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*The* **LIGHT**  
*of the*  
**DHAMMA**

**VOL. X**

**No. 2**

**2507 B.E.**

**July 1963 C.E.**



## THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

1. Please regard this not just as a quarterly magazine but as a continuing service for Buddhism.

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# EDITORIAL

## *What Rebirth Is.*

With regard to the question of Rebirth there can be two views; one, that life continues in some form or other after death; the other, that life ends with death, and that there is nothing left after death. There are many people in the world today who hold the latter view and reject the former for the simple reason that there is no direct proof or that it is impossible to demonstrate that life ends in one place, and then manifests itself or is re-born in some other place. Experiments have been made, and are still being made, but scientists have not been able to understand the mysteries in the working of the life-force within the body that is before them. Here some say that animals, which are the victims of their experiments, have no life-force which can continue after death. But what of human beings? Methods of observation have been vastly improved within recent years by medical men and biologists. Yet no light has been thrown on this question of Rebirth.

Turning now the other view, namely, that life ends up with death, and that there is no rebirth, is there any direct proof of this? Has this been demonstrated? There is no such proof, and this has not been demonstrated. This important fact is too often forgotten or overlooked by seekers after truth, by honest materialists and those who, owing to their habit of arguing against the doctrine of Rebirth, casually assume that there is no rebirth. They have no valid proof which would warrant them in coming to such a conclusion.

To explain this fact the following dialogue from Piyāsi Sutta—III, Dīgha Nikāya, is cited here:—

Brahmin: Venerable Sir, one day my servants brought a criminal to me and I had him put alive into a big jar. When its mouth had been closed with a piece of wet leather and sealed with clay, it was put into the furnace and the fire was kindled.

When I knew that the criminal was dead I ordered the servants to take out the jar and to unbind its mouth. I watched carefully for the soul to come out. But no soul appeared. From this evidence I concluded that there is no life after death.

Thera: Permit me to question you. Do you remember ever to have dreamt during your siesta that you were enjoying yourself in gardens or in groves?

Brahmin: Yes, Venerable Sir, I can remember such a dream.

Thera: During your siesta were you not surrounded by your attendants?

Brahmin: Yes, Venerable Sir, they were attending me.

Thera: Did they see your soul leaving your body to go to these gardens or re-entering on its return?

Brahmin: They have not said so, Venerable Sir.

Thera: Then, Sir, if they cannot see your soul either leaving or entering your body while you are still alive, how can you see any other soul at its departure for another life?

Brahmin: Venerable Sir, I shall have reason to retain my view.

Thera: What reason?

Brahmin: Once, Venerable Sir, a felon was brought to me by my ministers. I ordered them first to weigh him, then to strangle him with a sting and afterwards to weigh him again. They did so. While he was alive he was light and supple, after his death he became stiffer and heavier. This too concerns my view.

Thera: Suppose, Sir that you weigh an iron-ball when it is red-hot and again weigh

it when it is cool. Tell me when it will be lighter and more plastic.

Brahmin: Venerable Sir, when it is red-hot it will be lighter and more plastic.

Thera: In the same way, Sir, this body, when it has heat, vitality and consciousness, is lighter and suppler than when it is in any other state. You have still no reason to deny the continuance of life after death.

Brahmin: But still I cannot believe that it is possible.

Thera: Have you any other reason for your disbelief?

Brahmin: Yes, Venerable Sir, I have. Once when a criminal was caught and brought to me I ordered my men to kill him by stripping off his skin, flesh and sinews, and even to separate the marrow from the bones. They did so. I watched intently for his soul to leave him but it was of no avail. But now that body had eyes but could not see, it had ears but could not hear, a nose but could not smell, a tongue but could not taste, a body but could not touch. This proves that the soul neither issues nor remains at death, but is destroyed, and with it the possibility of future birth.

Thera: Well Sir, I will tell you a parable. Once, a trumpeter, taking with him his conch-shell trumpet, went into the country. In the middle of the village, having sounded it three times, he laid it on the ground and seated himself close by. The villagers, who had never heard a trumpet before, came and asked what sound that was. He said it was the sound of the conch-shell trumpet. Then, standing the trumpet first on one end and then on the other end, turning it on this side and on that, they struck it and cried, "Speak Sir, trumpet! Speak!" The trumpeter watched their foolish efforts and at last he took it up and blew it thrice. Then they understood that it made sound only in conjunction with

three other things, a man, his effort and the air. In the same way this body in union with heat, vitality and consciousness can walk and sit and talk. But without these three it can do nothing. The possibility of the continuance of life in other bodies does not seem to me to be disproved by your arguments.

Brahmin: But still it seems to me, Venerable Sir, that this continuance is impossible.

Theta: What other reason have you for your view?

Brahmin: Once, Venerable Sir, I had a certain felon flayed alive that I might see his soul pass out. But I did not see it when I had his skin, flesh, and nerves stripped off, his bones broken and their marrow extracted. But although he was now certainly dead still I had not seen his soul pass out of his body.

Thera: Sir, I will tell you a parable. A fire-worshipper who had to go out on business, asked his pupil, a little boy, to keep up the fire or to rekindle it if it should go out, and he showed him some sticks, a hatchet and the fire drill. Presently the fire went out. Wishing to rekindle it the boy took the hatchet and chopped the sticks at the fire-drill into very small pieces. At last even he powdered them and scattered their dust in the wind, but he got no fire. Meanwhile the fire-worshipper returned and with great surprise saw what had happened. He told the boy that by this method he would never get fire and showed him how to make it. Like that foolish boy, Sir, you are searching for future in vain by means of wrong views which can only bring you suffering and ruin.

### **What is death?**

According to Buddhism death is "the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon." It is not the complete annihilation of the being,

for although the organic life has ceased, the Kammic force which hitherto actuated it is not destroyed. Our forms are only the outward manifestations of the invisible Kammic force. This force carries with it all characteristics which usually lie latent but may rise to the surface at any moment. When the present form perishes another form takes its place according to a good or bad volitional impulse (*Kamma* that was the most powerful) at the moment just before death.

At death the Kammic force remains entirely undisturbed by the disintegration of the physical body and the passing away of the present consciousness conditions, the coming into being of a fresh one in another birth. The stream of consciousness flows on. "Life, then, in the Buddhist view of things, is like an ever-changing river, having its source in birth, its goal in death receiving from the tributary streams of senses constant accretions to its flood, and ever dispensing to the world around it the thought-stuff it has gathered up by the way." (Compendium of Philosophy, p. 12) The continuity of flux at death is unbroken in point of time, and there is no breach in the stream of consciousness and so there is no room whatever for an intermediate stage between this life and the next or between any two lives. The only difference between the passing of one ordinary thought-moment (and one unit of consciousness) to another and of dying thought-moment (consciousness) to the rebirth-consciousness is that in the former case the change is invisible and in the latter case a marked perceptible death is visible. Rebirth takes place immediately.

It may be asked: Is the place always ready to receive their rebirth? The answer is: As a point in the ground is always ready to receive the falling stone, so there is always an appropriate place to receive the rebirth which is conditioned by the natural law of *Kamma*.

Death being a momentary incident, rebirth is immediate. Some years ago it might have been doubtful about such rapidity in the transmission of the life-force; but in these days of scientific methods of investigation we know

of such rapid transmission of energy in wireless telegraphy and telephony. Solid walls do not prevent the radio waves from reaching an appropriate receiving set within a room. The transmission of the life-force from one existence to another may be compared to a receiving set that responds to the particular wave-length sent out from a distance of thousands of miles. It is more like the tuning-fork which vibrates in response to a particular note of a particular wavelength in the musical scale. So long as a musical note sets up vibrations in the air, so long will some tuning-fork that is responsive to that particular note, vibrate in unison.

When the vibrations of the musical note cease the tuning-fork will cease to vibrate to that note. And so it is with that restless Kammic force or life-force which continues to bring about births through appropriate germ-plasms or other life-conditions till that restless Kammic force ceases to exist in the peace of *Nibbāna*.

### **Is the new being the same as the previous one?**

In the words of the late Bhikkhu Silācāra, "This new being which is the present manifestation of the stream of *Kamma*-energy is not the same as, and has no identity with the previous one in its line: the aggregate that makes up its composition being different from, and having no identity with, those that make up the being of its predecessor. And yet it is not an entirely different being, since it has the same stream of *Kamma*-energy, though modified perchance just by having shown itself in that last manifestation, which is now making its presence known in the sense perceptible world as the new being."

If we were to obtain a quick motion picture of any particular individual's life from his birth to his death, the most striking fact that would attract our attention would be the changefulness that we should find running right through the series of pictures. The infant changes to the child, the child to the adult, and the adult to the decrepit old person who



collapses to death. This change goes on in every part of the individual's body; and not only that but in the mind also. So that any adult individual who surveys his existence will realize that the child that was, is now no more. That child had a different body, in size as well as in form, different likes and dislikes, and different aspirations. That child is almost a stranger to the present adult individual. And yet the adult individual is responsible for whatever he has done in his childhood because there is continuity or identity in the process of life-force from childhood to manhood as a child becomes a man.

In exactly the same way the new being has the same stream of Kammic energy or life-force as its predecessor, so it is responsible for whatever its predecessor has done. This new being has as much identity with the previous one as the adult individual of to-day has with the child that was; nothing less and nothing more.

This is well expressed in the Milinda Pañha. King Milinda asked Arahant Nāgasena if he who is reborn remains the same or becomes another "Neither the same nor another", was the answer he received.

"Suppose, O King, that a man were to light a lamp, would it burn the night through?"

"Yes, it might do so, Venerable Sir."

"Now is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night, Sir, and in the second?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

"Or the same that burns in the second watch and in the third?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

"Then is there one lamp, in the first watch, and another in the second, and another in the third?"

"No, the light comes from the same lamp all the night through."

"Just so, O King is the continuity of a person or a thing maintained. One passes away, another comes into being; and the rebirth is, as it were, simultaneous. Thus, neither as the same nor as another does a man

go on to the last phase of his self-consciousness."

Asked for another illustration, Arahatta Nāgasena gives that of milk which, once it is taken from the cow, after a lapse of time, turns first to curds, and then from curds to butter, and then from butter to ghee. Just as it would not be correct to say that the milk was the same thing as the curds, or the butter, or the ghee, but that they are produced out of it, so, he points out, continuity of a person or a thing is maintained in the same way.

There is also the illustration of the wave of water in the lake or the ocean. A certain mass of water is raised up as a wave. As the wave passes on, or seems to pass on, a moment or so later it is not the same mass of water that forms the wave, but a different mass altogether. And yet we speak of the wave "passing on."

The present being, present existence, is continued by how one faced circumstances in the last, and in all past existences. One's present position in character and circumstances is the result of all that one has been up to the present; but what one will be in the future depends on what one does now in the present. The true Buddhist regards death as a momentary incident between one life and its successor, and views its approach with calmness. His only concern is that his future should be such that the conditions of that life may provide him with better opportunities for perfecting himself. Holding, as he does, the great doctrine of Kamma, he perceives that it is within the power to alter or modify the quality of the life-force that continues in the next birth, and that his future environment will depend entirely on what he does, upon how he behaves, in this and in his previous lives.

### **Memory of Past Lives.**

Buddhism teaches that with the practice of concentration and meditation, memory can be trained. By meditation and mind-culture one can acquire the power to see the rebirth as a link or a succession of links, in a chain of births; one also can acquire the power of looking back into one's previous lives. Not only this, but further Buddhism teaches that

through enlightenment or true wisdom, one can see the end of this chain of births.

There are on record instances of people who have possessed wonderful memories, some for what they had once read, others for music and so on. Still others there are who have remembered their past lives. The average person's memory is very poor indeed. There are not many, who can recount the day's activities correctly and in details. How then can they remember their youth, childhood, infancy, foetal life, and their past life before this present one? The fact that they do not remember their past activities, is no proof that they did not exist in the past. We hear of Australian aborigines who can never learn to count more than two; they say "one, two, more", and some of them cannot remember things from one day to another.

What would you think if one of these men were to come to you and say: "There never was a yesterday, for I cannot remember it; and there can be no tomorrow or some of us would have seen one." You would think him very foolish indeed for imagining he could have grown to manhood in one day, and you would probably wonder how he explained the fact that he knows certain things belong to him, and recognises his relatives, his friends and his enemies at sight if he has not seen and known them before today.

It would seem so clear that he brought over the knowledge from the yesterday he cannot remember, and it would seem strange to you that he did not notice how babies grow into children, and children into men and women, since no baby grows into a man or woman in one day.

Now there are people among us, who are very wise in many ways, yet they treat the theory of Rebirth in exactly the same way that the Australian aboriginal treats the, to him, theory of past yesterday. Merely because they cannot remember their past lives, they deny that there can have been any past lives.

To students of Buddhism this seems a very foolish position, for they are taught neither to accept nor reject any teaching until they have examined all the evidence for it, and have experimented with it themselves to see if it true. Having proved by these means that it is true or untrue, a Buddhist should live accordingly as if he believes or disbelieves; but he must never judge others or be impatient if they cannot see things as he sees. He must be tolerant to all, even to the intolerant, and he must always remember that what is proof to one person may not be proof to another. What each needs is experience to see, to hear, to feel for himself; and, having done so, he has no right to ask others to believe before they also have experienced.

It is common to read in the Buddhist literature of the Buddha and many of his disciples speaking not only of their own past lives but those of others also, and often, too, of their future lives. Having attained his final enlightenment and developed higher spiritual powers, the Buddha declares "I recalled my varied lot in former existences as follows: first one life, then two lives, then three, four, five, ten, twenty up to fifty lives; then a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, and so forth." He also says; "With clairvoyant vision, I perceived beings disappearing from one state of existence and reappearing in another. I beheld the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the miserable passing according to their deeds." (Sutta No. 36, Majjhima Nikāya I, 248).

There are several discourses in which the Buddha clearly states that the beings who have done evil are born in woeful states; and those who have done good are born in blissful states. All the Jātaka stories which are not only interesting but of psychological importance, deal with the Buddha's previous lives. By following his instructions the Buddha's disciples also developed certain spiritual powers and were able to remember their past lives to a great extent.

# *The Way To World Peace*

By

The Ven. Sayadaw U Thittila, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita.

In the world as a whole there is enough money and material and there is no lack of intellect. Yet something is lacking. What is it? The answer is the spirit of world fellowship. The lack of the spirit is the major cause of war. Apart from military conflicts there are many other conflicts, such as racial, political, economic and even religious. The chief cause of nearly all of them is the lack of the spirit of world fellowship.

In a conflict each side has its own conceit, but to hide it both parties have their own nicely-written labels such as “New World Order”. “Co-prosperity in East Asia”, and “Civilising the Backward Peoples”. In almost every conflict each side blames the other, both parties claiming that they are right. They use even the name of religion to justify their actions. They will try to persuade God to take their side, but they do not seem to make any attempt to be on God’s side. They claim that there is only one God, but they forget that if there is only one God there must be only one family of men. They treat one another not only as strangers, but as enemies.

Taking all nations as one whole there is in the world today sufficient wealth and ability of brain and organisation to abolish poverty, unemployment, hardship and cruelty of any kind from all countries. It is possible for all men to do what work is necessary, if only they would learn to understand each other better by drawing closer. The world possesses all the wealth that it needs, and no one needs be poor in a single country if it were only realised by the various countries that they are all one family.

The discovery of power and energy could be of great service to humanity if all the scientific workers were united in the fellowship of the commonwealth of science. The poets and artists of all countries could

inspire men to noble conduct if only they come together. A powerful spiritual influence, helping all men to make the world a happier place, could be given by every religion, if all the various religions were to act together as members of one family.

Since the end of the First World War there have been many organisations called “international”. Many authors have written on this subject of internationalism. Idealistic workers, hoping for a better future, have started many international movements. As you know, we had the league of Nations, founded in 1920, but the League failed to maintain peace. Why? Because most of the nations have dealt with mere external end material adjustments. Too much attention has been paid to the material, and too little to the spiritual side of life.

Then came the Second World War, which is unparalleled in history for destruction. The world is still in a state of chaos. There is no peace or happiness. Again idealistic workers, lecturers and writers produce books and have re-started international organisations, such as U.N.O. Do you think they will be successful in maintaining peace? You can predict whether they will be successful or not. They will be successful if the leaders and workers can carry through their plans in a spirit of world fellowship. Otherwise they can never be successful. There will be another war—more wars—even worse than the last.

The peace which we all desire—peace in our hearts and in our minds, peace between neighbours and peace among nations—is not a miracle which it is God’s task to perform. It can only come about as the result of a reconstruction of thought, feeling and action by means of the spirit of fellowship, and that is the duty of a mankind.

In attempting to discover a form of appeal on which to base morality, Buddhism does not appeal to any external authority, such as a Deity, but to the natural desire of the human heart. We know that certain actions, such as selfishness, violence and laziness tend to disorganise society and to cause unhappiness to its members. A man will try to avoid injuring others if he sees clearly that his interests are bound up with those of others.

Buddhism teaches that misery and suffering are not the result of the wrath of God or Gods, but are the consequences of man's ignorance of his own nature and of his surroundings. The chief defect of our economic system is the existence of useless luxury on one side and unnecessary burdens on the other. The problem is to devise some scheme of production and distribution which will make human life less burdened on one side and less full of useless luxury on the other. By this I do not mean the socialism that takes, but I do mean the socialism that gives. The socialism of love which it would only be possible to establish by the proclamation and realisation of World Fellowship.

The real spirit of world fellowship which is lacking in the world today can be promoted through religion. Religion is an education of the heart with a view to refining our nature and elevating us in the scale of human beings. Religion is not merely theory, but practice. The heart, like the body, becomes healthy and strong by practical exercise. No doctrine merely held in the mind as an intellectual belief has any driving force. No doctrine is of any value unless and until it is applied.

