The fifth holds the experience and registers it (*Tadālamaṇa*). It occurs twice. A course of cognition is complete at the end of the *Tadālamaṇa* moments of mental energy, and this complete course is termed in Pāli as “*VĪTHI*”. Thus, from the arising of the first *Bhavaṅga-Citta* to the vanishing of the second *Tadālamaṇa* moment, there are altogether seventeen moments of mental energy, which are termed in Pāli as (*Cittakkhaṇa*). This mental process is based on a physical object presented through the eye door. But if an ideational object is presented through the thought door, only thirteen moments of mental energy will arise and vanish as follows:—

<i>Bhavaṅga</i>	Two moments.
<i>Āvajjana</i>	One moment.
<i>Mano-Viññāṇa</i>	One moment.
<i>Javana</i>	Seven moments.
<i>Tadālamaṇa</i>	Two moments.
Total 13 moments.	

Reflection, recollection, introspection, reasoning and understanding may be defined as ideational objects. From the above explanation we shall find that the combination of the inactive conscious mental energy

(*Bhavaṅga-Citta*) and the sense impressions received from the five physical sense doors, such as, eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and the thought door, to become active conscious mental energy (*Viññāṇa-Citta*) is very much like the combination carrier waves and audio waves to become modulated waves of radio communication as mentioned above. *Viññāṇa-Citta* or *Viññāṇa-Vithi* is the relation between (*Ārammaṇika*) inactive conscious mental energy (*Bhavaṅga-Citta*) and (*Ārammaṇa*) sense objects. The *ārammaṇa paccaya* or the object of inactive conscious mental energy may be an object of sense or an object of thought. We can, thus, realise that *Viññāṇa* is only a secondary reality that arises on the basis of the primary reality, i.e., *Bhavaṅga-Citta*. We can therefore find only four primary realities, viz., Mental Energy (*Citta*), Mental properties (*Cetasika*), Physical Energy and *Nibbāna*. It very clearly shows that we can never have a pure *Viññāṇa* without the *Bhavaṅga-Citta*, which is subject to the process of arising and vanishing. The conception of a pure and everlasting mind is only the creation of imagination. This is the primary chain reaction of mental process. This simple chain reaction of mental process can be verified and realized without much difficulty.

Let us now reverse this process and see what will happen. We all know that we have satisfaction and pleasure to use this motorcar, which we now own. Nobody will dispute this fact. We shall now find that in this instance the mental process starts from the volitional action of "USE", which is *Kamma*. This volitional action generates the mental properties of satisfaction and pleasure (*Cetasika*), i.e., from *Kamma* to *Cetasika*. This may be called the second process, which is in reverse direction. We can understand this second process without any difficulty in the same way as we understand the first process. But we shall find it extremely difficult to realize the complete process of this chain reaction in reverse direction. We cannot ordinarily find the continuation of chain reaction from mental property (*Cetasika*) to the mental energy

(*Citta*), i.e. a complete process of chain reaction from volitional action to mental property and then from mental property to mental energy. It is all the more difficult to realize the resultant-producing nature of the mental properties, which energize the mental energy (*Citta*). But Gotama Buddha discovered the complete process of chain reaction during the third watch of one particular night while He was developing His potential mental energy to find the knowledge to solve the problem of man's rebirth, decay and death, the natural process of chain reaction discovered by Him is termed in Pāli as "*Paṭiccasamuppāda*", which you all know very well. This discovery together with other discoveries He had made during the first and second watches of that night had enabled Him to attain the highest power of understanding or supramundane knowledge termed in Pāli as *Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*. On attaining this *Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa* He had not only realized that the mental property termed in Pāli as *Taṇhā* was the main generator of the chain reaction of rebirth but He had also overcome this *Taṇhā* completely. He had mentioned about His complete victory over *Taṇhā* in His first utterance. As soon as He had uprooted *Taṇhā* from His mental process He found that He had attained the highest mental equilibrium, perfect peace and happiness. Therefore the Buddha had found by personal experience that His mental energy *Citta* was generated by the mental property in the form of *Taṇhā* before He attained the *Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*. He also found that His process of rebirth would come to an end at the time of His death, because He had dispelled *Taṇhā* completely by acquiring the highest power of understanding. His active mental energy was transformed into a mental momentum, which was no more energized by the mental forces of the mental properties. The mental momentum may be compared with the continued running of an electric motor after stopping the supply of electric current. The running of an electric motor with rated mechanical power by having continuous supply of electric current may be compared

with the active mental energy energized by the forces of the resultant producing mental properties, which may be compared with electricity that energizes the motor.

