

Purification of Character

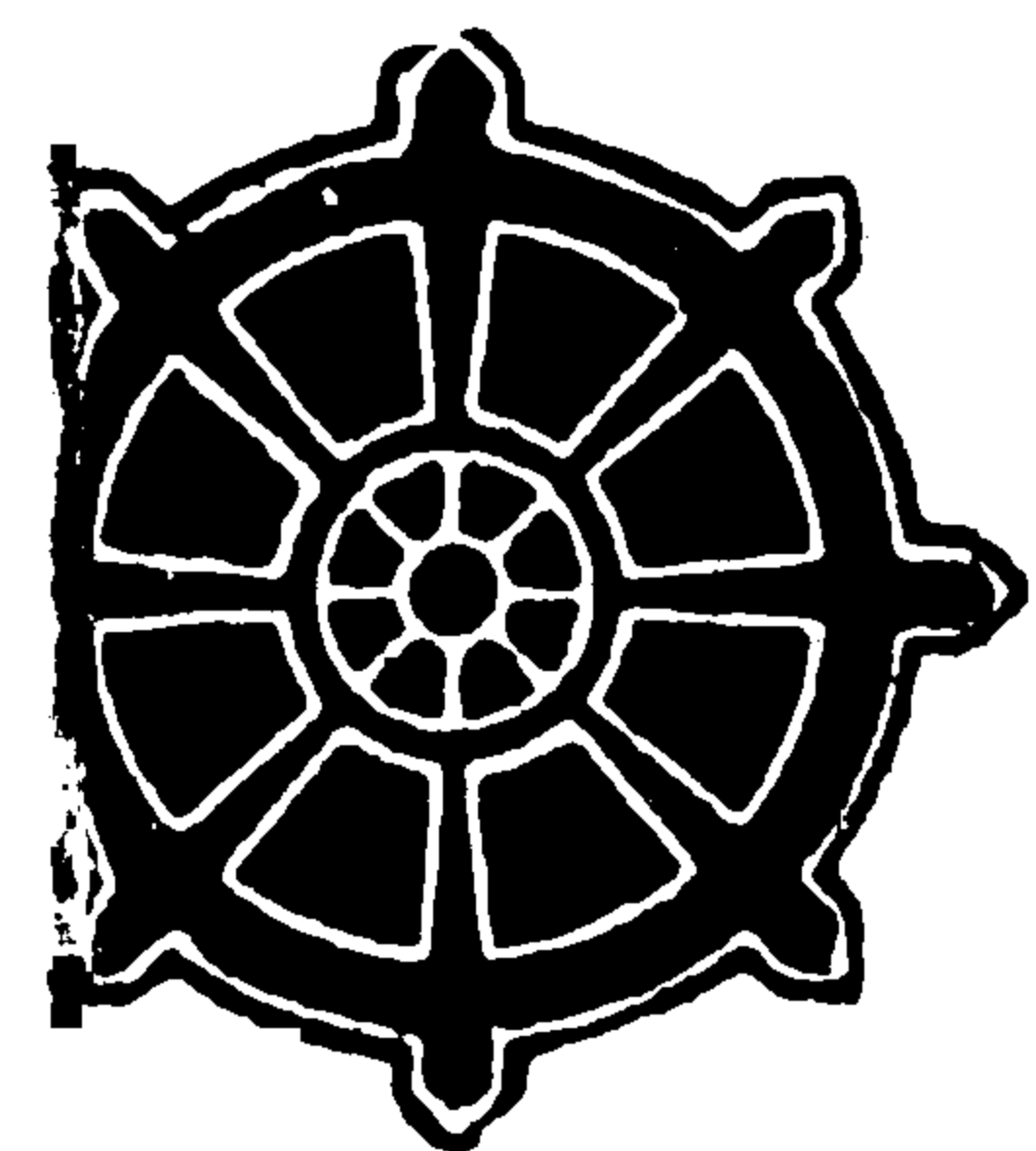
Bhikkhu Vimalo

of Germany

Purification of View

Dr. C. B. Dharmasena

M.B.,B.S. (Lond.)



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**THE WHEEL
PUBLICATION
No. 39/40**

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BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Kandy

1962

Ceylon

14667

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By BHIKKHU VIMALO

IN the *Anguttara-Nikāya*¹ the Buddha describes three kinds of defilements: coarse, medium, and subtle. The coarse ones are: wrong action (*kāya-duccarita*), wrong speech (*vacī-duccarita*), and wrong thinking (*mano-duccarita*); the medium ones are: sensual, hostile, and aggressive thoughts (*kāma-*, *byāpāda-*, *vihimsā-vitakka*); the subtle defilements are: thinking about relatives, country, and not being despised (*ñāti-*, *janapada-*, *anavaññatti-patisaṃyutta vitakka*).

It is not possible to get rid of these unhealthy inclinations without first making their driving forces conscious. Buddha called these driving forces (be they conscious or unconscious) *cetanā* and said, "Intention, O monks, I call *kamma*" (*cetanā-ham, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*).² *Cetanā* may be translated as will, volition, intention, inclination, drive, striving, direction, tendency, or motivation. In the *Sutta-piṭaka* several types of *cetanā* are distinguished; namely, the driving forces of our action (*kāya-sañcetanā*), speech (*vacī-sañcetanā*), and thought (*mano-sañcetanā*)³; *rūpa-*, *sadda-*, *gandha-*, *rasa-*, *phoṭṭhabba-sañcetanā*,⁴ the reaction to sense-objects,

Abbreviations:

A: Anguttara-Nikāya; D: Dīgha-Nikāya; Dh: Dhammapada; M: Majjhima-Nikāya; S: Saṃyutta-Nikāya.

¹ A I. 254 (All the following Pali references refer to the volumes and page numbers of the Pali Text Society editions) ² A III. 415 ³ S II. 40; A II. 158 ⁴ S III. 60.

or interest in them (Freud's "cathexis", i.e. the investing of an object with libido); and *dhamma-sañcetanā* ⁴, the reaction to ideas, memories, imagination and their cathexis. Lastly there is our attitude towards ourselves (*atta-sañcetanā*) and towards others (*para-sañcetanā*).⁵

When one speaks of making unhealthy inclinations conscious, it is *cetanā* above all that is referred to. The goal of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, or practice of mindfulness, consists in emerging from the predominantly unconscious condition in which most people live, into a state of being fully conscious, without conflict, repression or self-deception.

The Buddha said: "When the mind is wrongly directed, then action, speech, and thought are wrongly directed" (*citte byāpanne kāya-, vacī-, mano-kammaṃ byāpannaṃ hoti*).⁶ In other words, when our attitude towards ourselves and others is distorted it influences all our activities. One should try, therefore, to get to the root of one's problems and not be satisfied with superficial solutions.

In order to overcome the various undesirable character-traits a profound knowledge of oneself is imperative. Through *Satipaṭṭhāna* insight may be gained, not only into our mutually conflicting tendencies, conscious or unconscious fear and self-defence, resistances or self-justifications, but also into our attitude and reaction to these inclinations. Depth psychology shows that character is largely formed in early childhood. Many traits, together with basic attitudes and unconscious claims (*cetanā*), are acquired at that time, as the child learns to fit in with his environment (in

⁵ D III. 231; A II. 159 ⁶ A I. 262.

particular with important personalities) and develops his character in such a way as to obtain the greatest security for himself in the given circumstances. Even if they should later prove themselves harmful these attitudes are retained, since they afford a certain security in dealing with life.

It is not enough, however, to recognize what has led to the formation of certain character traits in the past. One must also understand why they persist at the present time. Many an unhealthy inclination continues because there is an advantage or a satisfaction connected with it. The person who is not prepared to give up this advantage seeks for some subterfuge or justification. All resistances must be examined, since they oppose a possible change. They consist for example in justification, unwillingness to make an examination, forgetting, and not seeing things in their correct context. Burying one's head in the sand and pretending not to see anything that cannot be reconciled with one's ideal image (*asmi-māna*) is certainly not consistent with Buddhist mind training. Nietzsche gives a lucid account of this process: "'I did it', says my memory. 'I couldn't have done it', says my pride and remains inexorable. In the end—memory yields".⁷ "Whoever considers clarification as the essential process of human life knows that the way to it leads through suffering, and that those who wish to avoid suffering will miss clarification".⁸

If insight penetrates sufficiently deep it gradually brings about a change of heart as the mental conflicts are overcome; it is in this way that right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)

⁷ F. Nietzsche: Beyond Good and Evil, 68

⁸ F. Kuenkel: Einfuehrung in die Charakterkunde, p.153

and the right attitude of mind (*sammā-sankappa*) grow stronger. "Nobody divided within himself can be wholly sincere".⁹ The right mental attitude can only arise when one surmounts the inner conflict, and is no longer driven by neurotic needs¹⁰ (*micchā-vāyāma*) for power, perfection, independence or affection.

When the Buddha wanted to investigate inner hindrances he often asked himself, "what is the cause, what is the reason. . .?" (*ko hetu, ko paccayo. . .*) He says in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*¹¹ that one should examine how feelings, states of mind and *dhammas* arise (*samudaya-dhammānupassī, vedanāsu, citte, dhammesu viharati*). The same applies for the five hindrances (*yathā ca anuppannassa kāmacchandassa, byāpādassa, etc. uppādo hoti, tañ ca pajānāti*).¹² The 61st and 151st *Suttas* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya* give a thorough explanation of this meticulous examination (*dhamma-vicaya*). In these *Suttas* the Buddha says that one should examine what one does, says or considers, not only before, but also during and after the action or thought concerned. Master Eckhart has this to say about awareness: "This 'seeing' serves two purposes: it scotches what is mischievous and makes us forthwith remedy our faults. Many a time I have laid it down that great workers, great fasters, great vigil-keepers, if they fail to mend their wicked ways, wherein true progress lies, do cheat themselves and are the devil's laughing stock".¹³

⁹ K. Horney: *Our Inner Conflicts*, p.163 (Norton, New York) ¹⁰ Cf. K. Horney: *Self Analysis*, p.54 ¹¹ D II.292, 299, 301; M I. 56, 59, 60; cp. S III. 14: *Samādhisutta* ¹² D II. 301, M I. 60; A I. 272 ¹³ Master Eckhart, transl. by C. de B. Evans (Watkins, London), vol. I. p.135.