The Buddha said: "A beautiful thought or word, which is not followed by a corresponding action, is like a bright flower that has no scent that will bear no fruit." Practice of the moral life is the very core and essence of religion. It is action and not speculation; it is practice and not theory that counts in life. The will-to-do, followed by the doing, is the actual virtue. The will does not count much unless it is fulfilled. To put one's

high ideas and concepts into practice is religion in the best sense. Religion is not confined to any one country or to any particular nation or race. It is universal. It is not nationalism, which in other words is merely another form of caste system, founded on a wider basis.

The world has found itself as one body; yet the fact of physical unity and economic interdependence, though of very great value, is not by itself sufficient to create a united family. For this we require a human consciousness of community, a sense of personal inter-relationship among men, the spirit of world fellowship.

To have the spirit of world fellowship, we must realise the oneness of the world and understand that we are one family. If we harm any person, we shall be paid back in the same coin. When we throw a stone into a pond, the resultant 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 edge of the pond, and then the water moves back till it reaches the stone which has disturbed it. In the same way, the effects of our actions come back to us, and if our actions are good we shall have good effects, likewise bad actions will produce bad effects.

Life is like a mighty wheel of perpetual motion. This great wheel contains within it numberless smaller wheels, corresponding to the lives of individual men, each of which has a pattern of its own. The great wheel and the smaller wheels, the whole world and individual men, are intimately and indissolubly linked. The whole human family is so closely knit together that every unit is dependent upon all others for its growth and development.

To bring out the goodness in us, each one of us has to try to reproduce in his own wheel of life that pattern which is in harmony with the pattern of the great universal wheel. For all the wheels to revolve in harmony the highest good in each must be developed. This is possible by the performance of daily duties

with kindness, courtesy and truthfulness. The ideal that is placed before us is that of mutual service and practical brotherhood. In all our thoughts, our emotions, our words and our deeds, we act and react upon each other. In a very real sense each one of us is responsible for the whole community. Men, being in need of each other should learn to love each other and bear each other's burden. Mutual service is a perpetual call on humanity, for we are bound alike by the bonds of humanity.

Science proves that the fundamental structure of the human mind is uniform in all races. What differences there are, are due to historical circumstances and stages of development. Without recognition of the oneness of the world of today in all its aspects, spiritual as well as social, economic as well as political, there will never be peace. The spirit of world fellowship is the only logical basis of all true and high civilisation, and real world peace.



The Stūpa Site III, Nālandā

( From the Way of the Buddha )

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## BUDDHISM

Over great areas of the world it still survives: it is possible that in contact with western science, and inspired by the spirit of history, the original teaching of Gautama, revived and purified, may yet play a large part in the direction of human destiny.

H. G. WELLS

(The Outline of History)

## *What Buddhism Is*

**(The following are a series of lectures given by Thray Sithu U Ba Khin, President of the Vipassanā Association which founded the International Meditation Centre. He was then the Accountant-General of Burma and the lectures were given in the premises of the Methodist Church, Signal Pagoda Pond, Rangoon, at the request of a religious study group headed by Messrs. Gerald F. Winfield, Information Officer and Roger C. Thorpe, Economic & Finance Officer of the Special Technical and Economic Division of the United States of America—Editor.)**

*23<sup>rd</sup> September 1951—Lecture No.1*

I consider it a great privilege to be in your midst to-day and to have this opportunity of addressing you on the subject of “What Buddhism Is.” At the outset, I must be very frank with you. I have not been to a University and I have no knowledge of science except as a man in the street. Nor am I a scholar in the theory of Buddhism with any knowledge of Pāli, the language in which the Tipiṭakas (literally known as the Three Baskets of Buddha Dhamma) are maintained. I may say, however, that I have read in Burmese to some extent the treatises of Buddhism by well-known and learned Buddhist Monks. As my approach to Buddhism is more by practical than by theoretical means, I hope to be able to give you something of Buddhism which is not easily available elsewhere. I must admit, however, that for the time being I am just a student of practical Buddhism as also an experimentalist trying to learn through Buddhism the truth of the nature of forces. As this has to be done as a house-holder and within a limited time available in between the multifarious duties of a responsible officer of Government, the progress is rather slow and I do not claim for a moment that what I am going to say is absolutely correct. I may be right or wrong. But when I say a thing, I assure you that it is with a sincerity of purpose, with the best of intentions and with conviction.

Lord Buddha said in “Kālāma Sutta”:

“Do not believe in what ye have heard; do not believe in traditions, because they had been handed down for many generations; do not believe in anything, because it is rumoured and spoken by

many; do not believe merely because a written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth to which you have become attached by habit; do not believe merely the authority of your teachers and elders. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and gain of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

Pray, do not, therefore, believe me when I come to the philosophical issues until and unless you are convinced of what I say either as a sequel to proper reasoning or by means of a practical approach.

“To abstain from evil  
To do good  
To purify the Mind  
These are the teachings of all the Buddhas”

This extract taken from “Dhammapada,” gives in brief the essence of Buddhism. It sounds simple but is so difficult to practise. One cannot be a true Buddhist unless he puts the doctrines of Buddha to practice. Buddha had said:

“Ye, to whom the truths I have perceived have been made known by me, make them surely your own, practise them, meditate upon them, spread them abroad: in order that the pure religion may last long and be perpetuated for the good and the gain and the weal of gods and men.”

2. Before I take up the teachings of Buddha which form the basic foundation of Buddhism

I propose to acquaint you, first of all, with the life story of Gotama Buddha. For this purpose, I feel it my duty to give you a background of certain Buddhist concepts which may be foreign to most of you. I propose, therefore, to give you a short and descriptive explanation of such concepts in Buddhism, as to the Universe, the World system, the planes of existence, etc. These will, no doubt give you some food for thought. I would however, appeal to you to give a patient hearing and to pass over these matters for the time being, *i.e.*, until we come to the question time for discussion.

### Universe

3. The Buddhist concepts of the Universe may be summed up as follows:

There is the Okāsa Loka (the Universe of Space) which accommodates, Nāma & Rūpa (Mind & Matter). In this mundane world, it is Nāma & Rūpa (Mind & Matter) which predominates under the influence of the law of Cause and Effect. The next is the Saṅkhāra Loka (the Universe of Mental forces), creative or created. This is a mental plane arising out of the creative energies of Mind through the medium of bodily actions, words and thoughts. The third and the last is the Satta Loka (the Universe of sentient beings) visible or invisible which are the products of these mental forces; we may rather call these three as ‘Three in One’ universe, because one is inseparable from another. They are, so to say, interwoven and interpenetrating.

What will interest you most are the Cakkavālas or World-systems, each with its thirty-one planes of existence. Each World-system corresponds to the Human World with its solar system and other planes of existence. There are millions and millions of such World-systems, simply innumerable. Ten thousand such World-system closest to us are within the Jāti-Khetta (or the field of Origin) of a Buddha. In fact when the renowned Sutta (or Sermon) “Mahā Samaya” meaning the “Great Occasion” was preached by Buddha in the Mahāvana (Forest) near the town of Kapilavatthu, not only the Brahmas and Devas

of our World-system but all of the ten thousand World-systems were present to listen to the teachings of Buddha. Lord Buddha can also send his thought waves charged with boundless love and compassion to the sentient beings of a hundred crores of such World-systems Within the Ānākhetta ( or the Field of Influence). The remainder of the World-systems are in the Visaya Khetta ( or Infinite space) beyond the reach of Buddha’s effective thought waves. You can very well imagine from these concepts of Buddhism the size of the Universe as a whole. The material insignificance of our World in the Okāsa Loka (the Universe of Space) is simply terrifying. The Human World, as a whole, must be just a speck in space.

Now I will give you an idea of the thirty-one planes of existence in our World-system which, of course is the same as in any of the other World-systems. Broadly they are:

- (i) Arūpa Loka.. Immaterial World of Brahmas
- (ii) Rūpa Loka .. Fine Material World of Brahmas
- (iii) Kāma Loka .. Sensuous World of Devas, Mankind and Lower beings.

The Arūpa Loka comprises of four Brahma Worlds of immaterial state, *i.e.*, without Rūpa or Matter. The Rūpa Loka comprises of sixteen Brahma Worlds of fine material state. The Kāma Loka comprises of:—

(a) Six Deva Lokas (Celestial Worlds) viz:—

- (i) Catumahārājika
- (ii) Tāvātimsa
- (iii) Yāmā
- (iv) Tusitā
- (v) Nimmānarati
- (vi) Paranimmita-vasavattī

(b) The Human World

(c) The four Lower Worlds, viz:—

- (i) Niraya (Hell)
- (ii) Tiricchāna (Animal World)
- (iii) Peta (Ghost World)
- (iv) Asurā (Demon World)

These planes of existence are pure or impure, cool or hot, luminous or dark, light or heavy, pleasant or wretched— according to the character of the mental forces generated by the Mind on the volition (*cetanā*) of series of actions, words and thoughts. For example, take the case of a religious man who suffuses the whole universe of beings with boundless love and compassion. He must be generating such mental forces as are pure, cooling, luminous, light and pleasant, forces which normally settle down in the Brahma Worlds. Let us now take the reverse case of a man who is dissatisfied or angry. As the saying “Face is the indication of mind” goes, impurity, heat, darkness, heaviness and wretchedness of his mind are immediately reflected in that person— visible even to the naked eye. This is due, I may say, to the generation of the evil mental forces of Dosa (Anger) which go down to the lower World of Existence. So also is the case with the mental forces arising out of Lobha (Greed) or Moha (Delusion). In the case of meritorious deeds such as devotion, morality and charity which have, at their base attachment to future well-being, the mental forces generated are such as will normally be located in the sensuous planes of Devas (Celestial beings) and of Mankind. These, Ladies and Gentleman, are some of the concepts in Buddhism relevant to the life story of Gotama Buddha which I will presently begin.

### Preparation

4. Gotama Buddha is the fourth of the five Buddhas to rise in the World cycle which is known as Bhadda Kappa. His predecessors were Buddhas Kakusanda, Konāgamana and Kassapa. There were also innumerable Buddhas who had arisen in earlier Kappas and who had preached the self-same Dhamma which gives deliverance from suffering and death to all matured beings. Buddhas are all compassionate, glorious and enlightened.

A hermit by the name of Sumedā was inspired by Buddha Dīpaṅkara, so much so, that he, took the vow to make all the necessary preparations to become a Buddha in course of

time. Buddha Dīpaṅkara gave him His blessings and prophesied that he would become a Buddha by the name of Gotama after a lapse of four Asaṅkheyyas and a lac Kappas. From then onwards, existence after existence, the Bodhisatta (*i.e.*, would-be-Buddha) conserved mental energies of the highest order through the practices of ten Pāramitās (or Virtues towards Perfection) viz:—

- |        |             |                          |
|--------|-------------|--------------------------|
| (i)    | Dāna Pāramī | .. Virtue in Alms-giving |
| (ii)   | Sīla        | .. Morality              |
| (iii)  | Nekkhamma   | .. Renunciation          |
| (iv)   | Paññā       | .. Wisdom                |
| (v)    | Viriya      | .. Perseverance          |
| (vi)   | Khanti      | .. Forbearance           |
| (vii)  | Sacca       | .. Truthfulness          |
| (viii) | Addhiṭṭhāna | .. Determination         |
| (ix)   | Mettā       | .. All-embracing Love    |
| (x)    | Upekkhā     | .. Equanimity.           |

It is, therefore, a most enduring task to become a Buddha. Utmost strength of Will Power is necessary even to think of it. The Bodhisatta's preparatory period came to an end with the life of King Vessantarā who excelled any living being in Alms-giving. He gave away his kingdom, his wife and his children and all his worldly possessions, for the consummation of his solemn vow taken before the Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The next existence was in Tusitā (of the celestial Planes) as glorious Setaketu Deva, until he got his release from that plane and took conception in the womb of Māyā Devī, the Queen of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu, a place near modern Nepal. When time was drawing nigh for confinement, the Queen expressed her desire to go to the place of her own parents for the event. King Suddhodana accordingly sent her there with befitting retinues and guards. On the way, a halt was made at the Lumbīni Sal forest. She got down from the palanquin and enjoyed the cool breeze and fragrance of Sal flowers. While holding out her right hand to a branch of the nearby Sal tree for a flower, all of a sudden and unexpectedly, she gave birth to a son who was to become the All-Enlightened Buddha. Simultaneously, the natural order of things in the Cosmos was revolutionised in many



respects and 32 wonderful phenomena were vivified. All material worlds were shaken from the foundation. There were unusual illuminations in the Solar system. All the beings of material planes could see each other. Deaf and dumb were cured. Celestial music was heard everywhere and so on. At that moment, Kāla Devīla, the hermit teacher of King Suddhodana, was having a discourse with celestial beings of Tāvātimsā. He was a hermit of fame who had mastery over the eight Samāpattis which gave him super-normal powers. Knowing the birth of a son to the King in the midst of rejoicing in all Rūpa and Kāma Worlds, he hurried back to the palace and desired the baby to be brought before him for blessings. As the King was about to place the baby before his teacher for the occasion, a miracle happened. The baby rose into the air and got himself rested with his tiny feet on the head of Devīla who at once understood that the baby was no other than the Embryo Buddha. He smiled at this knowledge but cried almost immediately thereafter, because he foresaw that he would not live to hear his teachings and that even after his death he would be in Arūpa Brahma Loka (Immaterial plane of Brahmas) whence he would have no relationship with any of the material planes. He missed the Buddha and his teachings miserably.

On the fifth day, the child was named Siddhattha in the presence of renowned Astrologer-Palmists who agreed that the child has all the characteristics of a Buddha to come. The mother Queen, however, died a week after confinement and the child was taken care of by his maternal aunt, Pajāpati Gotamī.

Siddhattha spent his earlier years of life in ease, luxury and culture. He was acclaimed to be a prodigy both in intellect and strength. The King spared no pains to make the course of his life smooth. Three separate palaces were built to suit three seasons with all the necessities that would make the Prince sink in sensuality. That was because the King, out of paternal affection, desired his son to remain in worldly life as a King rather than as an Enlightened Buddha. The King Suddhodana was over-

watchful that his son should be in such environment as will give him no chance of higher philosophical ideas. In order to make sure that the thought of the Prince would never turn into this direction, he ordered that nobody serving him or in his association was ever to speak a single word about such things as old age, sickness or death. They were to act as if there were no unpleasant things in this world. Servants and attendants who showed the least sign of getting old, weak or sickly were replaced. On the other hand, there were dancing, music and enjoyable parties right through, to keep him under a complete shade of sensuality.

### **The Great Renunciation**

5. As days, months and years passed, however, the monotony of the sensual surroundings gradually lost hold of the mind of Prince Siddhattha. The mental energies of virtue conserved in all his earlier innumerable lives for the great goal of Buddha-hood were automatically aroused. At times, when the world of sensuality lost control over his mind, his inner-self worked its way up and raised his mind to a state of purity and tranquillity with the strength of Sāmadhi such as had raised his baby form into space and onto the head of Kāla Devīla. The war of nerves began. An escape from sensuality and passion was his first consideration. He wanted to know what existed outside the walls of the palace beyond which he had not visited even once. He wished to see Nature as it is and not as Man has made it. Accordingly he decided to see the Royal Park, outside the Palace walls. On the way to the Park, in spite of precautions taken by the King to get the roads clear of unpleasant sights, he saw an old man bent with age in the very first visit. Next he saw a sick person in agony of a fatal malady. Thereafter he met with a human corpse. On the last trip he came across a monk. All these set his mind into serious thinking. His mental attitude was changed. The mind got clear of impurities and tuned up with the forces of his own virtues conserved in the Saṅkhāra Loka (plane of mental forces). By then his mind had become freed from hindrances, was

tranquil, pure and strong. It all happened on the night when a son was born to his queen, a new fetter to bind him down. He was, however, immune from anything which would tend to upset the equilibrium of his Mind. The virtues of Determination worked their way for a strong resolve and he made up his mind to seek the way of escape from birth, old age, suffering and death. It was midnight when the solemn Determination was made. He asked his attendant Channa to keep his Stallion Khandhika ready. After a parting look at his wife and the newly born babe, Prince Siddhattha broke away from all the ties of family and of the world and made the Great Renunciation. He rode across the town to the river Anomā which he crossed, never to return until his Mission had been achieved.

### **The Search for Truth**

6. After this Great Renunciation, Prince Siddhattha went around in search of possible teachers in the garb of a wandering ascetic with a begging bowl in his hand. He placed himself under the spiritual guidance of two renowned Brahmin Teachers, Āḷāra and Uddaka. Āḷāra laid stress on the belief in Atman (soul) and taught that the soul attained perfect release when freed from material limitations. This did not satisfy the Prince. He next went to Uddaka who emphasised too much on the effect of Kamma and the transmigration of soul. Both could not get out of the conception of “Soul” and the Prince ascetic felt that there is something else to learn. He, therefore, left both of them to work out the way for emancipation on his own. By that time, of course, he had learned the eight samāpattis and had become an adept in the exercise of all supernormal powers including the ability to read events of many Kappas to come and a similar period of the past. These were all in the mundane field and they did not much concern the Prince Ascetic, whose ambition had been an escape from this mundane field of birth, suffering and death.

He was joined later by 5 ascetics, one of whom, Koṇḍañña by name, was the

Astrologer-Palmist who definitely foretold on the fifth day of his birth that he would surely become a Buddha. These ascetics served him well throughout the six years, during which he was engaged in fasting and meditation, subjecting himself to various forms of rigorous austerities and discipline till he was reduced to almost a skeleton. In fact, one day he fell down in a swoon through exhaustion. When he survived this condition, he changed his method followed a middle course and found that the way for his Enlightenment was clearer.

### **Attainment of Buddha-hood**

7. It was on the eve of Wesak (Full moon of Kason) just 2540 years ago, that Prince Siddhattha, wandering Ascetic, sat cross-legged beneath a Bodhi tree on the bank of river Nerañjarā in the forest of Uruvelā (near present Buddha Gāyā)—with the strongest of determinations—not to rise from that posture on any account until he gained the Truth and Enlightenment, the Buddha-hood, even if the attempt might mean the loss of his very life.