All have I overcome, all do I know;
From all am I detached, all have I
renounced;

Wholly absorbed am I on the “Destruction
of Craving” (Arahantship).

Having comprehended all by myself
whom shall I cite as my teacher?

(Dhammapada Verse 353)¹¹

The interaction of (1) mental energy, (2) mental properties and (3) resultant producing volitional actions as a chain reaction of mental process is very much like the generation of three phase alternating current, which energizes the electric motors used in the industrial plants. These two processes can be represented in one graph of Sine-Wave Curves. A human being is only a manifestation of the compounded high frequency mental energy and low frequency physical energy like the modulated waves transmitted by the broadcasting stations. These two processes can also be represented in one graph of sine-wave curves.

When a person dies we know that his physiological process ceases to function. We think that his mental process also ceases to function, because we cannot find the working of his mental process after his death. We are now like our ancestors, who were dead long before the discovery of electro-magnetic radiations so far as the process of rebirth is concerned.

In point of fact the mental process of a dead person, who was not an Arahant, is not dead at all. It is still an active mental chain reaction with its Kammic forces that generate a rebirth thought radiation, which we cannot see or feel in the same way as we cannot see or feel the electronic radiations in the atmosphere around

us. When a person is at the point of death, there is *ārammaṇika* and *ārammaṇa* relation. The object of conscious mental energy at that time is any of these three (1) The *kamma* (actions itself), (2) *kamma nimitta* the symbol of action or (3) the *Gati Nimitta* (the vision of the abode to which that dying person is going).

We shall find the working of mental process if we study *Paṭiccasamuppāda* as follows:—

1. Through Ignorance (*Avijjā*), Kamma formations (*Sanḅhārā*) arise;
2. Through Kamma formations (*Sanḅhārā*), Consciousness (*Viññānaṃ*) arises;
3. Through Consciousness (*Viññānaṃ*), Mental and Physical Phenomena (*Nāmarūpaṃ*) arise;
4. Through mental and Physical Phenomena (*Nāmarūpaṃ*), the Six Sense-bases (*Salāyatanāṃ*) arise;
5. Through the Six Sense-bases (*Salāyatanāṃ*), Contact (*Phasso*) arises;
6. Through Contact (*Phasso*), Sensation (*Vedanā*) arises;
7. Through Sensation (*Vedanā*), Craving (*Taṇhā*) arises;
8. Through Craving (*Taṇhā*), Clinging (*Upādanāṃ*) arises;
9. Through Clinging (*Upādanāṃ*), Volitional actions and further existence (*Bhava*) arise;
10. Through Volitional actions and further existence (*Bhava*), Rebirth (*Jāti*) arises;
11. Through Rebirth (*Jāti*), there arises Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair (*Jarā, Maraṇa, Soka, Parideva, Dukkha-domanassa, Upāyāsa*).

Thus arises the unalloyed mass of suffering.

Reverse Direction

1. On the cessation of Ignorance, Kamma formations cease.

¹¹ Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada, Verse 353, p. 64. 6th Syd. Edn.

2. On the cessation of Kamma formations, Consciousness ceases;
3. On the cessation of Consciousness, Mental and Physical Phenomena cease;
4. On the cessation of Mental and Physical Phenomena, the Six sense-bases cease;
5. On the cessation of the Six sense-bases, Contact ceases;
6. On the cessation of Contact, Sensation ceases;
7. On the cessation of Sensation, Craving ceases;
8. On the cessation of Craving, Clinging ceases;
9. On the cessation of Clinging, Volitional action and further existence ceases;
10. On the cessation of Volitional action and further existence, rebirth ceases;
11. On the cessation of Rebirth, Old Age, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair cease.

Thus ceases the unalloyed mass of Suffering.

The most suitable analogy so far found by me to demonstrate the chain reaction of death thought radiation and rebirth thought radiation is radio communication as explained above. In the above mentioned process we shall find the intricate interaction of mental energy (*Citta*) and mental property (*Cetasika*). It is, therefore very essential to realize the difference between (*Citta*) and (*Cetasika*). The mental energy (*Citta*) may be compared with the circular motion of an electric motor. The mental property (*Cetasika*) may be compared with the electric current.