Whoever wants to advance to the higher stages of Buddhist mind training must first get the better of the "human, all too human" and for this courage, determination, and honesty with oneself are needed.

I

(1) It often happens that the compulsive nature of unhealthy activities is broken when one looks into the forces which drive them: whether it is a question of occasional petty theft or deceit or of more serious transgressions, or violence, sexual misdemeanours or heavy drinking. Self-reproaches (*kukkucca*) often do not help at all. Someone may occasionally indulge in small frauds because he is avaricious and wishes to save money, or because he finds it humiliating to ask for anything; or various objects of acquisition are used as substitutes for love and affection. He may perhaps commit these offences out of defiance or the desire for revenge. With regard to the third *Sīla* that is concerned with sexual misconduct, we should not forget that the attitude towards sex varies in different cultures, as Ruth Benedict,¹⁴ Margaret Mead¹⁵ and other anthropologists have shown. The various Buddhist countries differ markedly in their marriage customs. It is one aspect of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to become aware of the cultural influences which form the background of a person's whole outlook on life, and conditions him in many ways. There are great differences between East and West in this respect. Some forms of

¹⁴ Ruth Benedict: Patterns of Culture

¹⁵ Margaret Mead: Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies; Male and Female.

cultural conditioning are difficult to overcome because they are absorbed early in childhood and are later taken for granted and never questioned.

What is essential in keeping the *Sīlas*¹⁶ is the right attitude of mind—an attitude which does not look upon others as simply the tools of unbridled egotism.¹⁷ “Therefore we may briefly say here, that he who voluntarily recognizes and observes those merely moral limits between wrong and right, even where this is not secured by the state or any other external power, thus he who, according to our explanation, never carries the assertion of his own will so far as to deny the will appearing in another individual, is just. Thus, in order to increase his own well-being, he will not inflict suffering upon others, i.e. he will commit no crime, he will respect the rights and the property of others.

“We see that for such a just man the *principium individuationis* is no longer, as in the case of the bad man, an absolute wall of partition. We see that he does not, like the bad man, merely assert his own manifestation of will and deny all others; that other persons are not for him mere masks, whose nature is quite different from his own; but he shows in his conduct that he also recognises his own nature — the will to live as a thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*), in the foreign manifestation which is only given to him as an idea. Thus he finds himself again in that other manifestation, up to a certain point, that of doing no wrong, i.e. abstaining from injury. To this extent, therefore, he sees through the *principium individuationis*, the veil of *māyā*; so

¹⁶ i.e., the basic rules of morality

¹⁷ Cf. S V. 353 Dh. 129, 130; *attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā*.

far he sets the being external to him on a level with his own — he does it no injury. If we examine the inmost nature of this justice, there already lies in it the resolution not to go so far in the assertion of one's own will as to deny the manifestations of will of others, by compelling them to serve one's own".¹⁸ ✓

(2) Buddha described lying (*musā-vāda*), slander (*pisuṇā vācā*), harsh talk (*pharusā vācā*), and gossip (*samphappalāpa*) as wrong speech (*vacī-duccarita*).¹⁹ The person who tells lies should try to discover how far he is dependent on the good opinion of others. Intimidation and too strict an upbringing often result in the child's not daring to admit that he has done something forbidden, since he is afraid of losing love. (As the dependence on other people's affection—Karen Horney calls it the neurotic need for affection and approval²⁰—is very common, it is useful to examine it more closely in all its ramifications. There is neither freedom nor love as long as one needs the affection of others. A person who is dependent on other people's affection has rarely any love for them). If someone wants to impress others and lies in the process, it can often be traced back to humiliation. Lying serves a compensatory purpose (*vacī-sañcetanā*):²¹ that of erasing the previous disparagement and substituting recognition for it.

¹⁸ Schopenhauer: *The World as Will and Idea*, 3 vols.; transl. by R.B.Haldane and J.Kemp; Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1883; tenth impression 1957; vol. I. p. 478

¹⁹ A II. 141 ²⁰ Karen Horney: 'Self Analysis' and 'The Neurotic Personality of Our Time' (Norton, New York)

²¹ Cp. *vacī - sañcetanā - hetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ sukha-dukkhaṃ* (S II. 40'; A II. 158).

Speaking badly of others (*para-vambhanā*) and praising oneself (*att'ukkamaṣaṇā*), especially when it develops into a character-trait, is frequently nothing more than self-justification, an attempt to avoid self-hatred (*ajjhattam byāpāda*).²² As long as a person lacks the courage to investigate his conflicts and will not give up superficial solutions, so long will lack of self-confidence and inferiority-feelings (*hīno'ham asmi*) persist. The latter increase the necessity to compensate the lack of self-confidence and so other people are badly spoken of.

Harsh, unfriendly speech is an expression of aggressiveness. In our Western culture limits are set on aggressiveness, and one may conclude from harsh speech that this is perhaps the only outlet for repressed hostility. A person is inclined towards harsh judgments, when similar impulses in himself are repressed or when many repressions are being maintained. Inner resistance to these drives is then turned outwards. Exaggerated severity leads one to suspect that it is nourished from unconscious sources.

An excessive need for conversation is frequently found in a person who cannot bear solitude. The tendency towards unnecessary talk is often present in those who had the feeling of not being wanted when they were children; they have to ingratiate themselves and to make sure that they are not rejected.

(3) The Buddha spoke of three distortions (*vipallāsā*)²³: 1. distorted perceptions, imaginings and projections (*saññā-vipallāsa*); 2. distorted mind (*citta-vipallāsa*); 3. distorted

²² S V. 110 ²³ A II. 52.

views and prejudices (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*). These distortions make us see the transitory as permanent, the painful as happy, impure as pure, and what is not self as self.

“In order to see that a purely objective, and therefore correct, comprehension of things is only possible when we consider them without any personal participation in them, thus when the will is perfectly silent, let one call to mind how much every emotion or passion disturbs and falsifies our knowledge, indeed how every inclination and aversion alters, colours, and distorts not only the judgment, but even the original perception of things”²⁴.

Together with attraction and repulsion, hope and fear, it is above all unsolved problems and complexes that distort perception since they are easily projected outwards. Whatever one does not wish to recognize in oneself may be seen much more clearly in others. Not only unhealthy tendencies are projected outwards but also unfulfilled ideals and the compensations for one-sided developments. Admiration and respect may in many cases be traced back to the transfer of unfulfilled ideals.

In *Satipaṭṭhāna* these cathexes of the object, as Freud calls them, are made conscious. The Buddha says in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, “He knows sense-organs and sense-objects and he also knows the fetter which arises conditioned by both of them” (*cakkhum*, etc., *pajānāti*, *rūpe ca pajānāti*, *yañ ca tad ubhayam paticca uppajjati samyojanam*, *tañ ca pajānāti*).

²⁴ Schopenhauer, op. cit., vol. III. p. 134.

This fetter (*saṃyojana*)²⁵ is the previously mentioned *rūpa-*, *sadda-*, *gandha-*, *rasa-*, *phoṭṭhabba-sañcetanā*⁴; that is, interest in sense-objects as far as connected with, or followed by defiled impulses, as greed or aversion, conceit or envy, various misconceptions, and so forth. Only when all these projections are recognized as such and abandoned can one see things with complete objectivity. Schopenhauer says:

“If, raised by the power of the mind, a man relinquishes the common way of looking at things, gives up tracing, under the guidance of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, their relation to each other, the final goal of which is always a relation to his own will; if he thus ceases to consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither of things, and looks simply and solely at the what; if, further, he does not allow abstract thought, the concepts of the reason, to take possession of his consciousness, but, instead of all this, gives the whole power of his mind to perception, sinks himself entirely in this, and lets his whole consciousness be filled with the quiet contemplation of the natural object actually present, whether a landscape, a tree, a mountain, a building, or whatever it may be; inasmuch as he loses himself in this object (to use a pregnant German idiom), i.e. forgets even his individuality, his will, and only continues to exist as the pure subject, the clear mirror of the object, so that it is as if the object alone were there, without any one to perceive it, and he can no longer separate

²⁵ S IV. 108, 164; A I. 264; cp. C. G. Jung: “Interest I conceive as that energy=libido, which I bestow upon the object as value, or which the object draws from me, even may be against my will or unknown to myself” (Psychological Types, p. 521).

the perceiver from the perception, but both have become one, because the whole consciousness is filled and occupied with one single sensuous picture; if thus the object has to such an extent passed out of all relation to something outside it, and the subject out of all relation to the will, then that which is so known is no longer the particular thing as such, but it is the *Idea*,²⁶ the eternal form, the immediate objectivity of the will at this grade; and, therefore, he who is sunk in this perception is no longer individual, for in such perception the individual has lost himself; but he is *pure*, will-less, painless, timeless *subject of knowledge*".²⁷

There are also distortions in self-observation. When otherwise clear connections cannot be seen it means that unconscious resistance is still too strong; it is most important to make this resistance conscious. As long as an impulse is repressed it is outside conscious control. A feeling of uneasiness or embarrassment may be an indication that a complex has been touched or that a repressed tendency is trying to break through into consciousness. Unless attention is paid to it the unpleasant feeling (*dukkhā-vedanā*) remains the only indication that there is a repression. A person is practising *Satipaṭṭhāna* if he makes emotion,²⁸ mental states,²⁹ the repressed idea,³⁰ and repression³¹ itself conscious. We read in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-Sutta*, "He knows the mind, and the dhammas, and also the fetter that arises"

²⁶ in Plato's sense ²⁷ Schopenhauer, op. cit., vol. I. p. 231
 —The inclusion of this quote does not imply that all ideas expressed in it, are in conformity with the Buddhist view point; this applies in particular to the conception of the idea as an 'eternal form', and of a timeless subject of knowledge' (Ed). ²⁸ *vedanā* ²⁹ *citta* ³⁰ *dhamma* ³¹ *dhamma-sañcetanā*.