The great Event was approaching. The Prince Ascetic mustered up all his strength of mind to secure that one-pointedness of mind which is so essential for the discovery of the Truth. The balancing of the mind, the Prince found on this occasion, was not so easy as hitherto. There was not only the combination of the mental forces of the Lower Planes with those of the Higher Planes all around him but also interferences strong enough to upset, off and on, the equilibrium of his mind. The resistance of the impenetrable masses of forces against the radiation of the light normally secured by him was unusual. Perhaps, because it was a final bid for Buddha-hood; and Māra, the supreme controller of evil forces, was behind the scene. The Prince, however, worked his way through slowly but surely, backed up by the mental forces of virtues which must inevitably come back to him at the right moment. He made a vow and called upon all the Brahmas and Devas who had witnessed the fulfilment of his ten great Perfections to join hands with him in the struggle for supremacy.

This done, the association with the transcendently pure mental forces of the Brahmas and Devas had salutary effect. The thick masses of forces, which seemed impenetrable at the time, broke away and with a steady improvement in the control over the Mind, they were wiped out once and for all. All the hindrances having been overcome, the Prince was able to raise his power of concentration and put the Mind to a state of complete purity, tranquillity and equanimity. Gradually the consciousness of true insight possessed him. The solution of the vital problems which confronted him made its appearance in his consciousness as an inspiration. By introspective meditation on the realities of nature in his own self, it came vividly to him that there is no substantiality, as it seems to be, in the human body and that it is nothing but the sum total of innumerable millions of Kalāpas each about  $\frac{1}{46656}$ <sup>th</sup> part of a particle of dust from the wheel of a chariot in summer. On further investigation, he realised that this Kalāpa also is matter in constant change or flux. So also with the mind which is a representation of the mental forces (creative) going out and the mental forces (created) coming into the system of an individual continually and throughout eternity.

Buddha then proclaimed that his eye of Wisdom had arisen when he got over the substantiality of his own self and he saw by means of the lens of Samādhi, the Kalāpas on which he next applied the law of Anicca (impermanence) and reduced them to non-entity or behaviour, doing away with what, we,

in Buddhism, call “*Paññatti*” and coming to a state of “*Paramattha*”, or nature of forces, or in other words “Ultimate reality.”

Accordingly he came to a realisation of the perpetual change of Mind and Matter in himself (Anicca) and as a sequel thereto the Truth of Suffering (Dukkha). It was then that the ego-centralism in him broke down into the void and he got over to a stage beyond “Suffering”, *i.e.* (Dukkha Nirodha) with no more traces of “Atta” or attachment to Self left behind. “Mind and Matter” were to him but empty phenomena which roll on forever, within the range of the law of Cause and Effect and the law of Dependent Origination. The Truth was realised. The inherent qualities of Embryo Buddha then developed, and complete Enlightenment came to him by the dawn of the Wesak Day. “Verily, Prince Siddhatta attained Sammā Sambodhi and became the Buddha, the Awakened One, the Enlightened One—the All Knowing One. He was awake in a way compared with which all others were asleep and dreaming. He was enlightened in a way compared with which all other men were stumbling and groping in the dark. He knew with the knowledge compared with which all that other men knew was but a kind of Ignorance.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have taken so much of your time today. I thank you all for the patient hearing. I must also thank the Clergy of the Church for the kind permission given me for this address.

Hunger is the greatest ill and this body the greatest source of sorrow; when one knows this, Nibbāna becomes the highest happiness.

Dhammapada

## *What Buddhism Is*

*30<sup>th</sup> September 1951—Lecture No. 2*

Last Sunday I gave you a brief outline—a very brief one too—of the life of our Lord Buddha, up to the moment of his attainment of Buddha-hood. I am going to tell you today what his teachings are. Buddhist teachings are preserved in what we call the Tipiṭakas, consisting of the Suttas (Discourses), the Vinaya (Laws of discipline for Saṅghas, or monks) and the Abhidhamma (Philosophical Teachings). We have the Tipiṭakas in Pāli in several volumes which will require an intelligent Pāli scholar some months just to read through. I propose, therefore, to confine myself today only to essentials, that is to say, the fundamental Truths of Buddhism. Before Lord Buddha took upon himself the task of spreading his Dhamma (Teachings), he remained in silent meditation for a continuous period of 49 days, viz., seven days under the Bo tree and seven days each in six other spots nearby, enjoying at times the peace of Supreme Nibbāna and at another going deeper in investigation into the most delicate problems of Paramattha-Dhamma (Ultimate Realities). On his complete mastery of the law of Paṭṭhāna (the Law of Relations), in which the infinite modes of relations between thought moments are also dealt with, there emerged from his body brilliant rays of six colours, which eventually settled down as a halo of six-coloured rays around his head. He passed through this seven times seven days meditation without food. It is all beyond us to be without food for 49 days. The fact remains that he was throughout the period on a *mental plane* as distinct from a *physical plane*, in which mankind normally is. It is not material food that maintains the fine-material existence and life-continuum of beings in the Fine-material Worlds of the Brahmās, but the Jhānic Pīti, which in itself is a nutriment. So also was the case with the Buddha, whose existence during this long period was on a mental rather than physical plane. Our experiments in this line of research have firmly convinced us that for a

man of such high intellectual and mental development as the Buddha, this is a possibility.

It was the day break of the 50<sup>th</sup> day of his Buddhahood when he arose from this long spell of meditation. Not that he was tired or exhausted, but, as he was no longer in the mental plane, he felt a longing for food. At that time, two traders of a foreign land were travelling in several carts loaded with merchandise through the Uruvelā forest. A deva of the forest who was their relative in one of their previous existences advised them to take the opportunity of paying homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha who had just arisen from his meditation. They accordingly went to the place where the Buddha was seated, illumined by the halo of six coloured rays. They could not resist their feelings. They lay prostrate in worship and adoration before the Buddha and later offered preserved rice cakes with honey for the first meal of the Buddha. They were accepted as His lay disciples. On their request that they might be given some tokens for their worship, the Buddha presented them with eight strands of hair from His head. You will be surprised to know that these two traders were Taphussa and Bhallika of Okkalapa, which today is known as Rangoon, where you are at this moment. And the renowned Shwedagon, which you all probably have visited, is the Pagoda in which were enshrined all the eight hair-relics of the Buddha under the personal direction of the then ruler of Okkalapa, 2540 years ago. It has been preserved and renovated till now by successive Buddhist kings and devout laymen. Unfortunately, however, these two traders of Okkalapa, who had the privilege of becoming the first lay disciples of the Buddha, were disciples only by faith, without a taste of the Buddha-Dhamma in actual practice, which alone would give them deliverance from suffering and death. Faith is, no doubt, a

preliminary requisite, but it is the practice of the Teachings which really counts. The Buddha therefore said, “The Path must be trodden by each individual; Buddhas do but point the Way.”

### The Teachings of the Buddha

2. “Buddhism” is not a religion according to its dictionary meaning because it has no centre in God, as is the case in all other religions. Strictly speaking, Buddhism is a system of philosophy co-ordinated with a code of morality, physical and mental. The goal in view is the “Extinction of Suffering and Death.”

The Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha in his first sermon, known as the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta (viz., the Discourse to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma) form the basis on which is founded this system of philosophy. In fact, the first three of the Four Noble Truths expound the philosophy of the Buddha, while the fourth (the Eightfold Noble Path which is a code of morality-cum-philosophy) serves as a means for the end. This first sermon was given to the five ascetics led by Koṇḍañña, who were his early companions in search of the Truth. Koṇḍañña was the first disciple of the Buddha in practice to become an Arahat (*i.e.*, Holy One who got beyond the limitations of all fetters).

Now we come to the Four Noble Truths. They are:

- (i) Dukkha Saccā: The Truth of Suffering
- (ii) Samudaya Saccā: The Truth of the Origin of Suffering
- (iii) Nirodha Saccā: The Truth of the Extinction of Suffering
- (iv) Magga Saccā: The Truth of the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering

To come to a complete understanding of the fundamental concepts in the philosophy of the Buddha, emphasis is laid on the need for the realisation of the Truth of Suffering. To bring home this point, Lord Buddha tackled the problem from two different angles.

*Firstly*, by a process of reasoning. He made his disciples feel that life is a struggle, life is suffering; birth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. The influence of sensuality is, however, so strong in mankind that they are normally apt to forget this themselves, to forget what they have to pay therefor. Just think for a moment how life exists in the pre-natal period; how from the moment of birth the child has to struggle for existence; what preparations he has to make to face Life; what, as a man, he has to be struggling till he breathes his last. You can very well imagine what life is. Life is indeed suffering. The more one is attached to self, the greater is the suffering. In fact, what pains and sufferings a man has to undergo are suppressed in favour of momentary sensual pleasures which are but occasional spotlights in the darkness. But for the Moha (delusion) which keeps him away from the Truth, he would surely have worked out his way to emancipation from the rounds of “Life, Suffering and Death.”

*Secondly*, the Buddha made it known to his disciples that the human body is composed of Kalāpas (atomic units), each dying out simultaneously as it becomes. Each Kalāpa is a mass formed of the following nature elements:

- (i) Pathavī : Extension (literally, earth)
- (ii) Āpo : Cohesion (lit., water)
- (iii) Tejo : Radiation (lit., heat and cold)
- (iv) Vāyo : Motion (lit., air)
- (v) Vaṇṇa : Colour
- (vi) Gandha: Smell
- (vii) Rasa : Taste
- (viii) Ojā : Nutritive essence

The first four are called Mahā-Bhūtas, *i.e.*, essential material qualities which are predominant in a Kalāpa. The other four are merely subsidiaries which are dependent upon and born out of the former. A Kalāpa is the minutest particle noticeable in the physical plane. It is only when the eight nature elements (which have merely the characteristic of behaviour) are together that the entity of a Kalāpa is formed. In other words, the co-

existence of these eight nature elements of behaviour makes a mass which, in Buddhism, is known as a Kalāpa. These Kalāpas, according to the Buddha, are in a state of perpetual change or flux. They are nothing but a stream of energies, just like the light of a candle or an electric bulb. The body, as we call it, is not an entity as it seems to be, but a continuum of matter with life force coexisting.

To a casual observer, a piece of iron is motionless. The scientist knows that it is composed of electrons, etc., all in a state of perpetual change or flux. If it is so with a piece of iron, what will be the case for a living organism, say a human being? The changes that are taking place inside the human body must be more violent. Does man feel the rocking vibrations within himself? Does the scientist who knows that all is in a state of change or flux ever feel that his own body is but energy and vibration? What will be the repercussion on the mental attitude of the man who introspectively sees that his own body is mere energy and vibration? To quench thirst one may just easily drink a glass of water from a village well. Supposing his eyes are as powerful as microscopes, he would surely hesitate to drink the very same water in which he must see the magnified microbes. So also, when one comes to a realization of the perpetual change within himself (*i.e.*, Anicca or Impermanence), he must necessarily come to the understanding as a sequel thereto of the Truth of Suffering in consequence of the sharp sense of feeling of the radiation, vibration and friction of the atomic units within. Indeed, Life is Suffering, both within and without, to all appearances and in ultimate reality.

When I say, Life is Suffering, as the Buddha taught, please be so good as not to run away with the idea that, if that is so, life is miserable, life is not worth living, and that the Buddhist concept of suffering is a terrible concept which will give you no chance of a reasonably happy life. What is happiness? For all that science has achieved in the field of materialism, are the peoples of the world happy? They may find sensual pleasure off and

on, but in their heart of hearts they are not happy concerning what has happened, what is happening and what may happen next. Why? This is because, while man has mastery over matter, he is still lacking in mastery over his mind.

Pleasure born of sensuality is nothing compared with the Pīti (or rapture) born of the inner peace of mind which can be secured through a process of Buddhist meditation. Sense pleasures are preceded and followed by troubles and pains, as in the case of a rustic who finds pleasure in cautiously scratching the itches over his body, whereas Pīti is free from such troubles and pains either way. It will be difficult for you, looking from a sensuous field, to appreciate what that Pīti is like. But I know you can enjoy it and have a taste of it for comparative evaluation. There is therefore nothing to the supposition that Buddhism teaches something that will make you feel miserable with the nightmare of suffering. But please take it from me that it will give you an escape from the normal conditions of life, a lotus as it were in a pond of crystal water immune from its fiery surroundings. It will give you that "Peace Within" which will satisfy you that you are getting not only beyond the day-to-day troubles of life, but slowly and surely beyond the limitation of "Life, Suffering and Death."

What then is the Origin of Suffering? The origin of it, the Buddha said, is Taṇhā or Craving. Once the seed of desire is sown, it grows into greed and multiplies into craving or lust, either for power or for material gains. The man in whom this seed is sown becomes a slave to these cravings and he is automatically driven to strenuous labours of mind and body to keep pace with them till the end comes. The final result must surely be the accumulation of the evil mental forces generated by his own actions, words and thoughts which are motivated by Loba (desire) and Dosa (anger) inherent in him.

Philosophically again, it is the mental forces of actions (Sankhārā) which react in the

course of time on the person originating them, and which are responsible for this stream of mind and matter, the origin of suffering within.

## **The Path Leading to the Extinction of Suffering**

What then is the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering? The Path is none other than the Noble Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha in his first sermon. This Eightfold Path is divided into three main stages, namely, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*.

### **Sīla**

*(The Precepts)*

1. Right Speech
2. Right Action
3. Right Livelihood

### **Samādhi**

*(Tranquillity of Mind)*

4. Right Exertion
5. Right Attentiveness
6. Right Concentration

### **Paññā**

*(Wisdom, Insight)*

7. Right Aspiration
8. Right Understanding

(1) *Sīla*. The three characteristic aspects of *Sīla* are:—

- (i) *Sammā Vācā*: Right Speech
- (ii) *Sammā Kammanta*: Right Action
- (iii) *Sammā Ājīva*: Right Livelihood

By Right Speech is meant: Speech which must be true, beneficial and neither foul nor malicious.

By Right Action is meant: The fundamentals of morality, which are opposed to killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and drunkenness.

By Right Livelihood is meant: A way of living by trades other than those which increase the suffering of all beings—such as slave trading, the manufacture of weapons and traffic in intoxicating drugs.

These represent generally the Code of Morality as initially pronounced by the Buddha in his very first sermon. Later, however, he amplified it and introduced separate Codes for the Monks and Lay disciples.

I need not worry you with what has been prescribed for monks. I will just let you know what the code of morality, or the precepts, for a Buddhist Lay Disciple is. This is called *Pañca Sīla*, or the Five Precepts, which are:

(i) *Pāṇātipātā*: Abstaining from killing any sentient being. (Life is the most precious thing for all beings and in prescribing this precept the Buddha's compassion extends to all beings.)

(ii) *Adinnādāna*: Abstaining from taking what is not given. (This serves as a check against improper desires for possessions.)

(iii) *Kāmesu-micchācāra*: Abstaining from sexual misconduct. (Sexual desire is latent in man. This is irresistible to almost all. Unlawful sexual indulgence is therefore something which the Buddha prohibited.)

(iv) *Musāvāda*: Abstaining from telling lies. (This precept is included to fulfil by way of speech the essence of Truth.)

(v) *Surāmeraya*: Abstaining from intoxication. (Intoxication causes a man to lose his steadfastness of mind and the reasoning power so essential for the realization of Truth.)

The *Pañca Sīla* therefore is intended to control actions and words and to serve as a foundation for *Samādhi* (Equanimity of Mind).

(2) *Samādhi*. Ladies and gentlemen, we now come to the mental aspect of Buddhism, which I am sure will greatly interest you. In the second stage of the Eightfold Noble Path, viz., (*Samādhi*) are included:—

- (i) *Sammā Vāyāma*: Right Exertion
- (ii) *Sammā Sati*: Right Attentiveness
- (iii) *Sammā Samādhi*: Right Concentration

Right Exertion is, of course, a prerequisite for Right Attentiveness. Unless one makes a

determined effort to narrow down the range of thoughts of one's wavering and unsteady mind, one cannot expect to secure that attentiveness of mind which in turn helps one to bring the mind by Right Concentration to a state of One-pointedness and Tranquillity (or Samādhi). It is here that the mind becomes freed from hindrances—pure and tranquil, illumined within and without. The mind in such a state becomes powerful and bright. Outside, it is represented by light which is just a mental reflex, with the light varying in degrees from that of a star to that of the sun. To be plain, this light which is reflected before the mind's eye in complete darkness is a manifestation of the purity, tranquillity and serenity of the mind.

The Hindus work for it. To go from light into the void and to come back to light is truly Brahmanic. The New Testament, in Matthew, speaks of "a body full of light." We hear also of Roman Catholic priests meditating regularly for this very miraculous light. The Koran, too, gives prominence to the "Manifestation of Divine Light."

This mental reflex of light denotes the purity of mind within, and the purity of mind forms the essence of a religious life, whether he be Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Indeed, Purity of Mind is the greatest common denominator of all religions. Love, which alone is a means for the unity of mankind, must be supreme, and it cannot be so unless the mind is transcendently pure. A balanced mind is necessary to balance the unbalanced minds of others. "As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back."

So said the Buddha. Exercise of the mind is just as necessary as exercise of the physical body. Why not, then, give exercise to the mind and make it pure and strong so that you may enjoy the "Jhānic Peace Within."

When Inner Peace begins to permeate the mind, you will surely progress in the knowledge of Truth.

Believe it or not, it is our experience that under a proper guide, this Inner Peace and Purity of Mind with light can be secured by one and all irrespective of their religion or creed, provided they have sincerity of purpose and are prepared to submit to the guide for the period of trial.

When by continued practice one has complete mastery over one's mind, one can enter into Jhānic states (trances) and gradually develop himself to acquire the attainments (*Samāpattis*) which will give one supernormal powers like those exercised by Kāla-Devīla, the hermit teacher of King Suddhodana. This, of course, must be tried in penance and away from human habitations, but it is rather dangerous for those who still have traces of passion in them. Anyway, such a practice, which gives supernormal powers in this mundane field, was not encouraged by the Buddha, whose sole object of developing Samādhi was to have the purity and strength of mind essential for the realization of Truth.

