

# WHAT BUDDHISM IS



VIPASSANĀ RESEARCH ASSOCIATION  
OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL,  
RANGOON. (BURMA)

Electronic Publishers Notice: This work has been republished by Pariyatti as an electronic publication.

Questions or comments regarding this electronic publication can be addressed to [treasures@pariyatti.org](mailto:treasures@pariyatti.org)

For other issues in this series please visit [www.pariyatti.org/treasures](http://www.pariyatti.org/treasures)



## PARIYATTI

867 Larmon Road  
Onalaska, Washington 98570 USA  
360.978.4998  
[www.pariyatti.org](http://www.pariyatti.org)

Pariyatti is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the world by

- disseminating the words of the Buddha,
- providing sustenance for the seeker's journey, and
- illuminating the meditator's path.



## International Meditation Centre

Founded by

**The Vipassanā Association**

Office of the Accountant-General, Burma.

*(Location : 31A, Inyamyaing Road,  
Off University Avenue, Rangoon).*

President : *Thray Sithu U Ba Khin.*

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>What Buddhism Is</i>	
<i>Lecture No. 1</i> .....	4
<i>Lecture No. 2</i> .....	11
<i>Lecture No. 3</i> .....	19
<i>International Meditation Centre</i> .....	26

# *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 Brahmās
- (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) Tāvatiṃsa
  - (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, Āḷara and Uddaka. Āḷara 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 transcendingly 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.

# *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) Vanṇa : 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 pre-dominant 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: (Sankhārā).

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). Arahātship 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 .. Aññāmañña
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-Brahma 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 psycho-physical 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.

# INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTRE

Founded by

## The Vipassanā Association

Office of the Accountant General, Burma.

(Location: Inyamyaing, off University Avenue, Rangoon)

*(In response to requests from readers seeking more information about the International Meditation Centre, an aerial photographic of which we published in our last issue, we are pleased to furnish the following particular: about the Centre—Ed.)*

1. The International Meditation Centre is founded with the sole object of promoting the practice of Buddhist Meditation according to the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

2. It is open to members of the Association and also to foreigners who are really anxious to experience the “Nibbānic Peace Within.”

3. Courses of training in practical Buddhist Meditation will be given in English and each candidate for the course must be prepared:

- (a) to submit himself wholly to the Guru and to pay the respects normally due from a disciple to a Teacher,
- (b) to observe strictly the eight Precepts (Uposatha Sīla),
- (c) to remain within the precincts of the Centre for the entire period of the course.

4. The initial course will be for a period of 10 days which may be extended according to individual needs.

5. Individual development depends on one's own Pāramitā and his capability to fulfill the five Elements of Effort (Padhāniyaṅga), viz Faith, Health, Sincerity, Energy and Wisdom.

6. In practical work, every candidate will be required to follow strictly and diligently the three indisputable steps of Sīla, Samadhi and Paññā of the Eightfold Noble Path or the seven stages of Purity (Satta Visuddhi).

7. It is the responsibility of the candidate to restrain himself properly to ensure that the eight Precepts (Uposatha Sīla) are duly observed. With a view to promoting Sīla, he should further restrain the sense centres (Indria Samvara) by keeping himself alone, as far as practicable, in a cave or a secluded spot.

8. The Guru will arrange for the development of his power of concentration to one-pointedness (Citta Ekaggatā). For this purpose, the training to be given will be in accordance with the principles enunciated in the Ānāpāna Sati Sutta or the Visuddhi Magga Aṭṭhakathā as may be found suitable to the candidate.

(In this respect, the Guru is merely a Guide. The success in the development of the power of concentration to perfection (Sammā Samādhi) depends entirely on the right exertion (Sammā Vāyāma) and the right mindfulness (Sama Sati) of the candidate concerned. The achievement of Appanā Samādhi (Attainment Concentration) or Upacāra-Samādhi (Neighbourhood Concentration) is a reward which goes only to highly developed candidates).

9. When the candidates have developed sufficiently well in the power of concentration, they will be acquainted with the fundamental principles of Buddha Dhamma closely connected with the practical lessons in Vipassanā which are to follow.

10. The course of training will then be changed to Vipassanā or Insight, This involves an examination of the inherent tendencies of all that exist within one's ownself. The candidate learns in course of time by personal experience, the nature of Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta as taught by the Buddha. May be, following a realisation of the Four Noble Truths, he breaks through to a state beyond Suffering (Dukkha Nirodha), enters the first stream of Sotāpanna, and enjoys the fruit (Phala) of his endeavours in the "Nibbānic Peace Within."

11. He who can enjoy this Nibbānic Peace Within, is an Ariya. He may enjoy it as and when he may like to do so. When in that state of Peace Within called "Phala", but for the supermundane consciousness in relation to the Peace of Nibbāna, no feeling can be aroused through any of the sense-centres. At the same time, his body posture becomes tightened. In other words, he is in a state of perfect physical and mental calm., as in the case referred to by the Buddha in his dialogue with Pukkusa of Malla while halting at a place on His way to Kusināra for the Mahā Parinibbāna.

With the kind permission of Thray Sithu U Ba Khin Accountant-General, Burma, (Rtd.), (Author), there is no copyright to this booklet, and the contents may be republished without prior permission being obtained.

1st impression 6000

2<sup>nd</sup> " 2000

3<sup>rd</sup> " 5000

4<sup>th</sup> " 2000

PRINTED IN THE UNION OF BURMA  
AT THE UNION BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL PRESS.

## 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* )