(*manañ ca pajānāti, dhamme ca pajānāti, yañ ca tad ubhayaṃ paṭicca uppajjati saṃyojanaṃ, tañ ca pajānāti*).

Erich Fromm says in his book 'Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis'³²: "If one carries Freud's principle of the transformation of unconsciousness into consciousness to its ultimate consequences, one approaches the concept of enlightenment", and Karen Horney describes the goal of psychoanalysis as follows: "By rendering a person free from inner bondages make him free for the development of his best potentialities!"³³ The person who thinks he practises *Satipaṭṭhāna* and makes good progress in Buddhist mind training and still maintains his complexes and neurotic strivings obviously deceives himself. Freud has shown (and anybody who has done some self-analysis can corroborate it) that repressed tendencies (*cetanā*) stay in the unconscious and persist until they are dissolved by insight. They are very little — if at all — influenced by indirect treatment. This links up with the Buddhist doctrine of *Kamma* which holds that no one can escape the results of his evil actions, words and thoughts. Some profound discoveries in depth psychology have begun to reveal how this law of *Kamma* operates.

Citta-vipallāsa may perhaps be best explained as wrong attitude of mind. What Karen Horney calls 'neurotic trends' may also be near it. Such bad character-traits as greediness,³⁴ hypocrisy,³⁵ envy,³⁶ grudge,³⁷ conceit,³⁸ and self-satisfaction,³⁹ which Buddha described as defilements of the mind, must be investigated to see how and under what

³² p.139 ³³ Karen Horney: Self Analysis, p. 21 ³⁴ *abhiijhā*
³⁵ *makkha* ³⁶ *issā* ³⁷ *macchariya* ³⁸ *māna* ³⁹ *pamāda*.

circumstances they arise (*samudaya-dhammānupassanā*). The same holds for the inability to endure solitude or to get on well with others.

Among the motivations that prompt greediness there may be the search for security, or it may be a compensation for earlier want, or a remnant of an infantile greed.

Hypocrisy is found in people with a strong need for recognition. Their principal aim is to ensure that others have a good opinion of them. Envy and jealousy may often be traced back to the attitude towards brothers and sisters in early childhood. Psychoanalysis has shown what anyone may verify in himself and in his friends:—that the attitude towards others in the early environment is easily projected onto other people in later life. Obstinacy is closely related to feelings of inferiority. People with insufficient self-confidence are often obstinate when they are with someone else who is superior to them. They assert themselves by saying no and by contradicting. It is all too often the case that a person becomes complacent and ceases to strive for something higher when he has overcome certain inhibitions and difficulties.

The Buddha says that one must not remain satisfied with what has been already achieved (*oramattakena visesādhigamena asantuṭṭhi*; ⁴⁰ *asantuṭṭhitā kusalesu dhammesu*).⁴¹ “For it is well known that, on this road, not to go forward is to turn back, and not to be gaining is to be losing”.⁴² “Why then do we not become wise? There is much to it. The

⁴⁰ A IV. 22 ⁴¹ A I. 50; D III. 214 ⁴² The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross, transl. by E. Allison Peers, Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd. p. 51.

most important thing is that one should go out of all things, beyond them all and their origins; this is too much for most men and so they remain within their limitations".⁴³

A distinction should be made between genuine love for others and a flight from oneself, between a real need for solitude and a neurotic one. Neurotic striving for solitude is based on the incapacity to get on well with others, which often comes from a wrong attitude towards them. "If it is well with him, then indeed it is well in all places and with all people. But if it is ill with him, then it is ill in all places and with all people".⁴⁴

Mutually contradictory unconscious claims on others, for example the wish to dominate them and at the same time be loved by them, make it difficult—if not impossible—to establish satisfactory relationships. These claims are bound to bring up resistance in others. This rejection again strengthens the fear of defeat: a person either moves further and further away from others and makes up in fantasy and day-dreams for what reality denies him, or else feelings of insecurity and inferiority already in existence are strengthened and show themselves in awkward behaviour. This insecurity, together with compensatory feelings of superiority, is felt by others and rejected. So the whole cycle begins again: the tension between inferiority feelings and the need for recognition increases, and suffering becomes more acute.

In these vicious circles one can see clearly how the law of *Kamma* operates. The Enlightened One said, "*Kamma* is

⁴³ Quint: Meister Eckehart, p. 203 ⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 58.

Cetanā".² So long as one does not change these wrong attitudes to oneself (*atta-sañcetanā*) and others (*para-sañcetanā*) one must suffer. We may remember here the first verse of the *Dhammapada*: "If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, sorrow follows him even as the wheel follows the foot of the ox which draws the cart". To bring these unconscious claims into the clear light of consciousness is not easy and it demands long practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and development of intuitive understanding. "I grant you this needs effort, application, careful cultivation of the interior life and good sound sense and understanding whereon to stay the mind in things and with people. This is not learnt by flight, by one who runs away from things, who turns his back upon the world and flees into the desert: he must learn to find the solitude within where or with whomsoever he may be"⁴⁵.

Prejudices, distorted views (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*), conceptions of good and evil, are often taken over uncritically from parents or those in authority.

It is a part of *Satipaṭṭhāna* to make these sometimes completely unconscious attitudes conscious and to restrict self-centredness.. As a rule the stronger the feelings of inferiority the higher the ideal of oneself will be, and hence the possibility of understanding the *Anattā* - doctrine of the Buddha will be similarly limited. Only he who removes the tension between inferiority feelings and the need for recognition can understand, "This is not mine; this am I not; this is not my Self".

⁴⁵ Meister Eckhart, transl. by Evans, vol. II. p. 9.

II

IN the 20th *Sutta* of the *Majjhima-Nikāya* the Buddha explains how unhealthy thoughts should be overcome: 1. by attending to a healthy idea; 2. by seeing the danger in unhealthy thoughts; 3. by not attending to unhealthy thoughts; 4. by cutting off this mental activity; 5. by forcefully suppressing these thoughts. Above all, one should try to gain insight into those states of mind which always lead to the arising of sensual, hostile and aggressive thoughts. In addition one should endeavour to practise meditation and awareness and to develop those factors which exclude or at least weaken unhealthy thoughts. According to the Buddha, it is essential for the overcoming of sensuality that higher happiness and serenity be found;⁴⁶ in freeing oneself from animosity one develops *mettā*;⁴⁷ in abandoning aggressive thoughts one develops compassion.⁴⁸ The Buddha said that if one practises *Satipaṭṭhāna* correctly these unhealthy thoughts are gradually extinguished.⁴⁹

I. In the *Salla-Sutta*⁵⁰ the Buddha says that the ordinary person knows no other escape from unpleasant feelings except sensual pleasures. Painful feelings, threats to the ego-ideal, and inner conflicts may lead to the arising of sensual thoughts.

There are many ways of forgetting suffering, such as

⁴⁶ See "The Wheel" No. 21: The Removal of Distracting Thoughts (*Vitakka Santhāna Sutta*; *Majjh.* 20) Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy ⁴⁷ M I. 91.504 ⁴⁸ A III. 291; D III. 248, 280 ⁴⁹ S III. 93 ⁵⁰ S IV. 207

alcohol, sex, forced activity or distraction. Such a flight from unpleasant feelings is not a permanent solution, since the conflicts persist as long as they are not deeply investigated. By practising patience a person may learn to bear unpleasant feelings without immediately seeking sensual pleasures or other escapes.

Repressed sensuality may break through in day-dreams and fantasy, and gives them their force and compulsiveness. A person acts out in fantasy what he does not dare to put into actual effect, owing to his inhibition. If one looks for what is common to all these fantasies the insight gained into unconscious driving forces and compensations may cut the ground from under them. Repressed sensuality, and negative attitude towards it, may often be traced back to early childhood. As long as these repressions persist, unconscious anti-cathexes will be maintained, unproductively consuming energy. Repression of drives is not a lasting solution, since they remain in the unconscious. Those who practise Buddhist mind training should learn gradually to put conscious control into effect, instead of submitting to a fear of these tendencies that leads to repressions. Freud says ;

“The laws of logic — above all, the law of contradiction — do not hold for processes in the *id*.⁵¹ Contradictory impulses exist side by side without neutralising each other or drawing apart; at most they combine in compromise formations under the overpowering economic pressure towards

⁵¹ The *id* is “the sum total of crude, unmodified instinctual needs”. (“New Ways in Psychoanalysis” by Karen Horney; p. 184).

discharging their energy. . . In the *id* there is nothing corresponding to the idea of time, no recognition of the passage of time, and (a thing which is very remarkable and awaits adequate attention in philosophic thought) no alteration of mental processes by the passage of time. Conative impulses which have never got beyond the *id*, and even impressions which have been pushed down into *id* by repression, are virtually immortal and are preserved for whole decades as though they had only recently occurred.

They can only be recognized as belonging to the past, deprived of their significance, and robbed of their charge of energy, after they have been made conscious by the work of analysis".⁵²

2. Many people unconsciously expect from others love, pity, admiration, fear or submission. A few examples suffice to show the connection between unconscious claims, often of a compensatory nature, and resistance or open hostility. The person for instance who has a neurotic need for independence conditioned perhaps by previous coercion and injustice, will set himself against any outside influence. Another may strive for intellectual superiority and becomes angry if his ideas are not accepted. If anything taboo is touched upon, such as a complex, the emotional reaction is particularly strong. Unconscious resistance to repressed impulses turns outwards and directs itself against the person who dares to disturb it.