We have in Buddhism forty methods of concentration, of which the most outstanding is Ānāpāna, that is, concentration on the incoming and outgoing breath, the method followed by all the Buddhas.

(3) Paññā. Ladies and Gentlemen, I will now take up the philosophical aspect of Buddhism in the third stage of the Noble Eightfold Path, viz., Paññā or Insight. The two characteristic aspects of Paññā are:—

- (i) Sammā-Sankappa: Right Aspiration
- (ii) Sammā-Diṭṭhi: Right Understanding

Right Understanding of the Truth is the aim and object of Buddhism, and Right Aspiration (or Right Thought) is the analytical study of mind and matter, both within and without, in order to come to a realization of Truth.

You have heard of Nāma and Rūpa (mind and matter) so many times. I owe you a further explanation.

Nāma is so called because of its tendency to incline towards an object of sense. Rūpa is so



called because of its impermanence due to perpetual change. The nearest terms in English to Nāma and Rūpa therefore are mind and matter. I say “nearest” because the meaning is not exact.

Nāma, strictly speaking, is the term applied to the following:

- (i) Consciousness: (Viññāna)
- (ii) Feeling: (Vedanā)
- (iii) Perception: (Saññā)
- (iv) Volitional Energies: (Saṅkhārā).

These, together with Rūpa in the material state, make what we call the Pañca-Khandhās or Five Aggregates. It is in these five aggregates that the Buddha has summed up all the mental and physical phenomena of existence, which in reality is a continuum of mind and matter coexisting, but which to a layman is his personality or ego.

In Sammā-sankappa (Right Aspiration), the disciple, who by then has developed the powerful lens of Samādhi, focuses his attention into his own self and by introspective meditation makes an analytical study of the nature, first of Rūpa (Matter) and then of Nāma (mind and the mental properties). He feels—and at times he also sees—the Kalāpas in their true state. He begins to realize that both Rūpa and Nāma are in constant change—impermanent and fleeting. As his power of concentration increases, the nature of the forces in him becomes more and more vivid. He can no longer get out of the impression that the Pañca-Khandhās, or Five Aggregates, are suffering, within the law of Cause and Effect. He is now convinced that, in reality, all is suffering within and without and there is no such thing as an ego. He longs for a state beyond suffering. So eventually going beyond the bounds of suffering, he moves from the mundane to the supramundane state and enters the stream of Sotāpanna, the first of the four stages of the Ariyas (Noble Ones). Then he

becomes free from (i) ego, (ii) doubts and (iii) attachment to rules and rituals. The second stage is Sakadāgāmi (Once-Returner), on coming to which sensuous craving and ill-will become attenuated. He ceases to have any passion or anger when he attains the third stage of Anāgāmi (Non-Returner). Arahatsip is the final goal. Each of the Ariyas can feel what Nibbāna is like, even as a man, as often as he may choose by going into the fruition stage of Sotapanna, etc., which gives him the Nibbānic Peace Within.

This “Peace Within”, which is identified with Nibbāna, has no parallel because it is supramundane. Compared to this, the “Jhānic Peace Within”, which I mentioned earlier in dealing with Samādhi, is negligible because while the “Nibbānic Peace Within” takes one beyond the limits of the thirty-one planes of existence, the “Jhānic Peace Within” will still keep one within these planes—that is to say, in the fine-material world of the Brahmas.

Ladies and gentlemen, just a word more. What I have said includes only some of the fundamental aspects of Buddhism. With the time at my disposal, I hope I have given you my best:

To come to a state of Purity of Mind with a light before you;

To go into a Jhānic state at will;

To experience for yourselves Nibbānic Peace Within.

These are all within your reach.

Why not, then, try for the first two at least, which are within the confines of your own religion? I am prepared to give you any help that you may require.

May I again express my gratitude to you all for your patient listening. My thanks are also due to the Clergy of the Church for their kind permission.

# *What Buddhism Is*

14<sup>th</sup> October 1951—Lecture No. 3

My talks on “What Buddhism Is” will not be complete without a reference, though in brief, to the Law of Paṭicca-samuppāda (the Law of Dependent Origination) and the Law of Paṭṭhāna (the Law of Relations, or Cause and Effect).

It will be recalled that in summing up my first lecture, I mentioned how Prince Siddhattha, the wandering ascetic, realised the truth and became a Buddha. Lest you forget, I will repeat that portion again.

Verily, Prince Siddhattha attained Sammā-sambodhi and became the Buddha, the Awakened One, the Enlightened One, the All-Knowing One. He was awake in a way compared with which all others were asleep and dreaming. He was enlightened in a way compared with which all other men were stumbling and groping in the dark. He knew with a knowledge compared with which all that other men knew was but a kind of ignorance.

All religions, no doubt, claim to show the way to Truth. In Buddhism, for so long as one has not realized the truth (*i.e.*, the Four Noble Truths), he is in Ignorance. It is this Ignorance (Avijjā) that is responsible for the generation of mental forces (Saṅkhārā) which regulate the Life continuum (Viññāna) in all sentient beings. Just as the Life continuum is established in a new existence, Mind and Matter (Nāma and Rūpa) appear automatically and correlatively. These, in turn, are developed into a vehicle or body with Sense-centres (Salāyatana). These Sense-centres give rise to Contact (Phassa) and Contact of these Sense-centres with sense objects gives rise to Sense-impressions (Vedanā) which have the effect of arousing Desire (Tanhā) followed closely by Attachment or Clinging to Desire (Upādāna). It is this Attachment, or Clinging to Desire, which is the cause of “Becoming” (Bhāva) or of “Existence” with the attendant Birth (Jati),

Old age, Illness, Death, Anxiety, Agony, Pains, etc., all of which denote “Suffering”. In this way the Buddha traced the origin of Suffering to Ignorance.

## **So the Buddha said:—**

Ignorance is the origin of Mental forces;  
Mental forces, the origin of the Life-continuum;  
The Life-continuum, the origin of Mind & Matter;  
Mind & Matter, the origin of the Sense-centres;  
The Sense-centres, the origin of Contact;  
Contact, the origin of Impression;  
Impression, the origin of Desire;  
Desire, the origin of Attachment;  
Attachment, the origin of Becoming (Existence);  
Becoming (Existence), the origin of Birth;  
Birth, the origin of Old age, Illness, Death, Anxiety, Agony, Pains, etc. (which are all Suffering).

This chain of origination is called the Law of Dependent Origination and the root cause of all these is therefore Avijjā, Ignorance—*i.e.*, ignorance of the Truth. It is true that superficially desire is the origin of Suffering. This is so simple. When you want a thing, desire is aroused. You have to work for it or you suffer for it. But this is not enough. The Buddha said, “The Five Aggregates, which are nothing but Mind and Matter, also are Suffering.” The Truth of Suffering in Buddhism is complete only when one realizes by seeing Mind and Matter as they really are (both within and without) and not as they seem to be.

The “Truth of Suffering” is therefore something which must be experienced before it can be understood. For example, we all know from science that everything that exists is nothing but vibration caused by the whirling movement of infinite numbers of sub-atomic

particles, but how many of us can persuade ourselves to believe that our own bodies are subject to the same Law? Why not then try to feel things as they really are in so far as they relate to your goodself? One must be above physical conditions for this purpose. One must develop mental energy powerful enough to see things in their true state. With developed mental power, one can see through and through; one can see more than what one can see with the help of the latest scientific instruments. If that be so, why should one not see what exactly is happening in one's own self—the atoms, the electrons and what not, all changing fast and yet never ending. It is, of course, by no means easy.

Here is an extract from a diary of one of my disciples which will give you an idea of what Suffering Within is:

21/8/51. As soon as I began to meditate I felt as if someone were boring a hole through my head and I felt the sensation of crawling ants all over my head. I wanted to scratch, but my Guru forbade me from doing it. Within an hour I saw the sparkling radium of blue light tinged with violet colour entering inside my body gradually. When I lay in my room continuously for three hours I became almost senseless and I felt a terrible shock in my body. I was about to be frightened but my Guru encouraged me to proceed on. I felt my whole body heated up and I also felt the induction of the electronic needle at every part of my body.

22/8/51. Today also I lay down meditating for nearly three hours. I had the sensation that my whole body was in flames and I also saw sparkles of blue and violet rays of light moving from top to bottom aimlessly. Then my Guru told me that the changing in the body is Anicca (impermanence) and the pain and suffering following it is Dukkha and that one must get to a state beyond Dukkha or Suffering.

23/8/51. My Guru asked me to concentrate on my breast without the radiation of light and added that we are reaching the stage of philosophy of our body. I did accordingly and came to the conclusion that our body is full of Sufferings.

In reality, this Suffering Within is a sequel to the keen sense of feeling of the vibration, radiation and friction of the atomic units experienced through a process of introspective meditation called Vipassana with the aid of the powerful lens of Samādhi. Not knowing this Truth is indeed ignorance. Knowing this Truth in its Ultimate Reality means destruction of the root cause of suffering, that is, ignorance with all the links in the chain of causation ending with what we call “life” with its characteristics of old age, illness, anxiety, agony, pains, etc.

So much for the Law of Dependent Origination and the root cause of suffering.

Let us now turn our attention to the Causal Law of Relations as expounded by the Buddha in the Law of Paṭṭhāna in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. This is the Law in the course of the analytical study of which six coloured rays emerged from the person of the Buddha during his non-stop meditation for 49 days soon after the attainment of Buddha-hood. We have five volumes of about 500 pages each of Pāli text on this very delicate subject. I will just give here only an idea of the Law.

There are 24 types of Relations on which the fundamental principles of Cause and Effect in Buddhism are based. They are:

1. Condition .. Hetu
2. Object .. Ārammana
3. Dominance .. Adhipati
4. Contiguity .. Anantara
5. Immediate  
Contiguity .. Samanantara
6. Coexistence .. Sahajāta
7. Reciprocity .. Aññamañña
8. Dependence .. Nissaya
9. Sufficing  
Condition .. Upanissaya
10. Antecedence .. Purejāta
11. Consequence .. Pacchājāta

12. Succession .. Āsevana
13. Action .. Kamma
14. Effect .. Vipāka
15. Support .. Āhara
16. Control .. Indriya
17. Ecstasy .. Jhāna
18. Means .. Magga
19. Association .. Sampayutta
20. Dissociation .. Vippayutta
21. Presence .. Atthi
22. Absence .. Natthi
23. Abeyance .. Vigata
24. Continuance .. Avigata

I will explain to you now about the co-relation of Hetu (condition) and Kamma (action) and the effect produced by their causes, as I understand them.

Hetu is the condition of the mind at one conscious moment of each Kamma (action) whether physical, vocal or mental. Each Kamma therefore produces a condition of mind which is either moral, immoral or neutral. This is what in Buddhism we call Kusalā Dhammā, Akusalā Dhammā and Abyākātā Dhammā. These Dhammas are mere forces—i.e., mental forces—which collectively create the Universe of Mental Forces as explained in my first lecture.

*Moral (Kusala) forces* are positive forces generated from Kammas (actions, words and thoughts) motivated by such good deeds as alms-giving, welfare work, devotion, purification of mind, etc.

*Immoral (Akusala) forces* are negative forces generated from Kammas (actions, words, and thoughts) motivated by desire, greed, lust, anger, hatred, dissatisfaction, delusion, etc.

*Neutral (Abyākata) forces* are neither moral nor immoral. This is the case, for example, of an Arahāt who has got rid of all traces of ignorance (Avijjā). In the case of an Arahāt, contact (Phassa) of sense objects with the sense centres produces no reaction to sense impressions (Vedanā) whatsoever, just as no impression is possible on flowing water which

is ever changing. To him, the whole framework of the body is but an ever-changing mass and any impression thereon automatically breaks away with the mass.

Let us now adjust the moral and immoral forces generated by conditioned actions with the planes of existence. For this purpose, I will classify the planes of existence roughly as follows:

(1) *Arūpa- and Rūpa-Brāhma planes.* These are beyond the range of sensuality. Supreme Love, Supreme Compassion, Supreme Joy at others' success or greatness and Supreme Equanimity of Mind are the four qualities of mind which generate transcendently pure, brilliant and extremely pleasing, cool, and light mental forces which find their location in the highest of the planes of existence. This is the reason that in these planes matter is superfine and there is nothing but radiance, and the vehicles or bodies of the Brahmas cannot be identified with matter but with radiation or light.

(2) *The Sensuous planes* which are composed of:

- (i) Planes of Celestial Beings
- (ii) Human World
- (iii) Planes of the Lower Forms of Existence

*Planes of Celestial Beings.* All good or meritorious deeds, words or thoughts which have a taint of desire for future well-being create moral mental forces which are very pure, luminous, pleasant and light. These find their location in the higher planes of celestial beings where matter is fine, luminous, pleasant and light. These celestial beings therefore have astral bodies varying in fineness, luminosity and colour according to the planes to which they belong. Ordinarily they live in heavenly bliss till their own moral mental forces are consumed, when they revert to the lower planes of existence.

I will now pass on to (iii) the Planes of the Lower Forms of Existence. I will come to our Human World last.

*Planes of the Lower Forms of Existence.*

All malicious, evil, demeritorious actions, words and thoughts create mental forces which by nature are impure, dark, fiery, heavy and hard. The most impure, dark, fiery, heavy and hard mental forces should therefore find their place in Hell, the lowest of the four planes of existence. The matter in all these planes must, therefore, be hard, crude, unpleasant and hot. The human world is just above the concentration of these forces, which are meant for consumption by those beings destined for these lower forms of existence. These beings, with the exception of those in the animal world, are invisible to the ordinary human eye but visible to those only who have developed the higher powers of Samādhi and secured the Divine Eye. Here, suffering, both physical and mental, predominates. This is just the reverse of what happens in the planes of celestial beings.

*Human World.* Now I come to the human world. This is a half-way house between heaven and hell. We experience pleasure and pain mixed together, in degrees as determined by our own past Kamma. From here, we can, by developing our mental attitude, draw in our own mental forces that are in the higher planes. It is also from here that we can go down to the depths of depravity and tune up with the forces of the Lower Order. There is no such constancy as in other planes of existence. One may be a saint today but one can be a rogue thereafter. One may be rich today but one may soon become poor. The vicissitudes of life here are very conspicuous. There is no man who is stable, no family which is stable, no community which is stable, no nation which is stable. All are subject to the Law of Kamma.

As this Kamma comes out of Mind, which is ever-changing, the effects of Kamma must necessarily also be changing.

It is the condition of the evil mental forces submerged in the Earth just under our feet which gives rise to the Law of Gravitation. For as long as man has inherent impurities in him which, *prima facie*, exist, he is subject to this

gravitational pull and if he dies with the mental attitude tuned up with mental forces of a plane of lower existence at the last moment of his life, at the moment of death, the next existence is automatically in that plane, in order to clear, in a manner of speaking, his debit account of mental forces there. On the other hand, if at the moment of death his mental attitude is associated with forces in the human world, the next existence can be in the human world again. If, however, his mental attitude at the last moment of death is associated with the reminiscence of his good deeds, etc., the next existence will normally be in the celestial world, in order to enjoy the credit balance of his own mental forces there. One goes to the Brahma world if, at the moment of death, one's mind is not sensual, but is pure and tranquil. This is how Kamma plays its role in Buddhism, with mathematical precision.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are the essential teachings of the Buddha. The way in which these teachings will affect the individual depends on how one takes it. The same applies to the family, the community or people in general. We have Buddhists in Faith and Buddhists in Practice. Yet there is another class of Buddhists who are just labelled Buddhists by Birth. Only Buddhists in actual practice can secure the change in mental attitude and outlook. Let them only observe the five precepts. They are the followers of the teachings of the Buddha. If this were followed by all the Buddhists in Burma, there would be no internecine strife such as we have here in Burma. But there is another disturbing factor: bodily requirements. One must have the bare necessities of life. Life is more precious to a person than anything else. The tendency, therefore, is for one to break laws of discipline, whether religious or governmental, for his self-preservation and for others depending on him.

What is most essential is the generation of pure and good mental forces to combat the evil mental forces which dominate mankind. This is by no means easy. One cannot rise to a level of pure mental attitude without the help of a Teacher. If we want effective power to combat

these forces, we must work for it Dhammically, *i.e.*, according to the Dhamma. Modern science has given us for what it is worth the atomic bomb, the most wonderful and at the same time the most dreadful product of man's intelligence. Is man using his intelligence in the right way? Is he creating good or bad mental forces, according to the spirit of Buddhism? It is our will that decides how and upon what subject we shall use intelligence. Instead of using intelligence only for the conquest of atomic energy in matter without, why not use it also for the conquest of atomic energy within. This will give us the Peace Within and will enable us to share it with all others. We will then radiate such powerful and purified mental forces as will successfully counteract the evil forces which are all around us. Just as the light of a single candle has the power to dispel darkness in a room, so also the light developed in one man can help dispel darkness in several others.

To imagine that "good" can be done by means of an "evil" is an illusion, a nightmare. The case in point is that of Korea. For all the loss of lives on both sides, now over a million, are we nearer to or further away from Peace? These are the lessons which we have learnt. A change of the mental attitude of mankind through religion alone is the solution. What is necessary at the moment is mastery over mind and not only mastery over matter.

In Buddhism we differentiate Loka Dhātu from Dhamma Dhātu. By Dhātu is meant the nature elements or forces. Loka Dhātu is therefore matter (with its nature elements) within the range of the physical plane. Dhamma Dhātu, however, comprises mind, mental properties and some aspects of the nature elements which are not in the physical but in the mental plane. Modern science deals with what we call Loka Dhātu. It is just a base for Dhamma Dhātu in the mental plane. A step further and we come to the mental plane; not with the knowledge of modern science but with the knowledge of Buddha- Dhamma in practice.

At least Mr. H.A. Overstreet, author of *The Mature Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton) is optimistic about what is in store for mature minds.