At the same time I have shown above a simple illustration to show the difference and also the interaction between (*Citta*) and (*Cetasika*), i.e., the process of seeing a motor car leading to the purchase of this car. I have emphasized this point, because the misunderstanding of (*Citta*) and (*Cetasika*) is one of the main causes of the emergence of different Buddhist Schools of thought. I have

stated that the mental energy (*Citta*) of each and everybody except the Arahats is always in combination with *Avijjā* and *Taṇhā*. This statement is borne out by the fact that there is not a born Arahāt. Even Gotama Buddha became an Arahāt at the age of 35 only after attaining the highest degree of power of understanding that could dispel all his resultant producing mental properties. The other Arahats also had to acquire the right power of understanding of the required standard before they became Arahats in the same way as we all have to learn at the schools and colleges to widen or develop our power of understanding. The power of understanding is a mental property termed in Pāli as “*Paññindriya Cetasika*”. When the mental energy (*Citta*) is deprived of all resultant producing mental properties by developing the power of understanding (*Paññindriya Cetasika*), it will lose its motive energy or power and it will be transformed into a mental momentum, which is termed in Pāli as “*KIRIYA CITTA*”. This transformation is due to absence of *Bhava Taṇhā* which is the main cause of the arising of rebirth thought radiation. The mental momentum of an Arahāt will lose all its power of becoming a rebirth thought radiation at the time of his death in the same way as the gradual decrease of the circular motion of an electric motor till the complete disappearance of this circular motion after stopping the supply of electric current. Therefore at the time of the death of an Arahāt his mental energy (*Citta*) will disappear completely without leaving any residuum to be combined with Higher Self or Universal mind. We can thus realize that the chain reaction of the process of rebirth is energized by the active mental energy, which is again energized by the resultant producing mental properties, which are again energized by the resultant producing mental, vocal and bodily actions in the same way as the fused atomic energy is energized by the fissioned atomic energy as explained above. We can also realize the cessation of the process of rebirth by stopping the generation of resultant producing mental, vocal and bodily

volitional actions, which are termed in Pāli as “*KAMMA*”. The chain reaction of “*KAMMA* and REBIRTH” is the most marvelous and highly scientific doctrine propounded by Gotama Buddha.

After attaining the “*ĀSAVAKKHAYA-ÑĀNA*”, Gotama Buddha discovered the natural atomic chain reaction of rapidly arising and vanishing of mental and physical phenomena, the universal process of rebirth and the cessation of the process of rebirth. He, therefore, proclaimed that all phenomena are *ANICCA* and therefore they are *ANATTA*. Those who do not realise the phenomena as they really are, are subject to frustrations and other ills of life. The peace, tranquility, equanimity or the bliss of emancipation experienced by the Arahats is termed in Pāli as “*KILESĀ NIBBĀNA*” or “*SA-UPĀDISESĀ NIBBĀNA*”. The cessation of the process of rebirth of an Arahata is termed in Pāli as “*KHANDHA NIBBĀNA* or *ANUPĀDISESĀ NIBBĀNA*”. We can now realize that it is neither necessary to have a static and everlasting mind in this dynamic mental process nor will this dynamic mental process be transformed into a static mind to combine with the so called universal or absolute mind, because this dynamic mental process is sure to cease to function as when the generation of all kinds of resultant producing mental vocal and bodily volitional actions is stopped. We can widen or develop our power of understanding (*Paññindriya Cetasika*) by right methods to become *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi* and *Arahanta*. We are told that “*TANHĀ*” is the main resultant producing mental property that generates the process of rebirth and we can also find by personal experience that this “*TANHĀ*” is really the cause of all our troubles. If we like a thing we want to have it. If we cannot get it we are frustrated. The strength of “*TANHĀ*” is high when the power of understanding is low or limited. The strength diminishes in the same ratio as the increase in the power of understanding. The strength of “*TANHĀ*” will go down to zero as the power of understanding reaches the highest

stage. It may be formulated that the strength of “*TANHĀ*” varies inversely as the power of understanding. It is the law of diminishing “*TANHĀ*”.

If therefore, we are convinced that the process of rebirth is a true fact and if we are really keen to stop it either at the end of our present existence or some future existence, it is up to us to try and find the right means to solve this problem. The Buddha told us that the only means to solve all the problems of life expeditiously is the “*Satipaṭṭhāna*”, which is known by almost all Buddhists.