This anger may also be repressed, especially when one

⁵² Sigmund Freud: New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis; chapter on 'The Anatomy of the Mental Personality'

recognizes that love and hate of the same person are incompatible, or when a loss of love is feared if free rein is given to anger. Repressed aggressiveness shows itself in day-dreaming and fantasy as killing and destroying, but in most fantasies there is some displacement or compromise-formation, so that the aggression is turned against other people or objects. It may also be projected outwards, in which case all the animosity which one does not dare recognize in oneself is seen in others. The next step, so well described by Karen Horney,⁵³ is that one finds thunder, animals and other objects dangerous and threatening. Hate, aggressiveness and fear of retaliation are displaced from their original object onto a neutral one.

While unconscious claims are made on others it is impossible for the person to feel genuine goodwill (*mettā*) towards them. If he fears rejection he is incapable of loving, since his deep inner insecurity bars the way; nor can he love while he strives for power and is concerned to arouse envy, admiration or sympathy.

In the *Anguttara-Nikāya*⁵⁴ the Buddha describes various ways of overcoming ill-will. He advises the practice of *Mettā*, sympathy (*Karuṇā*) or equanimity if animosity arises; one should remove one's attention from it, or consider that each person will experience the results of his own *Kamma*.

The more the *Mettā*-meditation is practised, and the

⁵³ Karen Horney: *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. Cp. also Freud's analysis of the 'Little Hans' in his 'Collected Papers', vol. III ⁵⁴ A III. 158.

right attitude of mind developed, the less will animosity and aggressiveness be able to find a foothold. He will feel compassion instead of anger for those who are overwhelmed by their angry impulses. He preserves his equanimity since he regards unwelcome experiences as a practice in patience and self-discipline. Because he has made conscious the influence on his own mind of both the conscious behaviour of others and their unconscious attitude,⁵⁵ he does not get excited. He remains objective and realizes that the behaviour of others is not his business. If he becomes angry this will hinder his own development and will increase the force of unhealthy impulses in others,

3. "Freedom from vengeance is to me the bridge to the highest hope, a rainbow after continual storm".⁵⁶ Whoever harbours thoughts of vengeance would do well to examine closely his ambition, feelings of inferiority and need for recognition. In people who were often humiliated when they were young the search for revenge and the tendency to belittle others are frequently stronger than the wish to advance themselves, especially when fear of defeat is involved. Fear of failure restricts the ability to make a decision and the consequent feelings of inadequacy are compensated by aggressiveness and putting others in their place.

Such is often the purpose of sarcasm. Habitual sarcasm and irony destroy the character: in the end one is like a

⁵⁵ *ajjhataṃ ca bahiddhā ca cittanupassanā* (D II. 216); cp.: *pare vā taṃ kāya-, vaci-, mano-sankhāram abhisan-kharonti, yaṃ-paccayā'ssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukha-dukkhaṃ* (A II. 158; S II. 40) ⁵⁶ Nietzsche: Also sprach Zarathustra.

fierce dog, which has not only learnt to bite but to laugh as well".⁵⁷

If one does not understand why thoughts of revenge arise from slight causes, one should try to discover what is common to all these different reactions, remembering that it may be a question of compensation. In this way a complex or a 'sore point' may be discovered. It is necessary, above all, to look for the cause when our reaction is stronger than the occasion warrants (*ko hetu, ko paccayo*).

III

The Buddha described the more subtle defilements of the mind as thoughts of relatives (*ñāti-vitakka*), country (*janapada-vitakka*), and the thought of not being despised (*anavaññatti-paṭisaṃyutta vitakka*).

1. In the case of thoughts about relatives we should not forget that in the Buddha's time the bonds of family in India were incomparably stronger than they are in contemporary Western Europe. Perhaps the problem for 'modern' man exists in the form of strong attachments to father, mother, brother or sister. For example a man who as an only child, or the youngest, had a strong link with his mother, may marry a considerably older woman who then takes the place of his mother. Another who has developed still stronger and more exclusive attachments to his mother, may find it impossible to enter into any sort of relationship with the opposite sex. He will probably declare that he has

⁵⁷ Nietzsche: Menschliches, Allzumenschliches.

a 'natural' inclination to asceticism. Freud's explanation would sound a little different and might mention an unsolved Oedipus complex and fixation of the libido.⁵⁸ Wherever it is a question of an exclusive attachment to a single person, accompanied by jealousy, one should see if it is perhaps a fixation or compensation.⁵⁹

2. Thoughts of country and home may occur if one lives in a foreign country and suffers from homesickness. To live abroad for a time may at least help one to see the relative nature of one's customs and habits. National pride, which some consider as the most stupid sort of pride, falls into this category.

3. One cannot avoid the impression that in our Western culture, in which so much stress is laid on competition, the fear of failure—so far from being one of the weaker fetters—has assumed an almost neurotic force. A person may have developed this fear through unpleasant early experience; he may have been an unwanted child, or his brothers and sisters may have been given precedence over him. If he also has great ambition he will generally try to avoid superior people. He will surround himself with people who do not arouse inferiority feelings in him, and he will—in a somewhat compulsive fashion—unconsciously evaluate

⁵⁸ "A person whose experience is determined by 'his fixation to his family', who is incapable of acting independently is in fact a worshipper of a primitive ancestor cult, and the only difference between him and millions of ancestor worshippers is that his system is private and not culturally patterned". E. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p.49 (New York) ⁵⁹ "Love which can only be experienced with regard to one person demonstrates by this very fact that it is not love but a symbiotic attachment". (ibid. p.130)

everyone he meets: "I am superior" (*seyyo'ham asmi*); "I am inferior" (*hīno'ham asmi*); or "we are equal" (*sadiso'ham asmi*).

The inability of such people to live together with a superior person lies in the fact that they must make up for the painful experience of the past, and must prove to themselves that they are in no way inferior. They cannot bear any reminder that their inflated self-evaluation, which is a compensation for past humiliation and the resultant feelings of inferiority, rests on self-deception.

These people all too easily project their self-hatred outwards and are convinced that others see them as they see themselves, with all their unsolved problems, complexes and contradictions. In order to avoid a fresh rebuff they wait for others to take the initiative, and they approach someone who interests them only after they have assured themselves they will not be cold-shouldered. When they are recognized they easily overvalue the person who at least momentarily — releases them from the torturing doubt about their own worth.

Since they cannot bear that others think badly of them, they are often insincere. It is essential for their well-being that others have a good opinion of them; they cannot bear the thought of being despised. The recognition of others cannot for long liberate them from their insecurity, for they may have a profound doubt whether their strivings are genuine. This doubt arises because the driving forces (*cetanā*) of their actions are registered in the unconscious, despite all their deceptive manoeuvres and the splendid mask they show to the world.

Fear of defeat drives others to collect possessions, offices and titles or to pursue power and security. As long as feelings of inferiority are the motivation, the pursuit takes on a compensatory and compulsive character and even success can only relieve unhappiness and insecurity for a short time. "Really poor in spirit is the man who prefers to do without all unnecessary things... And best is he who knows how to dispense with what he has no need of".⁶⁰

The wish not to be despised may show itself in resisting any influence and criticism, particularly when the compulsion towards independence and perfection is present. A person who has these characteristics to a serious extent easily develops into a tyrant.

Equanimity with regard to praise or blame cannot be attained while a person is dependent on the opinions of others and possesses only slight self-confidence. Self-confidence arises when repressions are lifted and the split between incompatible tendencies overcome. Then one sees: "This is not mine; this am I not; this is not my Self".

Nāgārjuna says, "Because the arising of all dharmas is conditioned all dharmas are empty" (*apratitya samutpanno dharmah kascin na vidyate; yasmāt tasmād asūnyo hi dharmah kascin na vidyate*).⁶¹ "All things are empty and are not only made such by wisdom" (*na prajñā asūnyān bhāvān sūnyān karoti; bhāvā eva sūnyāḥ*;⁶² *yan na sūnyatayā*

⁶⁰ Meister Eckhart, op. cit., vol. II. p. 39
Kārikā XXIV, 19.

⁶² Samādhirāja Sūtra.

⁶¹ Mādhyamikā

dharmān sūnyān karoti; api tu dharmā eva sūnyāḥ).⁶³
“Therefore then, Subhuti, the Bodhi-being the great being, after he has got rid of all perceptions, should raise his thought to the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment. He should produce a thought which is unsupported by forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects, unsupported by *dharmā*, unsupported by no-*dharmā*, unsupported by anything”.⁶⁴ “Whoever searches for something or strives after it searches and strives for Nothing, and he who asks for something receives Nothing”.⁶⁵

⁶³ Kāśyapa-parivarta Sūtra ⁶⁴ Edward Conze: Buddhist Wisdom Books; Allen & Unwin, London, p. 54 ⁶⁵ Quint: Meister Eckehart, p. 211.

PURIFICATION OF VIEW

By Dr. C. B. DHARMASENA, M.B., B.S. (Lond).

*"How blest from passion to be free,
All sensuous joys to leave behind ;
Yet far the highest bliss of all
To quit th' illusion false — 'I am' "*¹

*"The inner tangle and the outer tangle,
This generation is entangled in a tangle.
And so I ask of Gotama this question:
Who succeeds in disentangling this tangle?"*²

There is hardly any need to stress the hopelessness of the tangle that the present generation has found itself entrapped in through its inordinate craving, for one's own requisites (inner tangle), and for requisites belonging to others (outer tangle). Today we are in greater need of an answer to the above question than the generation that lived in the time of the Buddha. The Blessed One, the

Abbreviations used :—

Ang: Anguttara-nikāya or The Book of the Gradual Sayings

M: Majjhima-nikāya or The Middle Length Sayings, Horner's translation.

Vis; Visuddhi-magga or the Path of Purification, translation by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli.

¹ Solemn utterance of the Buddha at the foot of the Mucalinda tree after his attainment of Buddhahood. Translated by H. C. Warren in *Buddhism in Translations* § 9, from *Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahā Vagga 1,3*.