**He said:—**

"The characteristic knowledge of our century is psychological. Even the most dramatic advances in physics and chemistry are chiefly the application of known methods of research. But the attitude toward human nature and human experience that has come in our time is new.

"This attitude could not have come earlier. Before it came, there had to be long preparation. Physiology had to be a developed science; for the psychological person is also physiological. His mind, among other things, is a matter of brain tissue, of nerves, of glands, or organs of touch, smell and sight. It was not until about seventy years ago that physiology was sufficiently developed to make psychophysical research possible, as in the laboratories of the distinguished German psychologist, William Wundt.

"But before physiology there had to be a developed science of biology. Since brain, nerves, glands and the rest all depend upon processes, the science of the living cell had to have its maturing before a competent physiology could emerge.

"But before biology there had to be chemistry; and before chemistry, physics; and before physics, mathematics. So the long preparation goes back into the centuries.

"There is, in short, a time clock of science. Each science has to wait until its hour strikes. Today, at least, the time clock of science strikes the hour of psychology, and a new enlightenment begins.

"To be sure, the interests explored by this latest of the sciences are themselves old; but the accuracy of research is new. There is, in brief, a kind of iron logic that is in control. Each science has to wait for its peculiar accuracy until its predecessor has supplied the

data and tools out of which its accuracy can be made.

“The time clock of science has struck a new hour: a new insight begins to be at our service.”

May I say that it is the Buddha-Dhamma which should be studied by one and all for a new insight into the realities of human nature. In Buddhism we have the cure for all the mental ills that affect mankind. It is the evil forces of the mind (past and present) that are responsible for the present state of affairs all over the world. By inspiring a strong sense of Buddhism in the minds of the people during the most critical days of Burma some two years ago, we have been able to get over the crisis.

Nowadays, there is dissatisfaction almost everywhere. Dissatisfaction creates ill-feeling. Ill-feeling creates hatred. Hatred creates enmity. Enmity creates war. War creates enemies. Enemies create war. War creates enemies and so on. It is now becoming a vicious circle. Why? Certainly because there is lack of proper control over the mind.

What is man? Man is after all mental forces personified. What is matter? Matter is nothing but mental forces materialized, a result of the reaction of moral (positive) and immoral (negative) forces. The Buddha said, “Cittena niyyati loko,” “The World is mind-made.” Mind, therefore, predominates over everything. Let us then study the mind and its peculiar characteristics and solve the problem that is now facing the world.

There is a great field for practical research in Buddhism. Buddhists in Burma will always welcome whoever is anxious to have the benefit of their experience.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have made an attempt to give you the best of what I know about Buddhism. I shall be glad to give any interested person such further explanation on any point that he may wish to discuss. I am grateful to you for your kind attendance and the interest taken in my lectures. May I again thank the clergy of the church for the permission so kindly given for this series of lectures on their premises.

Peace to all beings.

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## *Early Western Buddhists*

Extracts from articles published in “*THE BUDDHIST REVIEW*”, 1909-1914

*Selected and presented by Francis Story*

Buddhism made its first real impact on the Western mind in the early years of the present century. The way had been prepared for it by the Pāli and Sanskrit translations of Max Müller, Fausböll, Warren, Rhys Davids and a number of other oriental scholars. In Europe, some familiarity with the broad outlines of Buddhist thought had been created by Schopenhauer; and in England, particularly, Sir Edwin Arnold's fine poem, ‘The Light of Asia’, had given thoughtful readers an insight into the beauty at the heart of the Buddhist ideal. For the first time there was an interest in Eastern philosophy that was more than academic. It came about partly as a reaction against the constricting materialism of nineteenth-century scientific views, and partly in revolt against traditional religious teachings which science had shown to be inadequate, where they were not altogether false.

Many people found an escape from the clash between two equally rigid modes of thought, the religious and the scientific, in the mysteries of theosophy, with its loosely syncretic structure and the liberty it allowed for semi-scientific speculation. At that time the ferment caused by the new scientific ideas was at its height, and the popular construction placed on Darwin's theory of evolution had not yet sunk down to the level of general acceptance it occupies today. A need was felt for some religious or philosophic view that would reconcile the material and spiritual aspects,—a theory that would embody the idea of a progressive evolution, of life straining upwards from the primeval slime towards a glorious and godlike

fulfillment. If this concept could find some sanction in the mysterious and romantic religions of the past, so much the better, no matter what contradictions might be involved. Man, as perhaps never before, was becoming conscious of himself as part of the pattern of an evolving cosmos. The prevailing mood was reflected in the theosophical leanings of such dissimilar writers as August Strindberg and Pierre Loti, as well as in several of the English poets. Among the philosophers there were some who, like MacTaggart of Cambridge, were in the groove of neo-Pythagorean thought to the extent of accepting reincarnation as a law of life.

Everywhere the old shackles were being cast aside; the currents of a fresh movement were making themselves felt not only on the intellectual level but also in aesthetics. It was the era of new experiments in painting, sculpture, music and poetry. The art of the Fauves, the Dadaists and the Cubists competed with the music of the new composers, Stravinsky, Bartok and Honegger, as to which could make the most decisive break with tradition in the shortest time. In every sphere the idols of the past were being asked, in not very respectful terms, to show their credentials.

Amidst this upsurge of creativity and intellectual vigour there was at the same time a growing feeling of political insecurity; not so much in respect of the internal structure of society, which in most of the European nations at that time presented a deceptive appearance of stability, but in international relations. The mounting tensions which were to break in the First World War were



already making themselves felt, and as we shall see, the anxiety they caused found an individual expression in the writings of some of the first European Buddhists.

This was the *mise en scene* against which the ideas of Theravada Buddhism were first presented to the West, in the language of the West. It may seem inappropriate to speak of the articles in such periodicals as the *Buddhist Review* as 'early' writings on Buddhism by 'early' Western Buddhists, but historical perspectives sometimes bear little relation to the actual length of the periods they cover. Since the time when these writings first appeared, close though it is to the present, great and radical changes have taken place in the life and thought of mankind. A considerable amount of history has been telescoped into a brief half century, and it has brought about a great deal of re-thinking on some of the fundamental issues. Many of the most adventurous ideas of those days have become the commonplaces of our time. What is of interest to us today is the manner in which the early Western Buddhists applied the new ideas to their own situation, the characteristic colouring they gave to Buddhist thought, and the degree to which they had assimilated the principles of their adopted creed.

It is interesting, for example, to note the resistance many of them put up to the romantic theories of theosophical syncretism. Sometimes their interpretation of Buddhism leaned, if anything, rather too heavily on its purely rationalistic side; but at all events they avoided that most seductive of all the conceits that the pseudoscientific religious eclecticism of the time favored: the optimistic belief that man's spiritual course is an inevitable upward progression. Those of them who correctly understood the parallel

between the laws of kamma and that of biological evolution grasped the truth that every law, whether physical or psychological, must be capable of working to the detriment, as well as the advantage, of the beings subject to it. In this they were more realistic than those among their contemporaries who had that once human state had been attained in the course of evolution there could be no falling back to inferior conditions. Comforting as that 'esoteric' theory may be, it is no more in accord with the principles of evolution than it is with the real teaching of the Buddha.

In these early writings there is, in fact, surprisingly little attempt to tamper with the Pāli texts and their meaning. The writers seemed happy to accept Buddhism as they found it. It was as well for the continued validity of their ideas that they did so, for since they wrote the world has witnessed events which leave little room for supposing that man, collectively, is on the path to perfection by virtue of a law that permits him only to advance. Truth is angular and non-conformist; it does not obey popular fashions.

That there were, among the first Western Buddhists, minds fearless and in a sense revolutionary, cannot be doubted by anyone who goes through the pages of the early Buddhist publications. These were people who were not afraid to label themselves with the name of a religion which was still looked upon with distrust by the majority. It is not easy in these days when some knowledge of Buddhism has become part of the equipment of every educated man, and when books on the subject are easily accessible to all, for us to reconstruct the attitude compounded of ignorance and not a little fear of 'heathenish superstitions,' which was that of the ordinary man towards Buddhism at that time. The present writer well

remembers, even so late as the nineteen-twenties, a serial story, 'False Gods,' published by a London evening newspaper which purported to be based on the Buddhism of Tibet. It was an example of the most lurid and improbable fiction, in which sinister Lamas moved and had their being enshrouded in Gothic-Himalayan mystery, and worked out their evil designs to the peril and distress of respectable upper-class English families. That was the era when the editors of British Sunday newspapers, taking time off from their lucrative task of crime-reporting, varied by frequent orgies of moral indignation, every so often lashed out at this new menace, Buddhism, which according to their mood, was either a species of black magic or else (to quote one of them from memory) an 'attractive cult for blasé Londoners in search of a new thrill.'

It cannot be denied that there were some questionable personalities vaguely associated in the public mind with the early Buddhist movements, but the dabblers in the occult, make-believe magicians and other picturesque poseurs were not Buddhists in any sense, and most of them were not even on the fringe of any genuine Buddhist activities. Had the self-appointed journalistic guardians of public morality taken the trouble to glance at the articles in the *Buddhist Review*; and noted the names of the contributors, they would have found it difficult to sustain their prejudice. Even the most bigoted could not fail to recognise the earnestness, sincerity and intellectual integrity of these pioneer Western Buddhists, to whom the later progress of Buddhism in the West owes so much.

We cannot begin our symposium of extracts from these Western writings better than by quoting some passages from the editorial, signed J. E. E. (J. E. ELLAM.)

which introduced the first issue of the *Buddhist Review* in 1909. He wrote:

The most striking phenomenon of our time, a process which has been going on for more than a decade, is the growing confusion in the religious thought of the West. With the weakening of theological dicta has proceeded an indifference to the higher, more spiritual aspects of life, together with tendencies towards gross superstitions which find their expression in diverse and most unhealthy forms of heterodoxy. It is not necessary to specify these, indeed, it would be against the Buddhist spirit to do so. The Buddhist method is now, as it has ever been, to refrain from the condemnation of other modes of thought, but simply, gently yet with emphasis, to set forth its own teachings, and to leave them to plead their own cause at the bar of human reason and experience. In psychology, in the sphere of the mind, in the realms of the spiritual, Buddhism moves at ease, confident of its knowledge, confident of its logic, to state clearly, fully and conclusively its solutions of those problems which have vexed the minds of men from time immemorial, solutions which were presented satisfactorily to the acute mind of the Orient two thousand five hundred years ago, and which finding a mentality, an intellectual standard, in the West only now capable of adequately grasping them, are about to be presented, as we think to the great benefit of this and coming generations.... And those who are helping in this great work will, in the future, come to be regarded with the same feelings of gratitude, with the same reverence, which we accord to those who stimulated the Renaissance from the dark ages of Medieval Europe. There is, thus, no hostility, or even rivalry between the Buddhist Movement and the conventional forms of religion in the West. Buddhism is the friend of all, the enemy of none. Animosity, if such there be, can only proceed from one side, but it is certain that it will never be returned in kind. For those who are uneasy in their doubts and questionings, who lack a sure guide to peace of mind, who are bereft of the consolations of Faith in the

higher sense, Buddhism has a Message, strong, sure, convincing. For those who are satisfied with any other belief, creed, philosophy—call it what they will—Buddhism has no other feelings save of sympathy, of kindness, of fellowship, united with a desire for helpful co-operation, provided only that their efforts are for the benefit, the well-being, for the uplifting of humanity to higher ideals of life, of thought, of action, and of the duties of Common Brotherhood throughout the world.

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In the same issue, the essentially tolerant and progressive spirit of Buddhism is also stressed by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids in an article, "*Buddhism and Ethics*:"

Here is a doctrine that takes us back as far as the days of the very beginnings of Hellenic Science. For this doctrine it is claimed that it might have served, not to check or to ignore the discoveries of Copernicus and Bruno, Galileo and Newton, Darwin and Spencer but to stimulate and inspire them. Not a guide that they might have adhered to from convention only, or appealed to now and again to reconcile the lay world with their discoveries and conclusions but an oracle that would have spurred them on in their quest for Truth....

Well, it is one thing to talk about achievements of modern science and advance of modern thought, and another thing to claim for this age in general that it is imbued with the scientific spirit, or that the views and conduct of the average man or woman are governed thereby. This state of things is but in its infancy. But it is born, and is growing. Hence any movement of thought will have, more and more, to cope with the scientific spirit, and will stand or fall largely by its sanction. And hence all who call themselves Buddhist, or who are interested in spreading a knowledge of Buddhist doctrine or, at least, the spirit of that doctrine, should look into this claim that is made for it. Those, again, whose interest lies in tracing the growth of human ideas, can in no wise feel indifferent to the real extent to which

the ancient mind of India anticipated a standpoint slowly and painfully won to by the intellect of Europe....

The fact that early Buddhism and modern Science express belief in a universal law of Causation in terms so similar, leads inevitably to the further inquiry, as to how far there is historical evidence that the evolution of this belief among early Buddhists was parallel to the corresponding evolution in Europe. The lack of continuity and of chronological certainty in the literatures of ancient India hinder and complicate such an inquiry. But there does survive a body of Brahmanical literature, an accretion of various dates, known as the Sixty Upanishads of the Veda, in which a form of Pantheism called Atmanism or Vedantism is set forth, with mainly archaic views on what we term First, Final, and Occasional Cause. And we have the Pāli Canon of the Buddhists, coinciding, it is thought, in date, with the middle period of these sixty books, and repudiating this Atmanism, whether macrocosmically or microcosmically conceived.

To what extent Buddhism, as a lay, anti-Brahmanic anti-sacerdotal movement, originated the rejection of Atmanism, or carried on a wider and older tradition of rejection, it is not possible to say. But the fact that the founders of Buddhism did, in leaving the world for the religious life, take up this protestant position on the one hand, and on the other make a law of natural causation their chief doctrine, suggests at all events a profound psychological crisis.

In such passages as these we see Mrs. Rhys Davids at the height of her powers, when she was contributing the best of her scholarship to the Buddhist cause. The profound psychological crisis to which she refers is a recurring condition. Perhaps, indeed, every major change in the human situation is brought about by an insupportable paroxysm of the mind. Progress is the name we give to a

collective crisis that has taken the right turn.

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In the same issue an article, '*Buddhism and Science*', by E. J. Mills, D. Sc., F.R.S. deals with the still-disputed subject of *Anattā* (Egolessness), in connection with rebirth. It contains the following passage:

Now, nothing is more clear than that evolution is an essential constituent of Buddhism. It is necessarily a part of its doctrine of rebirth and heredity. A qualitative result—character—alone survives death; and this is reborn with a new set of skandhas, in accordance with the Karma of that instant.<sup>1</sup> There may be but very little distinction between the old "character" and the new; on the other hand, there may be a very great deal. It is within our power, as Buddha and Huxley both say, to influence our environment and ourselves very greatly; and it is clear that the next link in the pedigree may be so different, on occasion, as to be to all intents and purposes a new species. This gets rid of much of the difficulty about time in Darwin's theory. But we must not forget the instruction of the Buddha that the new link may, if we so condition it, be worse than before; there is a "way up" as well as a "way down" as Heraclites says. *The new species may be a new reversion*. This is a horrible thing to contemplate; but of its truth there can be no doubt whatever. A modification of this doctrine was adopted, I need not say—and probably from Buddhism—into the Christian scriptures.

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The reference here is of course to the Christian doctrine of eternal damnation, the state of torment or eternal deprivation. But Buddhism teaches that nothing in the sphere of causality can be

eternal; and while all things are subject to retrogression and degeneration there is still always hope, amounting to certainty, of a future opportunity to recover the lost ground. The eternal damnation threatened by theistic religion, and believed in literally for so many centuries, had by its inherent brutality become so discredited that many people still professing theistic creeds had abandoned it. In deference to the more enlightened and humane view the pulpits no longer thundered out the horrors and terrors of the life to come. Yet what is the meaning of salvation, if damnation is no longer believed in? The progressive weakening of religion as a moral influence was bound to follow on the removal of its punitive aspect, for relatively few people, even amongst the most civilised of mankind, are sufficiently advanced to choose the good for its own sake, and in all circumstances, on purely humanistic and ethical grounds. And this is so even when—which is rarely the case—they can be positively certain as to what constitutes the right course of action without guidance from religion. Aside from this, there is no discernible justice in a system that offers rewards for doing, without exacting some kind of retribution for wrong-doing. The early Western Buddhists were quick to see that Buddhism saved the moral order by substituting for eternal punishment a system of automatic causal balance between good and ill, in which the measure of suffering resulting from wrong action is exactly equal to the force of the deed that produced it, neither more nor less.

This theme is the subject of an article by another scientific writer, Ernest R. Carlos, M.A., B. Sc., who, under the heading, '*Transmigration in East and West*', wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Death-proximate Kamma, the last thought-moment that precedes rebirth-consciousness—Ed.

If, as many believe, one single life decides the whole course of the future, why is one life here for a few weeks, and another for seventy or eighty years? For one thing, there is in the first case less risk of eternal loss, but the question is, "Does this life matter or does it not?" If it does not, why are we here at all? If it does, then evidently the child who took his departure after three weeks did not reap the full benefit of life, and if life has value, if we are to learn therefrom, where is the logic in sending into eternal bliss a life which scarcely deserves it? Moreover, if we are to strive for perfection as enjoined by our Teacher, it seems utterly unthinkable that one could arrive at perfection in a single life. Again, it would be unjust for one to have a greater opportunity than another, and if we consider the wide gulf existing between the primitive savage and the enlightened civilised man, we must admit that it would be to the great advantage of the former, were he to return a few more times instead of shooting off straightway into eternity "with all his imperfections on his head."<sup>1</sup>

The idea first occurred to man partly from the desire for justice, and partly from the deep and overwhelming feeling of pain, which the manifest transience of earthly life produces in the human breast. That the idea did arise is not strange. The final law of creation is said to be Love; but the sin and suffering bequeathed to our race, through no apparent fault, makes us regard life as a ceaseless struggle in which the strongest win and the weakest go to the wall. Why are some born rich and others poor? Why are some endowed with the seeds of intelligence and high mental qualities, while others have minds that the best education can make nothing of? We see royal souls, men in whose faces we may read high sentiments of love and self-sacrifice, whose characters are pictures for admiration, and others whose very countenances are strange, criminal and even inhuman.