The fact that various types of persons are born in varying circumstances is the strong evidence to prove that the process of rebirth is a true fact. Generally we do not remember past existences. But, just because we do not remember our past existences shall we say that we do not have past existences? The following illustration will answer this question. We all know that all of us were born as babies. Let us call it our first stage of existence. Unconsciously we came to the second stage of existence in the form of boys and girls. As boys and girls we were quite different from our first existence as babies. If, for instance, we now pause for a moment and look back on our previous existence as boys and girls we are sure to get a vivid vision of our activities in that existence. But if we are asked to look at our first existence as babies we all will have to admit that we do not remember them. Just because we do not remember our first existence as babies we certainly would not say we never existed once upon a time as babies.

Yet in spite of the above mentioned facts many people are in doubt about the process of rebirth and many people reject it altogether. These skeptics and agnostics are really like the people, who are living before Madame Curie, the discoverer of radium, was born. But at the same time we cannot demonstrate the process of rebirth like the transformation of radium, actinium and thorium into various new elements. As for us, who take it for granted that the process of rebirth is a true fact, it is not

necessary to verify it by practical experiments. But those, who have a sincere and keen desire to carry out research to remember their past existences are requested to take a practical course of *Samatha-bhāvanā*.

The above mentioned scientific process of rebirth is quite different from the theory of transmigration or reincarnation as taught by the founders of certain religions. They taught their followers the existence of an everlasting element called the “soul” as the transmigrating or reincarnating agent, which connects the present and the future existence. They said that this eternal soul abides in the body of a human being as a separate entity, which leaves the body at the time of death.

According to this theory we have to assume that a human being is made up of three components, i.e., the physical body, the mental process and the immortal soul. We cannot deny the existence of the mental process and the physical body. But nobody has found the so-called soul. This idea of soul or metempsychosis was in vogue in many parts of the world long before Prince Siddhartha was born. When he attained Enlightenment and discovered the Universal Process of mental and physical phenomena, he could not find the so-called soul anywhere or in any form. Yet this idea was so firmly believed by the people of his time that he had to make them realize the non-existence of soul with great difficulty. In fact it is the main false concept that gives rise to several other misconceptions. On the other hand the materialists think that life is only a short existence before death, which they think is the end of life that has no connection whatsoever with the previous or the future existences.

Before closing, I feel that to make this short thesis complete I should mention the story of the discovery of the process of rebirth and its cessation by Gotama Buddha at least very briefly. While Prince Siddhattha was developing this mental energy under the famous Bodhi Tree he discovered a supernatural knowledge termed in Pāli as

“*Pubbenivāsa Ñāṇa*” during the first watch of one particular night. With the help of this supernatural knowledge he could see his past lives vividly. He found that he was a hermit by the name of Sumeda at the time of Dāpaṅkara Buddha. He then knew that the process of rebirth is a fact. But he did not as yet realize its mechanism. During the second watch of that night he discovered another stage of supernatural knowledge termed in Pāli as “*Dibbacakhu-Ñāṇa*” and with the help of this new knowledge he discovered all living beings throughout the universe of existence. Only during the third watch of the same night he discovered “*Paṭicca sammupāda*” and attained “*Āsavakkhaya Ñāṇa*.” He then knew the mechanism of all natural processes including the process of rebirth and the method to stop it. He, therefore, stated as follows in his first utterance:—

“Anekajāti samsāraṃ,
Sandhāviṣsaṃ anibbiṣaṃ
gahakāraṃ gavesanto,
dukkhā jāti punappunaṃ.
Gahakāraka ditthosi
puna-gehaṃ na kahasi
sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā,
gahakūtaṃ viṣaṇ khatam,
viṣaṇkhāragataṃ cittaṃ,
taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.”

(Dhammapada Verse 153, 154) ¹²

Meaning in English.

“Through many a birth in Samsāra
wandered I;
Seeking but not finding, the builder of this
house.
Sorrowful is repeated birth.
O house-builder! you are seen. You shall
build no house again.
All your rafters are broken, your ridge-
pole is shattered.

¹² Dhammapada, p. 36, 6th Syd. Edn.

My mind has reached the unconditioned
The cessation of thirst have I attained.”

We can, therefore, realize that one of the
main subject matters of the Scientific
Philosophy propounded by Gotama Buddha is

the CESSATION OF THE PROCESS OF
REBIRTH. In conclusion I would like to
mention that one of the objects of this short
thesis is to show that there cannot be a pure
and everlasting mind.

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