² Vis., § 1 (quoted from Samyutta-Nik. I, 13).

perfect physician for mental ills, specifically those concerned with the 'I' and 'Mine', and with 'We' and 'Our' provided the answer to the above question in the following stanza :—

*'When a wise man, established well in **Virtue**
Develops **Concentration** and **Understanding**,
Then as a Bhikkhu ardent and sagacious
He succeeds in disentangling this tangle'*.³

Development of Understanding or *Paññā* referred to above is divided by the Buddha into five stages, the first of which consists of PURITY OF VIEW or DITṬHI-VISUDDHI, the subject matter of this essay. This implies the vision according to reality that what is commonly referred to as a living being consists merely of mental and material (corporeal) phenomena, i.e. mind and body, or *nāma-rūpa*, and is void of an ego.

MODERN CONCEPTION OF MATTER⁴

Until the beginning of the present century our conception of the material world was one in which all things including our own bodies were made up of various permutations and combinations of 92 different kinds of atoms, meaning indivisible units, static and unchanging. But during the present century it has been found that atoms, despite their name are no longer the indivisible and static units they were once

³ Vis., §. 1 (Quoted from Saṃyutta-Nik. 1, 13) ⁴ Most of the statements in this para have been taken from "What is Atomic Energy" by K. Mendelssohn.

supposed to be, and that they are themselves complex structures composed of still smaller and more fundamental units moving at incredible speeds, and separated from each other by distances enormous by comparison with the minuteness of the size of these units themselves. We are told that the composition of the atom is comparatively simple, and consists of three kinds of 'elementary particles' or building bricks, the proton, the neutron, and the electron.

However the actual arrangement of these 'elementary particles' within the atom is complex, but a simplified picture consists of a central core or nucleus made up of a varying number of protons and neutrons, whilst electrons equal in number to the protons within the nucleus are disposed around the nucleus in 'shells', at a very much greater distance from the centre. Different combinations of these elementary particles form all the 92 naturally occurring elements from which all things including our own bodies as already mentioned are made.

The modern conception of the *Properties of matter* in terms of atomic physics is that these 'elementary particles' the protons, neutrons and electrons occupy an infinitesimally small volume compared to the remainder of the empty space within the atom. *The difference in the various qualities displayed by different objects of matter is a property not of the mass possessed by these minute elementary particles, but of the forces between them*, firstly that of attraction between dissimilar charges of the negative electrons and the positive protons, secondly of the *tremendously powerful forces of repulsion* between protons of similar (positive) charges, and thirdly of the still obscure phenomenon of 'exchange forces' due to change between protons and

neutrons of the recently postulated 'mesons', whereby the strong forces of repulsion between the protons are more than counter-balanced, and result in the *strong cohesion* of the atomic nuclei. Lastly the properties of matter are greatly modified by the particular arrangement of the protons and neutrons within the nucleus, and of the electrons in the varying number of shells of the electronic cloud, particularly in the 'open' outermost shell, where most changes take place owing to its varying degrees of 'unsaturation'. Further Einstein has demonstrated that mass and energy are equivalent. The property called mass is simply concentrated energy. In other words *matter is energy, and energy is matter, and the distinction is simply one of temporary state.*¹

BUDDHIST CONCEPTION OF THE PROPERTIES OF MATTER

What is thus outlined in the language of popular science of today was described by the Buddha in the ordinary or conventional language of his time so as to be understood by the educated people of his day. The Buddha described a living being as made up of mind and body or *nāma-rūpa*; the latter, *i.e.* the body, he described as being made up of four *Primary Qualities* or '*Elements*',² and of the *Space 'Element'*, or Akāsa-dhātu.

The importance of the four primary 'elements' lies not in their tangibility, but in their qualities and in the forces

¹The Universe & Dr. Einstein, by Lincoln Barnett.

²M. 140. Dhātuvibhaṅga sutta. M. 28. Mahāhatthipadūpama sutta. M. 62. Mahā-Rahulovāda sutta. Vis. XI. 31-38, 81-92, 109.

inherent in them. One cannot conceive of an object, animate or inanimate existing apart from its qualities, and in reality one should not say that an object *has* this shape, this colour or this odour; but the object *is* this shape, this colour or this odour. Material bodies are nothing but groups of qualities coming together in different ways and proportions that constitute them; and exist in and with them. Such a group of qualities is called a *kalāpa*. The *Earthy Quality* or '*Element*' or Paṭhavi-dhātu derives its name from the word paṭhavi, which means earth; it refers to qualities possessed by earth, e.g. of hardness (and of its opposite softness, for if something is less hard than something else, the first may be described as soft by comparison), of density, of heaviness and its opposite lightness, and of roughness and its opposite smoothness. The function of the Earthy Element is to act as a foundation for the other three Elements.

The *Watery Quality* or '*Element*' or Āpo-dhātu, from *appoti* to flow, refers to the quality that a fluid has to spread out and diffuse. If a small quantity of the watery element diffuses and penetrates amidst solid particles such as clay, cement or flour, the loose particles of the latter will be bound together into a lump. The function of the watery element therefore is that of cohesion, or binding the three remaining elements together.

The '*Element*' of Heat or the Fiery '*Element*', or Tejo-dhātu, has a powerful control over the three remaining elements, varying their consistence even to the extent of converting a solid to a liquid or a gas. To this 'element' belong the properties of anabolism or building up and maturing, and of katabolism or breaking down, ageing and

disintegrating, and in the case of living beings, of keeping them warm and of digesting the food they ingest.

The *Airy 'Element'*, or Vāyo-dhātu has two important characteristics, firstly that of motility; and secondly that of distending, of being prevented from collapse, of repulsion, of being blown out, or causing to be blown out. The above description of the 'Airy Element' may be compared with the following statement "The tendency of any gaseous atmosphere is to dissipate away into space".¹ All material things must possess all the four 'elements' or qualities at one and the same time; no three of these elements can exist without the fourth being present simultaneously. Each quality or element is so intimately connected with the remaining three that together they appear as objects. Each 'object' thus merely consists of the coming together of the four Primary Elements, in groups of qualities or kalāpas, *the difference in the appearance of objects being due to the vastly different proportions in which the primary elements blend*. Generally when one element predominates in comparison with the remaining three elements it is conveniently, and conventionally spoken of as an object belonging to that element, e.g., solid, liquid, or gas.

The *Space 'Element'*² has the characteristic of delimiting matter. Its function is to display the boundaries of matter. It is manifested as the confines of matter, or as the state of gaps and apertures. It is on account of it that one can say of material things that 'This is above, below, around'.

¹ *The New Outline of Modern Knowledge* by Alan Pryce-Jones. Chapter on Astronomy, by Sir Harold Spencer Jones. ² M. Sutta 140, and Vis. xiv. 63.

It is solely on account of this space element that the tiniest parts of one's body, or the body as a whole is able to move about freely, and to function properly; without the presence of the space element no movement or activity or function is possible.

To summarise: the main property of the Earthy Element is that of stiffening and acting as a foothold for the other three elements, and of the Watery, Airy and Fiery elements that of cohesion; of distending or causing motion; and of maturing respectively.

The Buddha time and again, and in numerous ways, and with varying analogies suited to the intelligence of his audience, and the circumstances under which he spoke emphasised the lack of a permanent ego in living beings including man. Says the Buddha, "Just as when the component parts such as axles, wheels, frame, poles etc. are arranged in a certain way, there comes to be the mere term of common usage '*chariot*',¹ yet in the ultimate sense when each part is examined, there is no chariot,—and just as when the component parts of a *house*² such as wattle, clay, timber, creepers, and grass are placed so that they enclose a space in a certain way there comes to be the mere term of common usage '*house*', yet in the ultimate sense there is no house,—so too *when a space is enclosed with bones and sinews, and flesh and skin there comes to be the mere term of common usage a 'being' a 'person'*,³ yet in the ultimate sense there is no being as a basis for the assumption of 'I am' or 'I'; in the ultimate sense there is only mind and body".

¹ M. Sutta 28; Vis. XVIII 28. ² Vis. XVIII. 28. ³ Vis. X. 43 & XVIII. 28; M. Sutta No. 28.

*"No doer of the deed is found
No being that may reap the fruits
Empty phenomena roll on,
This is the only right view".¹*

In modern terminology the same thought may be seen in the following lines from "The Universe and Dr. Einstein" by Lincoln Barnett. "However theoretical systems may change, and however empty of content' their symbols and concepts may be, the *essential and enduring facts of science and of life are the happenings, the activities, the events.* Within the frame-work of modern physics one can depict a simple physical event or happening, such as the meeting or collision of two electrons—two elementary grains of matter, or two elementary units of electrical energy — as a con-course of particles or of probability waves, or as a comingling of eddies in a four-dimensional space-time continuum. Theory does not define what the principles in this encounter actually are. *Thus in a sense the electrons are 'not real', but merely theoretical symbols. On the other hand the meeting itself is 'real'—the event is 'real' "*".

IMMATERIAL STATES

Now for the Immaterial States taught by the Buddha, and made evident to us through any act of cognition or consciousness, e.g. the four Groups or Khandhas,—feelings, perception, mental formation (saṅkhāra), and consciousness (viññāṇa), which are inseparable and which may be spoken of under the one term mentality or *nāma*. The *five modes of cognition through the five bases (exclusive of the mind-*

¹ Path to Deliverance. Nyanatiloka, para 176.

base),—eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body have now to be appreciated.¹

The eye and a visual object constitute materiality (*rūpa*), the visual (eye) - consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality (*nāma*). Similarly

The ear and sound constitute materiality, and the ear-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality:

The nose and odour constitute materiality, and the nose-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality:

The tongue and taste constitute materiality, and the tongue-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality:

The body and tangible object constitute materiality, and the body-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality.

“If an ear consciousness (mentality) arises owing to the presence of a sound and the ear-base (materiality), one is inclined to think of it as ‘I hear it’; in the ultimate sense however this is incorrect for if these two be identical when at death the mind (ear-consciousness in this example) disappears the body should disappear at the same time; and again the mind must remain so long as the body remains.