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<sup>1</sup> One may question the advantages of civilisation without weakening the argument.—Ed.

What answer can be given to the criminal, who, in reply to our exhortation to love justice and kindness says, "How can I help being so? Blame him who has put me in bad surroundings. I was born in a slum brought up by drunkards, heard little more than curses and filthy language in my youth, and was taught nothing that was noble. Can you wonder that I am wicked? I was not so fortunate as you, who, through no merit of your own, were placed among refined people full of tenderness, giving you everything you wanted, and offering you no daily temptations to steal; I had not your education, why blame me? Blame my environment." Justice demands that every man should have an equal opportunity, and Reincarnation gives this opportunity. It furnishes the answer to problems which religious dogma cannot deal with, and which material science is not ready to face.

Hume states that this theory "is the only system of immortality that philosophy can hearken to" and many people are startled at the statement that the belief in Immortality demands a belief in Rebirth. What begins in time must necessarily end in time, and it is impossible to conceive of anything eternal in its onward duration, and at the same time, having a beginning. There can be no "beginning" to eternity. If the soul was specially created for this body, why should it continue to live when this body dies? Its purpose is fulfilled and the materialists who hold that the "I" arose with the body, and will end in death are certainly the more rational. Life eternal must be life for ever, and it is unthinkable that, from an infinite history in the past, the soul enters this world for its first and only physical experience, and then shoots off into an endless spiritual existence.

The Christian holds to the belief in original sin and future punishment, and it is

difficult to conceive how one man can be responsible for a sin in which he had no share. If however we are indeed those who, in their first contact with matter did sin, then we can understand how man is born in sin. As to future punishment, it is not difficult to look thereon as a punishment in a future bodily existence, especially as it is now becoming very unfashionable to believe in Hell. Isaac Disraeli says: "If we accept the belief of a future remuneration beyond this life for suffering virtue, and retribution of successful crimes, there is no system so simple, so little repugnant to our understanding, as that of Metempsychosis. The pains and pleasures of this life are, by this system, considered as the recompense or punishment of our actions in another state."

To say that Science requires Reincarnation to complete the theory of evolution is to make a very bold statement, yet she could with advantage add this one to her other hypotheses. The Struggle for Existence is not a complete explanation of the nature of Man. Professor Huxley once remarked, "It seems that man, a fragment of the cosmos, has set himself against the law of the cosmos. He advances by self-surrender and not by the survival of the fittest, he develops by self-sacrifice." If we look upon those whom humanity has always regarded as the blossoms of the race, we find their lives are one long self-sacrifice. But self-sacrifice, charity, love, sympathy and the surrender of all one has do not conduce to the struggle for existence. Man advances by self-sacrifice—that is the True Law. Such people, however, die out. One who risks his all must eventually perish, and the social virtues and more human attributes tend to kill out their owners, and leave the more selfish and the more brutal to live. Such

lives must return doubly reinforced with that spirit of self-surrender which makes for moral growth.

In heredity it is hard to explain why a good father should have a wild and immoral son, why a genius is born of mediocre parents, or why there should be but one genius in a family, if character is determined merely by physical forces. Science gives us no definite explanation of this and other matters. Professor Weissmann's theory, that moral and intellectual qualities acquired during life are not transmitted to the offspring, is held by the majority of scientific men. If all the high qualities of a man are not handed down from father to son, through the body, how are we to explain human progress, unless, side by side with the continuity of protoplasm, we have a continuity in the development and unfolding of spirit? It seems strange first to imagine that Nature should end her masterpiece Man with total annihilation at death, and even then should not devise some means whereby he can transmit to his offspring the qualities he has acquired. If such qualities were transmitted by the body we should have a material basis for progress but as they are not, we must presume that the bond of union between the various stages lies something else. Kant recognised the difficulty when he said:—

"All the natural qualities of a creature are intended to unfold themselves completely and suitably, and it would take an immeasurably long life for a man to learn how to make a perfect use of all his natural qualities.... It would take an unending series of generations for the one to hand over its enlightenment to the other, in order that the germ of our species may at last arrive at that degree of development which shall be perfectly adapted to the fulfillment of its design. How it may be with the dwellers on other planets and their nature, we know not. Perhaps in these every

individual may attain his appointed design in life. With us is otherwise, and only the species can hope for it.”

Kant saw the hopeless nature of the question, and took refuge in the abstract idea of species. He had only to lift the veil and see how a man might make more and more perfect use of all his natural powers sooner than he expected, if each personality added its experience to a reborn “Intelligent Character.”...

Reincarnation is no doctrine of pessimism. Selfishness is necessary for pessimism and has produced it, but where there is a certainty of progress, of the possibility of perfection there can be no pessimism. To say with the Buddhist, “Painful is the wheel of rebirth,” is no more pessimistic than the Christian desire for union with God. Both wish for liberation from the

body which confines the Eternal Man. The doctrine rightly understood brightens life, in that we look upon this body as a garment and the world as a school. Sorrows and troubles are brushed off as only touching the accidental and the eternal. The heresy of separateness must disappear, and we must look on all as brothers....

Progress is the Law of Life. Man is not Man as yet,” and Emerson was right when he said, “We wake and find ourselves on a stair. There are other stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above, many a one, which go upward and out of sight.”

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*(To be continued)*

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“Through worldly round of many births  
I ran my course unceasingly,  
Seeking the maker of the house:  
Painful is birth again and again,  
House-builder! I behold thee now,  
Again a house thou shalt not build;  
All thy rafters are broken now,  
The ridge-pole also is destroyed;  
My mind, its elements dissolved,  
The end of cravings has attained.”

Dhammapada.

# *Elementary Practical Buddhism*

By

U Thein Nyun

I hope you will agree with me—that the elementary portions of a subject must be well-mastered in order to attain proficiency in it. For it is here that the fundamental principles of the subject are to be found, and which must be well grasped, before the advanced portions are taken up for study. Although this is the normal procedure for the proper study of a subject we are always in a hurry—especially in this satellite age—to learn about as many subjects as possible in the shortest period of time and to be up-to-date on them. Human nature, being what it is, we are eager and greedy to learn, or possess as many things as we can, all at once, and in the quickest time. For instance, we want to be rich tomorrow. We don't want to start from the bottom, strive hard, make sacrifices to save part of our earnings and wait patiently to become rich. It is the same with practical Buddhism. We are too eager to practice the advanced portions in order to become Ariyas as quickly as possible. I compare this to the running up of a very steep ladder. Owing to the disturbance of the ladder, it topples over and we fall back to earth, the place from where we started. It would be preferable to start slowly rung by rung. This is the safe and sure method for there is no possibility of the ladder toppling over. We remain safe at the particular rung from which we can gradually rise, higher and higher, till the top is reached. It is just like a fifth standard boy who is very keen to get to college as soon as possible. He takes private tuition for a year and sits for the Matriculation Examination. Without the proper foundation, however, he does not succeed in passing even after several attempts are made. Thus he loses hope of ever getting to college. Another boy of the same standard gradually works his way up, standard by standard, and passes the Matriculation at the first attempt. So he succeeds in getting to college and, of course, earlier than the first boy. It is the case of the

slow and steady winning the race. Thus a man of knowledge bides his time. He works on the causes, slowly works his way up, and does not bother about results for he knows they will come in time. The ignorant man only bothers about results, rushes to get results but never gets them.

A subject is studied with one of these two objectives namely:— (1) to gather as much information as we can about it from books, *i.e.*, just to know what it is all about. This is the only objective in the case of theoretical subjects such as history (2) to achieve practical results. This is possible only with practical subjects such as chemistry and Buddhism and this should be the objective. But the theorist takes up a practical subject with the first objective, *i.e.*, just gathering information about it, it is only the one, who is gifted with the trait for practical application, who will look out for practical instructions, follow them and acquire practical knowledge of the subject. Here we must be clear as to what is meant by a practical person or a person who is practically minded or one who has the trait for practical application. A practical man is not one who is ready to work with his hands mechanically, *i.e.*, to saw, to carry out experiments and so on. A practical person or a practically-minded person is one who knows how to apply facts in order to make them his own. He also carries out physical work but this forms only part of the procedure for realisation of facts. For example, a scientist thinks out a theory, and then proves the theory is correct by his experiments. The theory then becomes a fact which is his own. In passing, it may be mentioned that every scientist is not a practical person. He has only been trained, in the methods of practical application in his particular field of science but if he does not adopt the same methods in other fields of study, he is not practically-minded.



In the case of a practical subject it is most essential to know whether the facts that a person speaks about are his own or not. A theorist has no means of judging this. For he mistakenly believes that the facts he learns from books are his own. This is “Just theoretical acceptance of facts and conclusions that were arrived at in a practical way by someone else.” So he has to place sole reliance on books in support of his arguments. On the other hand, the practically-minded person knows that the facts he learns from books are borrowed facts and that he has to make them his own. He can distinguish a theorist from a practical man. For he will not be led away by all that the theorist says. Since it is not what a person speaks that counts but his action, attention will be paid to the character of the person and not to the fine words that anybody can utter. A practical man, therefore, makes it a point to preach what he has practised or is practising.

If one is not gifted with this trait for practical application is there any way of acquiring this trait? This brings me to the principles about practical application, *i.e.*, to the method that must be followed for making another's practical knowledge one's own or the practical realisation of facts. These are general principles which are applicable to all practical subjects though their subject matter may be poles apart. For instance, it can be applied to games, the practical arts and sciences, and Buddhism. One must be well-versed with these principles before going on to the actual practice. It is for this reason that I will deal with these principles first before showing how they are to be applied to Buddhism. It is my belief that if a person is ignorant of these principles he will not be in a position to judge which is the correct method or practice. Since he will be reluctant to take up any kind of practice for fear that it might be wrong, he will end up by not practising at all. But if a person is acquainted with these principles he is sure to get practical results because the facts to be realised by himself, facts which he has to make his own, are all

available in the books. And what I have been stressing all along is that we have all the facts in the Buddhist Texts. It is the method of practical application to make the essential facts our own that, somehow or other, has been overlooked, lost sight of, and so far nobody has pointed it out to us. For I am sure that if this method becomes generally known and applied there would be a far larger number achieving results in Buddhism. These results may just be the intermediate results but it would still be beneficial to mankind and the world. It may be compared to reaching the middle rung of the ladder.

The principles of practical application consist of these 4 stages:—

- (1) Why is it necessary to achieve practical result? (One has to come to a personal decision so that action will be taken to achieve the result.)
- (2) What has to be done to achieve the result. (Know what to do, *i.e.*, the theory of the practice—one comes to know the practical knowledge of another—*sutamayañāṇa*.)
- (3) How it has to be done. (Learn how to do, *i.e.*, reasoning or reflection and experimental practice to carry out the method in the right way—*cintāmāyañāṇa*.)
- (4) Repeatedly doing it (Practise to know how to do. The right method is practised till one comes to know how to do it, *i.e.*, this is one's practical knowledge—*bhāvanāmāyañāṇa*).

Before going into details about these stages, let me briefly illustrate in a general way what I mean, taking a worldly subject like soap making and Buddhism as examples.

### Soap making

- (1) A person must have deeply reflected upon the usefulness of knowing how to make soap in order to arrive at a personal decision.
- (2) He will then find out about the method of soap making from books or a soap

maker. The knowledge that he has now gained is not his. It is the practical knowledge of another that he has come to know.

- (3) He then carries out the instructions for making soap. He reflects on what he has to do, the ways of remedying faults and so on, till he gets a good soap.
- (4) Now that he has got the right method he will go on practising till he gains experience. Only now he comes to have a practical knowledge of soapmaking. The facts about soap making are his own.

### **Buddhism**

- (1) A person will not seriously take up the practice of Buddhism unless he has come to a personal decision, i.e., he is thoroughly convinced that the worldly happiness he enjoys is not the true happiness and that there is a better kind; that he theoretically accepts the fact that existence is suffering and desires to attain release from suffering, from the rounds of existence.
- (2) He will find out what are the practices to be carried out to achieve this objective of deliverance. He will seek explanations for what he has to do and the results that he should attain.
- (3) He will learn to carry out the elementary practice of Buddhism. He will know for himself the purpose of the practice and the right method of carrying it out.
- (4) Once the method of practice is known, he will go on practicing mechanically since he has already acquired knowledge about the practice in the third stage.

It will be seen that these are the stages which must be followed in succession. None of these stages must be skipped over or neglected. In my opinion, it is at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> stage that one becomes Sotāpanna. He has a right view of things which includes right view of the practice to be carried out to attain Nibbāna. He has attained the right result, i.e., taking Nibbāna as object, for the first time. Although the Sotāpanna has right views his actions do

not correspond with his views fully and therefore he has to practise towards that end. It is just like having the right view of a bad habit and then the continual practice to overcome entirely that bad habit. The Sotāpanna has only found the Truth to the extent of his stage and has to practise to attain Truth fully. It is just like first finding a treasure and then taking entire possession of it.

I will now go on to the details about the 4 successive stages for acquiring practical knowledge.

(1) Why is it necessary to 'achieve a practical result?

We must get a personal answer to this so that we will make our own decision to take action in the matter. Although others may coax us to do a thing we seldom do it unless we, ourselves, are personally convinced that the result will bring us some reward. As a matter of fact, in this revolutionary age, we do just opposite of what we are told to do. How, then, can we arrive at a personal decision? It comes through meditation. We reflect on the pros and cons of the matter and when we are convinced of the great advantages that will be gained from a practical result we make a decision which leads to action. Meditation is thinking round a subject, i.e., dwelling on the ideas related to that subject. In this case it is a debate, with oneself speaking both for and against. But unless this is done earnestly and repeatedly no decision is made and the matter is forgotten. But if it is done properly a decision is reached and we have a clear objective before us. This objective should then be in the forefront of our minds till it is achieved.

We do meditate and make personal decisions which lead to actions with regard to worldly things such as pleasures, wealth, fame and honour, the results that we constantly crave for. But we seldom, if ever, meditate on what are called dry subjects which lead to actions for the acquisition of knowledge and other abstract results. It is said (1) that if we repeatedly meditate on an idea we come to understand it and (2) that the subject of meditation distinguishes the saint from the

sinner. When meditation is first practised it takes a long time before an original idea occurs to us. But when experience is gained by steady practice, such ideas arise in a very short time.

In many cases we have to make efforts at meditation. For instance, when an intelligent student is about to join the university he makes efforts to reflect on the purpose of going there. He comes to the personal decision that it is for the acquisition of knowledge. So he keeps this objective in mind very often. No one has to ask him to study for he does it by himself seriously and steadily. And he is not easily led astray by others. On the other hand, the ordinary student makes no such efforts and so he has no clear objective before him. Therefore he does not take interest in his studies even if he is forced to do so.

There are times, however, when external circumstances force us to meditate and lead us to action. Advertisements are good examples. A boy, who has sufficient freedom to do as he likes, comes across a newspaper advertisement of a film to be shown in the local cinema. At the first time he does not pay much attention to it. But seeing the advertisement daily he comes to reflect upon it and finally decides to see the film. Once this personal decision is made, no one can prevent him from going to that particular cinema. As another example, boy and girl meet for the first time and they are attracted to each other. Somehow or other they have many opportunities for seeing each other. The boy begins to think of the girl in her absence, takes a fancy to the girl's image which is recalled many times. The girl does likewise. Then as time goes by, each desires to be with the other all the time and so they decide to marry. No one can prevent them from changing their minds and if the parents are not agreeable they find other means. We can recall many such instances these days because boys and girls see each other so often either in the house, office, as neighbours and so on. I have given these examples just to show that when the mind dwells repeatedly on an idea for a long time, some definite action always results.

Sometimes we are compelled to meditate by force of circumstances and arrive at personal decisions which result in good or evil actions. For example, when a person is down and out he is compelled to come to a personal decision to earn a living. If he honestly tries and fails in his attempts he is compelled to meditate again and arrive at other decisions which would lead to stealing and murder. Ordinarily, the majority of us are mentally lazy and so we do not meditate deeply and repeatedly on any idea. The kind of thinking we do is very superficial. No decisions are made and therefore no action is taken to bring about practical results. For instance, everybody wants to be rich and we occasionally think about the ways to get rich and what we will do with all that money. But since we do not reflect deeply enough in order to arrive at personal decisions the objective is not strong enough to lead to action. This is what is wrong with most of us. We have no fixed objectives at all and so we wander aimlessly through life.

It is true, however, that the kind of life we have to lead gives us very little time for sober reflection. There are so many things to be done, so many social calls to make, etc., that we can seldom spare the time. We are now so used to this kind of life that we are not accustomed to be alone with ourselves. As a matter of fact we dislike solitude. We must be doing something all the time, either talking to someone, reading some book or carrying out some physical deed. We now fight shy of solitude which is essential for proper meditation. To sum up:— We must repeatedly meditate on the advantages of a practical objective we wish to achieve and do it long enough in order to arrive at a personal decision, one way or the other. Persuasion and coaxing by others generally fail. For a Buddhist whose primary duty is to take action so that he will never come back to a worldly existence, he has to meditate and convince himself of the unsatisfactory nature of worldly existence. I shall deal more fully with this when I come to its application in practical Buddhism.

(2) What has to be done to achieve the result.

After a personal decision has been made to achieve a practical result, the next step is to find out what has to be done to achieve that result. In other words we must know what to do, *i.e.*, the theory regarding the practice. Here we have to learn the basic principles concerning the practice, the directions that have to be followed, the reasons for carrying out these directions and the result that is to be explained. This means that we must have a theoretical knowledge of the practical knowledge acquired by the discoverer or rediscoverer. For instance, take the case of the discoverer of a gas. He has a practical knowledge of the preparation and properties of the gas. He then makes known his discovery so that others may rediscover the gas themselves. It will include the substances used in the preparation, the method of preparation, the precautions to be taken, the chemical reaction that takes place, the proper collection, testing and properties of the gas. It will be noted that the properties of the gas are given, properties which are found by testing the result, which is the gas. And why are they given? Because anyone who prepares the gas will know that he has employed the correct method when it is found that the results of testing the gas he prepared are in entire agreement with those properties. Of course, the person who is going to carry out the experiment must have acquired a knowledge of elementary chemistry and the ways of carrying out chemical experiments. The same applies to all practical subjects. So we see how essential it is to learn the elementary principles and practice of a subject.