¹ Vis. xiv. 54-57

But neither of these is true; *the reason is that in the ultimate sense there is only mind and body (nāma-rūpa), and no 'being' or person, which are only terms of convenience*".¹

Says the Buddha,² "Even the ignorant, unconverted man, O bhikkhus, may conceive an aversion for this body which is composed of the four elements, may divest himself of passion for it, and attain freedom from it: for the increase and the wasting of this body which is composed of the four elements, and the way in which it is obtained (conceived), and afterwards laid away (at death) are evident. But, O bhikkhus, what is called the mind, intellect, consciousness — here the ignorant, unconverted man is not equal to conceiving aversion, is not equal to divesting himself of passion, is not equal to attaining freedom, because, O bhikkhus, from time immemorial the ignorant, unconverted man has held, cherished, and affected the notion 'This is mine; this am I; this is my ego'. But it were better, O bhikkhus, if the ignorant, unconverted man regarded the body which is composed of the four elements as an ego, rather than the mind. And why do I say so? Because it is evident, O bhikkhus that this body which is composed of the four elements lasts one year, lasts two years.....fifty years, lasts a hundred years and even more. *But that which is called the mind, intellect, consciousness keeps up an incessant round by day and by night of perishing as one thing, and springing up as another*".

¹ *Diṭṭha Vipassanā*, Ven. Mohnyin Sayadaw, p. 20

² H. C. Warren "Buddhism in Translations" ch. 18, from Samyutta-Nikāya (xii.62)".

INTERDEPENDENCE OF MIND AND BODY (NĀMA - RŪPA)

Time and again the Buddha laid stress on the interdependence of these two factors. Here is the analogy of the *two sheaves of reeds* that are propped one against the other,¹ "Each one gives the other consolidating support, and when one falls the other falls, so too mind and body occur as an interdependent state, each of its components giving the other consolidating support, and when one falls owing to death the other falls too": and again the analogy of the *marionette*,² "Just as a marionette is void, soul-less and without curiosity, and while it walks and stands merely through the combination of strings and wood, yet it seems as if it had curiosity, and interestedness; so too, this mind and body is void, soulless and without curiosity, and while it walks and stands merely through the combination of the two together, yet it seems as if it had curiosity and interestedness. This is how it should be regarded". Furthermore³ "The mind has no effective power; it cannot occur by its own efficient power. It does not eat, it does not drink, it does not speak, it does not adopt postures. The body is without efficient power; it cannot occur by its own efficient power. For it has no desire to eat, it has no desire to drink, it has no desire to speak, and it has no desire to adopt postures. But rather it is when supported by the mind that the body occurs. *When the mind has the desire to eat, the desire to drink, the desire to speak, the desire to adopt a posture it is the body that eats, drinks, speaks, and adopts a posture*".

¹ Vis. xviii. 32 ² Vis. xviii 31 ³ Vis. xviii 34.

CONCEPTS OF COMPACTNESS AND CONTINUITY

Despite all that has been said so far, and despite all that one has learnt on numerous occasions it is no easy matter to loosen — much less to get rid of, even temporarily — the notion of an ego that is so deeply ingrained within each and every one of us. In the first instance, the notion is so widely held and mental apathy for the effort necessary in the search for an alternative explanation precludes one from taking the trouble to question its validity. Further, appearances are so very plausible that the idea of an ego is readily accepted just as the view that the sun rises and sets 'because the sun revolves round the earth' used to be accepted at one time not so long ago. Further because of the concept of Compactness,¹ we take phenomena in their entirety, hence the characteristics of 'not self' e.g., the absence of an ego, does not become apparent, until resolution of the compact into the various elements is given attention; and because of the concept of Continuity the characteristic of impermanence does not become apparent, until continuity is disrupted by discerning that phenomena rise and fall, and that nothing remains static even for the minutest fraction of a second. The Buddha has given us an apt illustration in *the difference between our attitude to a cow and its meat*:² Whilst feeding a cow, bringing it to the slaughter house, keeping it tied up after bringing it there, and seeing it slaughtered, and dead the butcher does not lose the perception of 'cow' so long as he has not carved it up and divided it into parts: but when he has divided it up and when he sits down to sell it he no longer retains the perception of 'cow', and in its stead the perception of

¹ Vis. xxi. 3-4

² Vis. xi. 30.

meat occurs, he does not think 'I am selling cow', or 'they are carrying cow away', but rather he thinks 'I am selling meat' or 'they are carrying meat away', so too this bhikkhu, whilst still a foolish ordinary person does not lose the perception 'living being' or 'man' or 'person' so long as he does not by analysis of the compact into its elements review the body however placed, however disposed as consisting of elements. But when he does review it as consisting of elements, he loses the perception of 'living being', and his mind establishes itself upon elements".

*The corrective to these concepts of Compactness and Continuity in the corresponding terminology of modern physics is well illustrated by the following analogies. We are told*¹ "The nucleii of matter in an armour plate are as separately placed as a collection of apples separated from each other by a distance of about three miles, and yet the armour plate appears to be impregnable". Again²: "It is beyond belief, but scientific proof shows that if it were possible to assemble atoms into a mass the size of an average marble such as children play with, the weight of the marble would be four hundred billion pounds"; and again³ "Electrons circle round their nucleii with enormous velocity, and atoms and molecules themselves rush about with incredible speed. The speed of the molecules in the air for instance is about one thousand miles per hour". In these circumstances no movement can possibly be noticed by our senses even with the aid of the most powerful instruments, since these speeds occur within such a very limited space as is available within molecules of matter.

¹ and ³ What is Atomic Energy, by K. Mendelssohn

² More Modern Wonders and How they work, by Captain Burr W. Leyson.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

We have so far made a study and gained some knowledge of the vision according to reality showing that what is commonly referred to as a living being consists merely of mind and body or *nāma-rūpa*, and is void of an ego. We have merely attempted to acquire the theoretical knowledge required for gaining Purification of View, which is the first of the five stages towards the attainment of Understanding. But we are yet a long way, a very long way from the actual Understanding of Purification of View. The Buddha has spoken of *three grades of wisdom*:¹ by learning (Sutamaya paññā), by reasoning (Cintāmaya paññā), and thirdly by meditative development (Bhāvanāmaya paññā). This last grade is the one by which alone higher truths can be grasped, and to which alone the term Understanding or Insight may correctly be applied. Understanding is a very precise form of realisation, and never a vague kind of mystic vision. Says the Buddha,² "The dhamma one has learnt and mastered *must be tested by intuitive wisdom, these things that are not so tested their meaning does not become clear*. Some foolish men master the dhamma simply for the advantage of reproaching others, and for the advantage of gossiping, and they do not arrive at the goal for the sake of which they mastered the dhamma. They are *like the man who catches a large snake by its tail or by its body*, and not by its neck, and because of his wrong grasp is bitten by the snake", or they are like the "cowherd who counts others' kine, for they do not share in the blessings of a recluse".³ Aldous Huxley illustrates clearly the difference between knowledge

¹ Vis. xiv. 14. ² M. Sutta. 22, ³ Dhammapada 19.

and understanding when he states,¹ "Understanding can only be talked about, and that very inadequately, it cannot be passed on, it can never be shared. There can of course be knowledge of such an understanding, and this knowledge may be passed on. But we must always remember that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as understanding, which is the raw material of that knowledge. It is different from understanding as the doctor's prescription for penicillin is different from penicillin. Understanding is as rare as emeralds, and so is highly prized. The knowers would dearly love to be understanders; but either their stock of knowledge does not include the knowledge of what to do in order to be understanders, or else they know theoretically what they ought to do, but go on doing the opposite all the same. In either case they cherish the comforting delusion that knowledge, and above all pseudo-knowledge are understanding".

Our generation has undoubtedly grown rapidly in knowledge and in intelligence, but can we say that we have grown in Understanding? Is not this 'inner tangle', and this 'outer tangle' referred to in the opening paragraph of this essay of our own making? If we hope to disentangle this tangle are we prepared firstly to make a study of the basic teaching of the Buddha, and once we have begun to appreciate its fundamentals, perhaps at first with a few reservations, *are we prepared to undertake the training, arduous and prolonged that is essential, in the words of Huxley, from being knowers to become understanders?* Buddha the perfect physician for mental ills has given us

¹"Adonis and the Alphabet, and other Essays", Aldous Huxley. Ch. 2 — Knowledge and Understanding.

the prescription, and it is left to us to have it dispensed by studying his teaching, and most important of all to start taking the medicine ourselves by putting his teaching into practice. The illness is of a very serious nature although often showing little or no symptoms to the unwary and the thoughtless. It is 'infectious', deep rooted and extremely chronic. Moreover it is beset with many complications, and the patient is a danger to society.

The treatment is difficult, and is so prolonged that for the preponderating majority of us, for want of an adequate trial, it will have to be spread over many, many lifetimes before a cure can even be reasonably expected. However a beginning must be made sometime, and fortunately an amelioration of the symptoms may be noticeable shortly after one commences the treatment in proportion to the enthusiasm with which it is followed. This will infuse fresh enthusiasm and hope as to the final efficacy of the treatment. *From the point of view of society however it is most fortunate that the benefits of the treatment are spectacular and immediate.* It is as if the patient who is suffering from violent maniacal fits is calmed down within a few days of the commencement of the treatment, although a cure may be ever so remote; it is as if a patient with an infectious disease requiring prolonged treatment is rendered non-infectious from the very outset of the treatment. This aspect of the Buddha's teaching ought to make a firm appeal to all those who control the affairs of their community or their country, and should create an enthusiasm in the minds of those in a position to mould international relationships. For is there any doubt that it is the greed to satisfy the 'me' and the 'us', so deep rooted within us, and the ill-will resulting from any obstacles in our path in the attainment

of that satisfaction, both of which are the result of ignorance that are the causes of all our entanglements — the jealousy and rivalry, the suspicion, fear and anxiety, and man's inhumanity to man, that we see all round us? What other cause is there for all this misery, for the obstacles to our economic and our spiritual development, and for the meanness and the degradation resulting from the exploitation of man by man? A knowledge of the Buddha's teaching, and much more even a far off glimpse of its understanding will convince those who hold the destiny of their country in their hands, that so long as they avoid the ugly features of greed, of lust for power, and of exploitation of one nation by another, they may safely concede to nations, who wish to develop their nationhood along any lines, and through any stages of nationalism peculiar to their own genius the right to do so. *In this way the minds of national leaders may be infused with the ultimate ideal of a world brotherhood of nations.*

UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE

The conversion of knowledge into understanding and final deliverance rests on a systematic development and perfection to a minimum but definite extent of each of the seven Stages of Purification in successive steps. It is not possible to by-pass any of these stages. It will thus be seen that Purification of Morality is the first essential requisite, and Purification of Concentration the second before one can profitably embark on the five final stages of Purification of Understanding, which commences with the stage of Purification of View.