Since the objective is to achieve practical results, we will have to concentrate on those theories which relate to practice. From where can we get these theories? We can seek for them, alone and unaided, from books. This is what is generally done. However, this takes up a lot of time in order to grasp the essential ideas of practice. Moreover, there is always the chance that some of these may be overlooked. The result will be that we gradually come to

lose interest in it and later give it up for good. The best course to adopt is to seek a practical teacher, *i.e.*, one who has a good practical knowledge of the subject. We know of scientific discoverers who adopted the same course and served their apprenticeships under eminent scientists of their time. But it is important that we avoid the teacher who only knows the theoretical aspects of the subject. For we will be asked to carry out some practice without telling us what the result should be. Of course it must be admitted that some sort of result must come from a practice but whether it is the desired result or not is an entirely different matter.

It is, indeed, most difficult to know who is the true teacher. In my opinion he is one who does not care for rewards, followers and fame. He looks solely to the benefit of the pupils he has accepted. And why select pupils? Because he is not going to waste his time and effort on those who will not carry out his instructions and who start arguing and contradicting him. At the present time there are no proper selections of pupils—besides the examination marks gained by them—who are really fired for the professions especially school teachers and doctors who look after the nations' education and health. Recently it came out in the papers that a tennis coach for the Davis cup players refused to accompany them unless they promised to do as they were told. Incidentally, the value of having coaches and experts to train people, instead of learning by trial and error, has come to be realised. The true teacher would be able to explain matters in detail as I have mentioned above. To stress my point by an analogy it wouldn't be right for a teacher to ask a person to ride a bicycle when that person has never seen one and does not know the use of it. If a teacher asks a pupil to do a thing without explaining and giving instructions and the pupil does not carry it out, the teacher blames the pupil. But the latter is not at fault. If a teacher first explains and gives instructions and asks a pupil to do it and the pupil does not carry it out, it is now the pupil's fault, not the teacher's.

We now come to consider the pupil. We must be pupil-minded. This does not mean that we must overdo our respects or flatter the teacher. This is not what the true teacher wants. The main thing is to do exactly as we are told. We will have to leave aside all our old beliefs, prejudices etc. for the time being and have implicit confidence in the teacher. If we don't understand or cannot accept what he tells us we should not argue with him but humbly ask for explanations so as to clear up all doubts and be quite sure that we have rightly interpreted them. For the teacher has to express his ideas in words which can easily be misinterpreted. This will result in reflection on wrong ideas and carrying out wrong practices and we will fail to achieve the proper result. Therefore it is necessary to let the teacher know how we have interpreted his words. This is the real purpose of discussion with the teacher. It is not meant for the purpose of arguing or contradicting him or for showing off our knowledge. But you will find that there are very few who are pupil-minded. We stick to our own views and beliefs and can never leave them aside for a while. In fact we try to force our views on others, instead of simply presenting them for consideration. Others have the freedom to hold views and beliefs of their own and if these are wrong, it's their concern, not ours. There is the pride in us from giving up our views and condescending to learn from others whoever they may be. There is an account of two persons each of whom had been carrying a bundle of rags for a long distance. Then they came to a village where they found some cloth which was better than the rags. One, of course, gave up the rags and took the cloth. But the other would not, saying that he had expended so much effort carrying it for such a long distance he was not prepared to give up the rags. They went on from village to village, one always exchanging his goods for a better one each time and the other sticking to his old rags. Who has profited? It is the same with our views and beliefs, The pupil-minded discards old ones for better ones. We always think in terms of superiority over, or equality

with others, and so we try to learn about things by ourselves without assistance from others. Even in such worldly matters as seeking wealth, we go our own way about it. The wise thing would be to serve as a pupil to one who has acquired riches (honestly, of course), learn from him and consult him in such matters. And this is most important in practical Buddhism. The great difficulty is that there are no concrete ways, such as in the case of the wealthy man, to judge who is the true teacher. The next best thing, therefore, is to select a teacher, serve under him for several years, then do the same with other teachers that are selected. To sum up:—We don't need to know a practical subject entirely but only that relevant portion concerning the theory and instructions that are needed to achieve practical results. This is the practical knowledge acquired by others. We now go on to the next two stages by which that practical knowledge is made our own.

### (3) How it has to be done.

This requires meditation or reflection on the instructions and on how to carry them out. Then comes experimental practice and meditation to remedy defects in the practice so as to get the right result. For in practical work we seldom succeed at the first attempt. Of course, the information in books or those given by the practical teacher is always correct but when we get down to the practice, we make mistakes in the practical details which we ourselves have to overcome. The practical man knows he is liable to make mistakes, he is not afraid of making mistakes and when he does, he overcomes them and gets his practice right. The theorist, on the other hand, gets his information from authoritative books which are always right. He is afraid of making mistakes and he thereby loses truth.

Here more time is spent on meditation on practice. We must remember, however, that the meditation is done with a practical result in view. We have to rely on ourselves alone from now on. We can get advice and guidance from the teacher and from books but to get our own result we have to carry out the meditation and

the experimental practices by ourselves. We cannot get the right view of the method of practice simply by accepting what the teacher and the books tell us. This is just theoretical acceptance of the practical conclusions arrived at by others. We have to carry out trial experiments and arrive at the practical conclusions ourselves. As an example to illustrate my point, we Buddhists learn from the Texts that everything in this world is Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā and this view is accepted by us. If this were sufficient then all Buddhists would be Ariyas. But we are not, simply because we have not found this out practically for ourselves. The view has not been confirmed by experiment.

The things that have to be done at this stage are (1) to meditate over what we have to do (2) to clearly comprehend why they have to be done, (3) to recall results that are to be obtained at the different stages and (4) to draw up a procedure for trying out the experiment or method of practice. After that we carry out the practical work. It will be found that the result expected at intermediate stage is not obtained. We then reflect and find out where we went wrong and the ways of putting it right. Then the method must be repeated from the beginning and carried on till we again find that the result at another intermediate stage is wrong. Again we must reflect to find means to overcome the defects. These practical mistakes can only be remedied by ourselves to get the right result. When, in the above manner, we find that the final result is correct, we have a right view of the experiment. But if we do not get the right ideas of the practice or make no attempts to find solutions to the practical problems that we come across, we lose interest and give up the experiment. It is therefore very necessary that we proceed steadily and with perseverance so as to grasp the essential ideas in order to create interest. Because it is only when we become interested that we find time to continue with the trials till success is achieved.

To sum up:— At this stage we have to get a good grasp of the essential ideas of the

experimental practice and this comes only by steady and persistent efforts at meditation and practice. It becomes very interesting because we have to find solutions for the practical problems that are encountered. We become active in mind—and therefore active in body—when we know we have some problem to solve and we try to find the solution. We now clearly comprehend, in a practical way, how the practice has to be carried out, why we have to carry out the various steps and the result attained from practice. So this is a right view which has been confirmed by practice, *i.e.*, a practically realised right view of our own.

#### (4) Repeatedly doing it.

Since we have clearly comprehended everything about the method of practice in the preceding stage, the method is now repeated just consciously till it can be carried out mechanically. We can now say that we know how to carry out the practices because the right result is obtained every time. There is nothing more to do about it for we have acquired practical knowledge of the method, *i.e.*, it is our own method. The practical knowledge of another has been made one's own.

To sum up:— It is only at the end of this final stage that we practically realise the facts found in books or given by the teacher. The conclusions that we arrive at are our very own and are based on practical experiments. Our objective to achieve a practical result has been realised.

We often go through these successive stages in order to achieve some practical objective although we are never conscious of these stages. If therefore, a person clearly understands the principles explained above and repeatedly applies them he will acquire the trait for practical application of facts and so make them his own. He will never forget the facts although he makes no effort to memorize them. The reason is that he had meditated on them so often in the various stages and applied them in practice. One seldom forgets things that one comes to know in a practical way. Off-hand answers can be given on it at any time.

# *Holism And The Scientist*

By

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(This article was written by an English Buddhist and is an attempt to apply Buddhist principles to modern Science.—Ed.)

*The traditional methodology of Western Science has been Analytic and has tended to subsume events under standards or ideals. Holism looks to the events themselves, and makes no attempt to set the observer apart from the system being studied. The Holistic observer attempts to attain an understanding of the event rather than to formulate laws which may explain the activity of the system.*

“FIRST and above all, an explanation must do justice to the thing that is to be explained, must not devalue it, interpret it away, belittle it, or garble it, in order to make it easier to understand. The question is not ‘At what view of the phenomenon must we arrive in order to explain it in accordance with one or another philosophy?’ but precisely the reverse: ‘What philosophy is requisite if we are to live up to the subject, be on a level with it? The question is not how the phenomenon must be turned, twisted, narrowed, crippled so as to be explicable, at all costs, upon principles that we have once and for all resolved not to go beyond. The question is: ‘To what point must we enlarge our thought so that it shall be in proportion to the phenomenon.’” (Schelling, ‘Philosophic der Mythologie’.)

As in all thought, the thought expressed in the foregoing quotation, is worth rather less than the paper on which it is printed, unless and until it is given expression as action. Without action, thoughts, no matter how rational and sophisticated and pious they may be, are merely rational and sophisticated and pious. This is not to say that thought is useless, but it is to say that, it has no position superior to action, and must travel with it as equal partner, if it is to travel at all.

Those of us raised in the Rationalistic societies of the Western Hemisphere may find it simple to agree that action must always consult thought, before it attacks its end; significantly fewer of us understand what is

well understood in the Eastern Hemisphere, which is that effective thinking may only operate in the same area as that in which action operates, and that this area is defined by whatever are recognised to be events. Events are prior in experience to facts, and need not be facts at all. Consequently scientists who deal only in facts run a risk of ending up with a collection of world-pictures, instead of gaining a grasp of Nature, the totality of events, which they set out originally to get.

The conflict over the relative importance of Reason and Events in regard to possible action emerges typically in Science as a methodological dispute. Those who say that events should be given, an equal voice with reason in deciding proper scientific methods, are often called Holists; whilst those who would subordinate events to laws, principles and classes whose abstract, rational form is frequently cloaked under some ill-understood notion of “high probability”, are called by me the Analysts.

In what follows I shall introduce them more fully to the reader, provide a brief sketch of their historical position and origin, and finally examine three main arguments often advanced against Holism. I would assume a point at issue if I claimed to do this objectively, for Holism rejects the Analysts contention that man is, or must be, capable of being impartial to whatever he studies as a scientist. I shall, then, reject the disputed role of impartial recorders, and, like a French judge does,

declare myself biased, in this case towards Holism. My readers run no risk therefore of having their minds covertly made up for them by me assuming an objectivity that may not exist.

To predict and control Nature to the fullest possible extent, Science must seek an intimate understanding of it. This intimacy presupposes an effective methodology. Methods are adopted for use in one of three ways. The first way is by haphazard fumbling around some problem which has suddenly put the correct method into the experimenter's hand. This is hardly Science, and is certainly not effective. The Analysts choose the second way, which is to make a minimum assumption that any scientific problem must be analyzable; as events are always at the core of scientific problems, this entails that events are capable of being understood by splitting them up in a methodical manner. The third way is the typical *modus operandi* of the East, and makes no assumptions whatever; events are simply observed until some understanding of their activity is gained, which is immediately experimented upon, after which the operator observes, and so on.

The distinction between the consequent methodologies is that the first isn't one, the second is assumptive, and the third is dictated by the way things allegedly are. As I am arguing that our methods must arise either from our assumptions about the world, and the Analysts represent this view, or from the perceptions we have in the world, and the Holists stand for this, it follows that I must proceed by examining their respective attitudes towards the world, in a context supplied by Science.

The Analysts have tended to view the end of Science, as perhaps Zoology used to be regarded, as a closed or completed science. Nature would be seen as analysed into exhaustive classes, each one resting on logical proofs for its being a class, and containing within its definition the practical possibility of predicting accurately that each class will, or

will not, develop into another distinguishable class. Present in some areas of the system is the possibility of promoting or inhibiting this development by the simple exercise of man's will. Nature would thus appear exactly like a huge machine, the operation of which men could predict and control with varying degrees of success.

Technically, for brevity, this is the same as saying that the event-system is postulated as being a complete, or static, structured object, and that this assumption underlies the expectations and methods with which the Analysts approach events. (a) The word "complete" is used to indicate the eternal stability which the Analysts believe to underlie the surface froth of processing phenomena. "Indeterminate errors" are due to the contingency of events, and are not sign-posts to the constant novelty of Nature, as the Holists believe. (b) The term "structured" I have used to signify what is sometimes his conscious assumption, but often his unconscious prejudice, that the Universe is *built*, and therefore has parts which are capable of being entirely separated from the whole, and which, *in toto*, exactly equal the whole. To claim, as the Holists will do, that a whole can *be* more than its parts because of the pattern any part of such wholes must follow so as to be a part of such particular wholes, is, to the Analyst, merely to claim that any organised whole always has one more part than any unorganised whole—that is, its, organicity, or 'blueprint'. (c) "Object" is used to underline the Analysts' belief that Nature is in front of us where we are independent observers, or is capable of being brought in front of us by some process which invariably leans heavily on the assumption that logical arguments can apply validly to events.

If I were attempting to be "logical", I would now go on to assume the truth of the Analyst position by presenting the opposed Holistic view, and then compare and contrast their positions as "objectively" as I could, utilizing objective techniques to do so. But Holism rejects all words like "logical" and



“systematic” and “objective” and also their logical opposites such as “illogical”, “unsystematic” and “subjective” because they rest upon purely rational operations of the mind, and can therefore have nothing to do with events. Events, however, have histories, and as I am avowedly taking the Holist side here, and as their conflict with the Analysts is an event, I shall proceed to develop the Holistic thesis by examining their theory of history.

To Holists history is conflict. This struggle has taken place between events, including men with their varied desires, and what men have often claimed events ought, or ought not, to be, by standards other than those erected on personal desire. Each force in this apparently endless struggle is known by a great variety of names, because in order to avoid undesirable associations drawn out of their meanings by the opposition, each disputant has frequently changed or modified its distinguishing label. So, for instance, those who say that events are the proper study for man, have sometimes called themselves Materialists; and those who believe that events are, or can be, arranged under idealistic standards which have the only authority over them, including man’s wants and needs, are still often called Idealists. But as the first term has often been confused by its antagonists with sensualism, sometimes deliberately, and the second confused with impractical dreaming, just as deliberately, quite often, we now find names which seek to avoid these associations. Thus Materialists have been known to call themselves Realists, and Idealists to call themselves Rationalists, and even Empiricists.

Apart from name changing and name calling the dispute remains unmodified, because, the Holists say, it is simply an instance of the eternal conflict which keeps Nature going. Idealists and Materialists are both right, in the way that any natural struggle is right, and the only danger to man has been when either of these antagonists threatened to get the upper hand. The exact parallel is when male and female are struggling together in

potentially fruitful sexual union, and the one suddenly seeks to kill the other. Of course this view of eternal conflict is not accepted by the Analysts, who resort to a certain body of rules the ancient Greeks used to use for deciding who had won a debate, and which are nowadays often called Formal Logic.

But the Holists refuse to be bound by them, arguing that either these rules will dictate the proper settlement of the argument (which is an event like any other), or they will not. If the latter, they are useless; but if the former they must assume the point to be proved, which is whether events can be subordinated to rules and standard. When the Analysts argue that scientists cannot know anything unless they follow rules, and select and analyse events in terms of them, the Holists counter by saying it is the primary aim of the scientist to understand events, and this is a whole, or unified process, which has no connection with abstract laws and rules. A child *knows* that two and two make four, but does he understand the process which develops four out of two twos?

It is important to note that the Analysts, like their ancestral Idealists, are seeking to subordinate Holism to their methodological approach; but the Holists represent a progression on the ancient Materialists, for they do not want to overcome their opponents, but want simply to co-exist with them in fruitful union.

Within the context supplied by the foregoing exposition of that conflict of events which the Holists say is the story behind all events, and each event, it is now possible to see their thesis emerging. It is far older, probably, than recorded history, for its roots lie for all to see in the Upanishads and Vedic hymns of ancient India. In them, Nature is said to be a continually developing process of events, of which man is always an integral part. This view is *not* a bare assumption; for it is describing what is clearly the case, namely that Nature, and natural events, are always altering and modifying, and man is a part of Nature.

Any methodological interferences in Science, if scientists wish to deal with what is the case, i.e. events, must be drawn therefore from this fundamental declaration, often made by Buddha as “All that is constant is change”. Against the Analyst *assumption* that Nature will turn out to be a completely structured object, and that therefore scientific methods should aim at proving this true, the Holists present their *observation* that Nature is continuously developing as a whole, with scientific observers consequently unable to divorce themselves from what it is that they study, and that therefore all *scientific* methods are unitary, and ecological, and synthetic in operation. It is this practical inability of the scientist to divorce himself from what he seeks to understand that is the very condition of his understanding, and his realisation of this, in connection with each particular problem he seeks to solve, *is* his understanding.

There are three common moves made against Holism, and I shall conclude this outline by sketching them in, along with their rebuttals.

(1) Nature is cyclic. Summer follows summer, assorted crystals exhibit the same pattern, and so on. This is the ground for assuming Analytical methods, and it is in order to lay this basic completeness bare. The Holists rebut this by saying that Nature, either as a whole of event, or in aspect as single event, is not cyclic, but is instead spirited. One summer is not exactly like another, one crystal is not identical with another. Events represent a continual unfolding on themselves, which is therefore a whole of development. We cannot approach the ever-renewed-yet-new, symbolised by a spiral, with methods based upon assumptions of a fixed and inviolable nature. For rest assured the use of such methods will confirm our assumptions, or else they will be discarded, and we will wind up eventually with a *picture* of the world, a knowing of it, instead of a *grasp* of the world, an understanding of it. Our methods must be as flexible and unprejudiced as is the process we study; when

they are truly such, we are at one with the process, and can be said to understand it.

(2) Science can only come to know what any event is by examining the way it is built. In order to do this it must assume an analytical method, which is the same as assuming that every event is a logical structure which therefore must have parts. The reply of the Holists is that events are illogical structures. Therefore to seek always and essentially to analyse them will result either in failing to understand events, or in understanding something quite different from them. Any event is illogical because it is that-which-happens. As “that” it is an entity, and is therefore a mass, and intransitive. As “happening”, however, it is therefore a velocity, and transitive; it is merely using synonyms to say it is therefore a process, and represents a history. It follows, and unless we wish to ignore events and live in some analytical dream-world, that the understanding of events presupposes the abandonment of logical assumptions about them, and consequently, the sole use of analytical methodologies as the only “respectable” activity of Science.

(3) We can regard the world objectively, for events are at the receptors of our sense-organs, and we must so regard the world with impartiality if we are to gain a clear picture of it, and the events that make it up. Thus methodology must always assume the analysis-possibility of events. Holists, however, deny that we view the world impartially, for our sense-organs, nervous systems, and brains are events in it, and of it. But this is a case for scientific joy, not despair. This circumstance will help, not hinder, the scientist to achieve his end, which is not to look at pictures of events, but to grasp them in his understanding.

Understanding is essentially an enlightening, insightful experience, which I term “pattern-grasp”. The practice of objective techniques removes us from any possibility of gaining this grasp of events, by opposing us to events. Pattern-grasp arises, and can only arise, from the many pulls and pushes, tugs and

shoves, which we give to events, amid events. This is not a logical procedure, for it has no possibility of being ultimately abstracted from events, and made formal and objective; but neither is it illogical in the sense of being haphazardly insane, for it is not utterly subjective, being continuously responsive to other events. Pattern-grasping involves, if you like, a totality of object and subject, and this is Holism for Scientists.

If I were asked to sum up the argument advanced by Holism I would speak, or write,

as follows. If you look at Nature, and each event, like a machine set in front of you, and Nature were not a machine in front of you, this assumption would lead you away from what Nature actually is, to what *you*, personally, think it to be. If you happen to belong to a rich and powerful organization, such as modern Science is, and I happen to be a natural event, and a discrepancy appears between what you think I must be, and what I happen to be, I can be exposed to physical, mental, moral and spiritual damage. 'Potent sirs, take care.



The Monastery—IB, Nālandā

( From the Way of the Buddha )

## THE BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF BUDDHISTS

By

*Miss Pitt Chin Hui,*

*President of the Singapore Regional Centre of the W.F.B.*

Many people think that Buddhism is a Doctrine of pessimism and, for this reason, keep themselves far away from the Buddhist world. They care very little to investigate and study Buddhism, the Science of Deliverance. But, in fact, to study Buddhism is to seek the way to understand the Truth of the world and of human life. The excellent way of life preached by the Buddha is the result of His personal experiences, and His teachings are practical and within the reach of every one.

The ethical Teachings of the Buddha appeal not only to people of all classes but also to people of different thoughts, in different times and under different circumstances. The doctrine of the Buddha is the only excellent way of leading the world to perfect peace and happiness. Selfishness, greed, hatred, injustice and intolerance have caused many a quarrel among individuals and these same evils have led to wars among nations.

The main Teachings of the Buddha are based upon cause and effect, and these truths are well contained in the philosophy and moral Teachings of the Buddha. When people understand the principle of cause and effect, they will try their very best to do good and to avoid evil. Buddhism is not only the science of deliverance, leading people to live a righteous

life, but it is also an excellent path to a lasting world peace. If we try our utmost to propagate the Teachings of the Buddha today, we shall be able to convert those who love war to rather searching for peace and harmony instead.

Since Buddhism is an excellent way of leading humanity to deliverance, we should spare no effort to search for all means to propagate the Noble Teachings of the Buddha, to promote Culture, Education and Charity. Through -the medium of Culture, we can propagate Buddhism far and wide. With Buddhist education, we can train Buddhist missionaries. When young people are taught the ethical teachings of the Buddha in schools and Universities they will bring peace and happiness to the world. And finally we can win the hearts of men through infinite loving-kindness. Promoting cultural, educational and charitable activities is the basic responsibility of all followers of the Buddha.

I earnestly hope that we followers of the Buddha will try to find ways and means to propagate Buddhism to every corner of the world so that the Truth of the Buddhadhamma will enlighten the world, and enable all to live in peace, liberty and happiness.

May this Vesak Day bring you all good health and prosperity.

# *Nalanda University Library*

By

Dipak Kumar Barua, M.A., Dip. Lib.

“A true University is a collection of books”, Carlyle remarks such while he commends highly of the library or a collection of books. Indeed no University whether of old or of today can be an effective instrument of imparting instructions to the inquisitive learners without a well-planned library. The celebrated Universities of India, thus maintained well-organised libraries for the convenience of both teachers and students. Nalanda, the magic name in the domain of learning, too flashes a good deal of light on the organisation of libraries in Indian Universities of old.

About 55 miles south-east of Patna, Nalanda became gradually a famous Buddhist centre which was the place of the birth and death of Sariputta, one of the dearest disciples of the Buddha. Asoka is said to have built a temple there. But its rise as a centre of learning has to be placed at about 450 A.D., as Fa-Hien in C. 410 A.D., did not mention its educational eminence. It was under the active support and patronage of the Gupta emperors who were little orthodox, that Nalanda steadily rose into prominence. Sakraditya (probably Kumara Gupta I) of 414-455 A.D., laid the foundation of the greatness of Nalanda by establishing and endowing a monastery there.

But the “Nalanda authorities could feel that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armoury”.<sup>1</sup> The Nalanda University was maintaining a splendid library to meet the needs of the numerous teachers and students. I-Tsing, the Chinese traveller, got copied at Nalanda 400 Sanskrit works amounting to 5,00,000 verses and stayed for his studies there for the long period of ten years (675-685 A.D.).<sup>2</sup> This refers to the fact that the University possessed a very rich collection—both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

According to further observations of I-Tsing when a Bhikkhu expired at Nalanda, his sacred books were added to the library and other properties including non-Buddhist works were sold or distributed. This precious information shows how gradually through peaceful acquisition of dead one’s careful collections the Nalanda University Library ultimately became a grand store-house of invaluable manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> Detailed particulars about the Nalanda University Library can be gathered from the Tibetan sources. The library was situated in a special area known as the Dharmaganja (Mart of Religion)<sup>4</sup> which comprised three monumental edifices, called Ratnasagara, Ratnadadhi and Ratnaranjaka, of which Ratnasagara, which was a nine-storeyed building<sup>5</sup> was specialized in the collection of rare and sacred works like “Prajnaparamitasutra” and Tantrika books like “Samajaguhya” and others.<sup>6</sup>

There are epigraphic records which show definitely that financial arrangements were made for the preservation of the rich collections of the Nalanda Library. An inscription relates how the famous king of Java and Sumatra, Balaputradeva by name, had a monastery built at Nalanda, and also requested his friend, King Devapala of Bengal, to make a grant of five villages for the maintenance of this newly built monastery and expenditure of adding to its library manuscripts copied for the purpose (Dharmaratnasaya lekhanartham).<sup>7</sup>

But it is sad to note that this celebrated Library which grew up step by step and which respected accurately the Fifth Law of Library Science, viz., “Library is a growing organism”,

<sup>3</sup> Indian Librarian, Vol. 9 No. 2, Sept. 1954, p. 54  
(Chekravorti, S. N. *Libraries in Ancient Times with special reference to India.*)

<sup>4</sup> Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, ed., Das. S.C. p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Mazumdar. N.N. *A History of Education in Ancient India*, p-93.

<sup>6</sup> Sankalia. H.D. *The University of Nalanda*, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XVII; p.310.

<sup>1</sup> Altekar, A.S. *Education in Ancient India* p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Mookerjee, R.L., *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 574.

as propounded by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, could not survive long as the surging waves of invaders came from the West. It was at the merciless hands of these bloody intruders that Nalanda passed into oblivion and now has become almost a sacred name for the scholars world over. The Tibetan text Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang presents a vivid account of the destruction of the Library thus: “After the Turusha raiders had made incursions in Nalanda, the temples and chaityas there were repaired by a sage named Mudita Bhadra. Soon after this, Kukutasiddha, Minister of the King of Magadha, erected a temple at Nalanda, and while a religious sermon was being delivered there, two very indigent Tirthika mendicants appeared. Some naughty young novice monks in disdain threw washing water on them. This made them very angry. After propitiating the Sun for twelve years, they performed a yajna, fire-sacrifice, and threw living embers and ashes from the sacrificial pit into the Buddhist temples, etc. This produced a great conflagration which consumed Ratnadadhi”.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended “most insignificantly the most magnificent temple of learning in Jambudripa” or the premier and pioneer National University of India.<sup>2</sup> It was the University which offered to us the first well-organised University Library consisting of manuscripts of different curricula that were followed there. It not only helped the scholars and aided the ordinary common people by answering simple reference questions, but also actually found out appropriate answers for the inquirers. The visitors were struck dumb by observing its magnificent buildings and grand libraries of encyclopaedic knowledge. It may be that in the subsequent periods numerous academic and institutional libraries grew up, but none could surpass the Nalanda Library which being pre-eminent scattered its rays to all directions and made the cultural conquest of India easy and convenient.

<sup>1</sup> Vidyabhushana, S.C. Mediaeval School of Indian Logic, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Sankalia, H.D. The University of Nalanda, p. 241.

## DHAMMA SAṄGAṆĪ (ENGLISH TRANSLATION) REPRINTED

(The following is the series of correspondence leading to the re-print of SCO copies of the English Translation of Dhamma-Saṅgaṇī by the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council, in 1963, with the kind permission of the Pali Text Society, London.—Ed.)

**Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,**  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

No. Sa. Sa. 62/(295)

22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1962

Dear Madam,

As the interest in the study of Buddhist literature, especially the Abhidhamma, is growing day by day all over the world, the members of the Inquiry Committee of the Buddha Sāsana Council feel that the English translation of Dhamma Saṅgaṇī, the first book of Abhidhamma, should be reprinted as soon as possible.

The Buddha Sāsana Council is fortunate enough to own a very modern Litho-press, which can reprint the Dhamma Saṅgaṇī within one month's time at the longest. If ever it is reprinted, it should be not less than two thousand copies, otherwise the cost of each copy will be very high.

Our main object is to place the book within the easy reach of interested scholars and students. Our purpose is not to make money out of the publication, but at the same time we do not want to deprive the original printers and the people who owned the copyright of their monetary benefits.

We like to know the terms for the publication of this book as soon as possible, i.e., commercially.

Even if the original printers do not agree to our idea of reprinting the book on commercial scale, we like to print the book for our domestic use only. That means, we like to print about 500 copies only.

Therefore, can you enlighten us as to the following two points:—

- (1) The terms for the publication of the book up to 2000 copies.

(2) Publication of the book up to 500 copies only for domestic use, *i.e.*, just for the interested scholars and the students in the country. In this case, each copy will not cost more than ten Kyats only (*i.e.*, about 12 Shillings) *for* scholars in *Burma* only. This is just the bare cost. The book consists of about 500 pages. You know very well that there is no money-making enterprise in this. It is purely a dissemination of Dhamma.

Kindly note that if we reprint the book, we can give royalty, if any, in terms of books only, as we are faced with the Foreign Exchange problems.

An early reply is solicited.

Sincerely Yours,

**U Hla Maung, M.A., M.S., B.L.,**

Secretary,

Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

Miss I.B. Horner, M.A.,  
Associate of Newnhan College,  
Cambridge, ENGLAND.

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**Pali Text Society**

30 Dawson Place, London, W.2

1-1-63.

The Secretary,  
Buddha Sāsana Council,  
Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon.  
Dear Sir,

**Your Ref. No. Sa. Sa 62/(295)**

I have safely received the two copies of the letter you sent me dated December 22<sup>nd</sup> concerning a reprint of the English Translation of the Dhamma Saṅgaṇī. Today I am forwarding one of these copies to the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, as this Society, and not the Pali Text Society, is the publisher of this book, and presumably owns the copyright. You will doubtless hear from the Secretary in due course.

Thanking you for waiting, I am,

Yours Sincerely,

**Sd. I.B. Horner**

(President)

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**Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,**

Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

No. Sa.Sa. 63/ (8)

10<sup>th</sup> January 1963.

Dear Madam,

Thank you very much for your kind letter of 1st January 1963. We are writing direct to the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society in London in connection with the reprint of the Dhamma Saṅgaṇī. We hope, you will also remind either the secretary or the members of the Royal Asiatic Society whenever there is any chance for you to contact them.

We also like to have a Book List published by the Pali Text Society.

Thanking you again for your kind reply.

Yours Sincerely,

**U Hla Maung, M.A., M.S., B.L.,**

Secretary

Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

Miss I.B. Horner, M.A.,  
President, Pali Text Society,  
30 Dawson Place, London, W.2,  
ENGLAND.

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**Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,**

Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

No. Sa.Sa. 63/ (9)

10<sup>th</sup> January 1963.

Dear Sir,

We believe that you have already received a copy of our letter addressing to Miss I.B. Horner, who was kind enough to forward it to you.

In this letter, we want to repeat our request that we may be given permission to reprint the English translation of the Dhamma Saṅgaṇī, which is one of the most important treatises on Abhidhamma.

Our main purpose is for the wider publication and dissemination of the Dhamma only, and not for monetary profit at all.

Buddha Sāsana Council owns a very good Litho Press, which can reprint the book well.

Therefore, we like to know the following points:—

- (1) The terms for the publication of the book up to 2000 copies, and
- (2) Publication of the book up to 500 copies only for domestic use.

If we are to give any royalty, we can give in terms of books only, as we are faced with the very strict foreign exchange problems.

An early reply is solicited.

Sincerely Yours,

**U Hla Maung, M.A., M.S., B.L.,**

Secretary,

Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

The Secretary.

Royal Asiatic Society (in London),  
Miss I.B. Horner, M.A  
President, Pali Text Society,  
30 Dawson Place, London, W.2.,  
ENGLAND.

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**Pali Text Society,**

30 Dawson Place, London, W.2.  
9-2-63.

Your ref. No. Sa. Sa. 63 (8)  
of January 10th, 1963.

Dear U Hla Maung,

Since I received your letter, for which I thank you, I have been trying to find out who is the owner of the copyright of Mrs. Rhys Davids's translation of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, "Buddhist Psychological Ethics". I now discover that the Pali Text Society has the copyright invested in it. For any question of a reprint being made I must refer the matter to my Council at their next meeting in the middle of March and will let you know if they come to any decision.

I sent you a catalogue of books published by the Pali Text Society on January 17<sup>th</sup>, by surface mail, so am afraid it cannot have reached you yet. It is rather heavy for air mail. Since I sent it, the book "Introduction to Pali", a primer and reader, teaching one how to read and understand canonical Pāli, has been published. It is priced at £ 4.15.0 a copy. I

wonder if you know anyone in Burma who could buy one?

Thanking you very much for your kindness which is much appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

**Sd. I.B. Horner**

(President)

The Secretary,  
Buddha Sāsana Council,  
Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,**  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

No. Sa. Sa. 63/(50)

14<sup>th</sup> February, 1963.

Dear Madam,

I thank you very much for your letter dated the 9th February 1963 and the Catalogue of Books published by the Pali Text Society, which had reached me safely.

As for the book "Introduction to Pali", we will order it through either Ava House, a book depot, or Peoples' Literature House. I believe that it will be very useful for the students of Pāli.

As for reprinting the "Dhamma Saṅgaṇī" we will be grateful if you can advise us as to how many copies we should publish. Locally, we can have an immediate sale of about 150 copies, and the rest will be sold out gradually and slowly. Anyway, we are ready to print the book up to 1000 copies.

We hope, our request will meet a favourable consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

**U Hla Maung, M.A., M.S., B.L.,**

Secretary,

Buddha Sāsana Council Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon, Burma.

Miss I.B. Horner, M.A.,  
President, Pali Text Society,  
30 Dawson Place, London, W.2,  
ENGLAND.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Pāli Text Society**

30 Dawson Place, London, W.2.

20-3-63

Your ref. No. Sa. Sa. 63/ (50) of 14.2-63.

Dear U Hla Maung,

I put the matter of a possible reprint of the translation of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* to be made by the Buddha Sāsana Council before the Council of this Society at its Meeting this week. This refers to the translation made by Mrs Rhys Davids, under the title "Buddhist Psychological Ethics", 1st edition 1900, 2nd edition 1923. The copyright is vested in the Pali Text Society.

I am glad to be able to tell you that my Council fully agreed that an edition of up to, but not exceeding, 500 (five hundred) copies might be printed in Burma for, as you say, your "domestic use only", and this edition should not be sold to overseas countries; and copies to be sold only in Burma. In fact, my Council was inclined to think that each copy should have printed in it "Not for Export".

The Pali Text Society had for some years been contemplating re-printing this work,

being fully aware of the importance, and scarcity in English translation, of Abhidhamma books. I now have my Council's permission to put a reprint in hand. This will be on sale to all countries except Burma where it would not be possible for us to sell it because of the Foreign Exchange problem.

This copyright permission we are now giving you for reprinting an edition of up to 500 copies naturally covers these five hundred copies only. If any subsequent reprinting were desired to be made, the copyright permission would have to be sought from the Pali Text Society again.

I hope you will find we have tried to meet your wishes. Like you, we too feel the dissemination of Buddhism is a matter of great importance.

Sincerely Yours,  
**Sd. I.B. Horner**  
(President)

The Secretary,  
Buddha Sāsana Council,  
Inquiry Committee,  
Kaba-Aye, Rangoon.



The Monastery—IA, Nālandā