Purification of Morality or Sila-Visuddhi is

“To refrain from all evil,
To do good”.

"*Refraining from all evil*", is not a mere negative and physical phenomenon of abstaining from wrong action and wrong speech. It is based on the internal restraint of a clearly conscious and guiding mind: and for the layman this consists in the abstention from bodily and vocal misconduct — unskill in action and speech.¹ The first includes killing or inflicting injury; acquisition either by stealth, fraud, threat, or violence; sexual misconduct; the use of intoxicants; and undesirable modes of livelihood; and the second consists of lying, harsh speech, slander and frivolous talk. In order 'to do good' one develops characteristics directly opposed to unskillful acts and speech already enumerated, for instance the practice of lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and liberality (*dāna*); the practice of restraint of the senses (*indriya-samvara-sīla*) with constant mindfulness, self-possession and detachment; the practice of truthfulness, of kind and helpful talk, and a golden silence where speech is not indicated; and the practice of the difficult art of rejoicing at the good fortune of others (*muditā*). By 'refraining from evil' one has the great reward amongst other things, in the Buddha's own words, of freedom from remorse, of a sense of ease without alloy, and of tranquillity and facility to concentrate.² Besides these daily practices one practises from time to time for periods of one or more days at a time and as frequently as possible *other rules of morality*³ such as celibacy, abstention from all food after the hour of twelve noon, abstention from the enjoyment of dancing,

¹ *Pañca Sīla* (the five precepts). ² Ang. vol. V. ch. 1.

³ e.g. The eight precepts:—consisting of the five precepts, with the substitution of strict celibacy for abstention from sexual misconduct; and with the addition of the three abstentions mentioned as regards food, amusements, and comfortable seats.

music, shows and other amusements, and from the use of cosmetics, perfumes, garlands and adornments; and lastly abstention from the use of lofty and comfortable seats and couches. These periodic practices are meant to develop control over one's sexual appetite, and the craving for food, and to lessen one's inordinate craving for the fleeting pleasures of the senses. They further stimulate one's enthusiasm for the more satisfying and stable enjoyment of voluntary renunciation and of detachment.

PURIFICATION OF CONCENTRATION (CITTA-VISUDDHI OR SAMĀDHI)

This is the second of the seven stages of Purification. It is profitable unification of the mind on a single object, whereby the mind remains undistracted, unscattered, pure and tranquil—a preliminary condition absolutely necessary as a foundation either for developing insight, i.e. Vipassanā (Understanding); or for the acquisition of the various Jhānas. The latter are supersensual states of perfect mental Absorption, in which the fivefold sense activity has ceased, and where perfect unification of the mind is associated with various Jhāna Factors, which in the fourth or highest Jhāna of the Rūpa world consists of the finest Jhāna factor of Equanimity (Upekkhā) alone, unmixed with any of the less refined factors associated with the earlier Jhānas. This fourth Jhāna is also known as the Pādaka or Foundation Jhāna, as it is the foundation from which may be developed either the Jhānas of Formless existence (Arūpa Jhānas), or the Supernormal Powers or Abhiññās, e.g. various psychical powers:—the ability to read the minds of others, the remembrance of past lives, and the Divine Ear and the Divine Eye.

It is left to one's own wish to decide the stage in mental concentration at which he would desire to begin developing Understanding (Vipassanā), for it is not essential for final deliverance to develop Mental Concentration (Samādhi) to the lofty heights mentioned above. On the other hand it must be clearly borne in mind that Mental Concentration can never be by-passed altogether, as some would have us believe, before one may profitably embark on meditative development of Understanding (Vipassana-bhāvanā). When one is able to prevent the attention from jumping from one thought to another, and to keep it steady on one line of thought, and when the strain of such concentration on a single line of thought no longer exists one is ready to embark on Meditative Development of Understanding. The Visuddhi Magga has summarised for us the instruction given by the Buddha in forty subjects for meditation for the Development of Concentration,¹ giving us the choice of selecting one to two or three subjects suited to our temperament, and to the circumstances and surroundings under which we are placed for carrying out the practice. No attempt is made in this essay to enumerate these, much less to describe them even briefly.

*A good friend and teacher to guide one in the choice of a suitable subject for meditation, and to help one from time to time with advice and encouragement during the course of one's meditation is invaluable, but failing such a person, one may rely on a careful study of the written word. Next as to the choice of a *suitable place* for meditation; a room where one can lock oneself up for half an hour daily free from intrusion, and from noise is the most practicable. As*

¹ Vis. xviii. 23.

for a *suitable time* for meditation, a brief half-hour, when one is not too tired either physically or mentally, and when the necessary privacy and freedom from noise is available should be chosen. Once such a time is chosen the practice of meditation should be carried out regularly every day at the same time, either reckoning by the clock, or relative to some other regular event of the day, say within a specified number of minutes from waking up, or some specified period of time either before or after dinner. The aim of such regularity in the practice is the formation of a *habit of meditation*, a habit as regular as that of taking meals, for habit regulates one's life. This calls for thought and rearrangement of the day's programme, which in turn means some inconvenience, which however is negligible in relation to the benefits to be gained from regular meditation. The formation of a habit of meditation will convert a practice that was at the beginning irksome, into one of pleasant anticipation and privilege. *The duration* of these practices will vary considerably on circumstances, and on the degree of one's enthusiasm. However for the layman living in a town under present-day conditions, and occupied in earning a living, a regular half-hour per day once or preferably twice daily is perhaps what ought to be aimed at, with longer periods at intermittent intervals. One cannot reasonably expect marked benefits from meditation undertaken for periods much shorter than half an hour; however regular ten minutes or even five minute periods are of benefit in the sense that it will ultimately infuse enthusiasm into the meditator sufficient to want him to extend the duration of his meditative practice. It is important to *adopt a comfortable position* to which one can without much difficulty get accustomed to, the essential point is to keep the spine erect so that one may not be fidgety, or sway one's body. For a

brief period just prior to sitting down for meditation one should forget all business interests, and personal likes and dislikes and prejudices. This is conveniently done either by a brief period of quiet reading from a portion of the dhamma, or of worship of the Buddha (*vandanā*). Lastly one has to *cultivate patience and enthusiasm* if one is not to be discouraged by one's lapses in not maintaining the regularity of one's meditative practice in the early stages.

BHĀVANĀMAYA PAÑÑĀ

This connotes meditative development of Understanding. Purification of View as already mentioned, is the vision according to reality, that what is commonly referred to as a living being, consists merely of name and form or *nāma-rūpa*, and is void of an ego. The meditative development of this view may be done in one of several ways.

MEDITATION ON THE BODY

Taking the body first, materiality may be discerned in one of several ways:— By way of the 18 elements (*Dhātu*); by way of the 28 properties of materiality (*Mahābhūta* and *Upādāya-rūpa*); by way of the corporeal groups (*Kalāpas*); or lastly by way of the four Primary Elements (*Mahābhūta*). By way of the last mentioned one may discern materiality in his own person by meditation either with constituents of the body in brief, or with constituents by analysis in detail, taking each of the thirty two parts separately, one by one.

¹M. Sutta. No. 140; Vis. viii. 44; and xi. 47-82.

Meditation on the body, with constituents in brief is done in the following manner:—"In this body all parts whose predominant quality is that of hardness, or roughness are said to belong to the *earthy element*. Every such solid part of one's body, — e.g. head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, or skin; flesh, sinews, bone, marrow, or mesentery; every solid organ such as kidney, liver, spleen, or brain; every hollow organ such as stomach, intestines, or the heart; and all the solid contents of hollow organs such as undigested food in the stomach, or excrement in the intestines — is made up of a multitude of groups or *kalāpas* of all the four primary elements or qualities coming together in a certain manner, and in varying proportions. The four primary elements are widely separated from each other by the element of space (*ākāsa-dhātu*), which makes it possible for the former to be in a continual state of movement, of change, and of activity; and which enables them (the primary elements) to function properly. In each solid part of one's body the earthy element predominates, hence it appears as a stiffened solid. These groups of the earthy element are, on the one hand held together by the small quantity of the watery element present, 'flowing out' amongst these groups and binding them, whilst on the other hand they are prevented from collapsing by the quality of distension possessed by the airy element. Further these groups of the earthy element are maintained, matured, removed, and renewed by the fiery element. The earthy element present in the solid parts throughout one's body is in its fundamental characteristics in no way different from the earthy element present in solids outside one's body. Just as the solid element present in a tree, or a rock does not represent a living being, even so what is called hair, teeth, or bone or any other solid part of one's body is a particular component

of one's body, without thought, morally indeterminate, void, and not a living being".

One next meditates, in a similar manner on all the fluid parts of one's body thus:— "In this body all parts whose predominant quality is that of 'flowing out', and subsequently of 'holding together' the other qualities are said to belong to the *watery element*. Every such fluid portion of one's body—e.g. bile, blood, oil of the joints, or other secretion ; sweat, tears, spittle, urine or other excretion—is made up of a multitude of groups or kalāpas of all the four primary elements or qualities coming together in a certain manner, and in varying proportions. In every drop of fluid in one's body the watery element predominates, hence it appears as a liquid having the quality of flowing out, or spreading out. The small quantity of the earthy element present gives the liquid the necessary foundation or 'substance'. Each drop of liquid present in one's body is prevented from collapsing by the quality of distension possessed by the airy element. Further each drop of fluid is secreted, maintained, altered, and matured by virtue of the fiery quality or element present. The watery element present in each drop of fluid in one's body is in no way different to the watery element present in liquids outside the body. Just as the watery element present in a pond, or well, or a river does not represent a living being, even so what is called bile, or blood, sweat or urine or any other liquid part of one's body is a particular component of one's body, without thought, morally indeterminate, void, and not a living being".

One next meditates on the 'fiery' and the 'airy' qualities in one's body thus:— The *fiery quality* in one's body has

the function of warming (santāpana), of ageing (jīrāpana), of burning up or breaking down (pariḍayhana), and of digesting (pācaka). It maintains this body, keeps it warm, ensures its proper appearance, and prevents it from putrefying”.

“In this body all parts whose predominant quality is that of distending, and preventing from collapse; of motility, and of lightness belong to the *airy element*. Every such gaseous portion of one’s body — e.g. up or down going winds, wind both inside and outside hollow organs in the chest and in the abdomen; wind in gaps and apertures such as the ears or the nostrils — is made up of a multitude of groups or kalāpas of all the four primary qualities coming together in a certain manner, and in varying proportions. In each gaseous portion of one’s body the airy element predominates, hence it appears as a gas having the quality of distending, of motility and of lightness. The small portion of the earthy element present gives the gas the necessary foundation or ‘substance’. These gases are held together by the watery quality present, and they are maintained, by the fiery quality. The airy quality present in the gases in one’s body is in its fundamental characteristics in no way different to the airy element present in gases outside one’s body. Just as the airy element present in the atmosphere does not represent a living being, even so what is called up or down going winds, or wind in the lungs or in the intestines, or any other part of one’s body is a particular component of one’s body, without thought, morally indeterminate, void, and not a living being”.

One may profitably do the above meditation in stages, as it has to be done when the meditation is carried out in detail, where each of the thirty two parts of the body are

taken up separately one by one. Firstly one learns by-heart the summary of the meditation as given above, or suitably modified; secondly there is the *Verbal Recitation*¹ of what has been learnt by-heart. "This shall be done even if one is a master of the Tipitaka, for the meditation subject only becomes evident to some through recitation". Thirdly when one is proficient in the verbal recitation, one should do the *Recitation Mentally*.² "Just as it was done verbally, for the mental recitation is a condition for the penetration of the characteristics of the primary elements". Fourthly when one becomes proficient in both the verbal and the mental recitation one commences the actual meditation itself.

Instead of doing the meditation in the above manner one may do it *in terms of recent atomic physics*. One may make one's own summary from the facts gathered from this essay, and from other sources. This summary should embody the following facts: That everything in the universe, including our own bodies is made up from one or a combination of two or more of the 92 elements or atoms, in varying combinations. That these atoms themselves are complex in structure, and are made up of three elementary particles or building bricks, the protons, the neutrons, and the electrons. That of these the first two are placed within a central core or nucleus, and that the electrons are disposed at great distances from, and around the nucleus. That the size of these elementary particles in comparison to the space in which they are disposed is infinitesimally small. That the difference in the qualities displayed by different objects is a property not of the mass possessed by these

¹ Vis. viii. 49. ² Vis. viii. 57.

minute elementary particles, but of the forces of attraction, and of repulsion between them. That these minute elementary particles are not static, but are constantly moving at incredible speeds. That the property called mass is simply concentrated energy. One would then conclude thus:— “The elementary particles, e.g. the protons, the neutrons, and the electrons present throughout one’s body, are in no way different to the protons, neutrons, and electrons present in solid objects, liquids or gases outside one’s body. Just as the protons, neutrons, and electrons present in solid objects, liquids or gases outside one’s body do not represent a living being, even so the protons, the neutrons, and the electrons, present in one’s body are without thought, morally indeterminate, void, and not a living being”.

One meditates in this way — either in terms of the four ‘primary elements’; or in terms of the three elementary particles that go to form the atom — regularly, with enthusiasm, and with increasing confidence, for months, for years, or for a lifetime until one is ‘quite sure of discerning materiality (rūpa), in one’s body’. If, and when one ‘has thus become quite sure of discerning materiality in this way, and *not until then*, should one undertake the task of discerning immaterial states (nāma)’.¹

MEDITATION ON THE IMMATERIAL STATES

This meditation is based on the formula given in the paragraph on Immaterial States on page 33f., and is carried out thus:— “The eye and a visual object constitute materiality (rūpa); the eye-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitutes mentality (nāma): besides the eye, the

¹ Vis. xviii 23.

object that impinges on the eye, and the resulting eye-consciousness there is no 'being', or 'person', which are only terms of convenience. The ear and sound constitute materiality; the ear-consciousness which arises by their coming together constitute mentality: besides the ear, the sound, and the resulting ear-consciousness there is no 'being' or 'person', which are only terms of convenience". Similarly one carries out the meditation for the nose and odour, and the resulting nose-consciousness: for the tongue and taste, and the resulting tongue-consciousness: and for the body and tangible object, and the resulting body-consciousness. Further "through the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), and mind-object (*dhamma*) there arises the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*): besides the mind-element, the mind-object, and the resulting mind-consciousness-element there is no 'being' or 'person', which are only terms of convenience".

In addition to the above one runs one's mind through everything that has been described in the remaining portion of this section, on Immaterial States, through the section on Interdependence of Mind and Body, and through the section on Concepts of Compactness and Continuity.¹

The above meditation undertaken for discerning the Immaterial States will have to be carried out with diligence, with enthusiasm, and with regularity, and for an ever increasing duration of time daily for years or for a lifetime until one gains Purity of View — that "Correct vision of mind and body; which after defining mind and body by these various methods has been established on the plane of non-confusion by overcoming the perception of a being, is what should be understood as "PURIFICATION OF VIEW".²

¹Pages 33-38. ²Vis xviii. 37.

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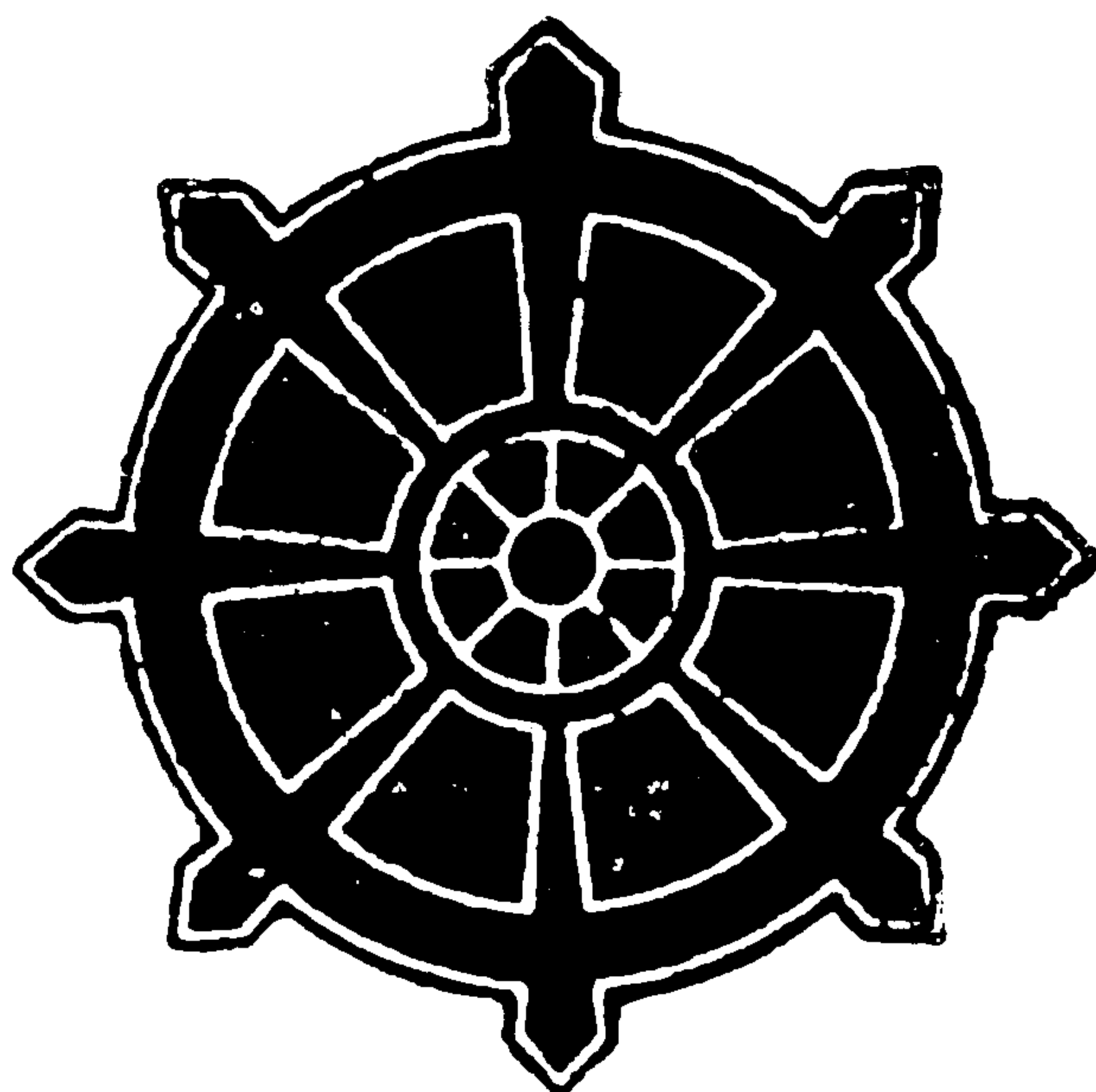
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THE VENERABLE BUDDHAGHOSA'S
SALUTATION TO THE TRIPLE GEM

Heart compassionate cool, lamp of lore,
Shattering all nescience-murk at the core,
World-Honoured One, Thee do I adore,
The Welfarer freed from faring more.

What he the Lord made become to gain
Buddhahood-Enlightenment, state beyond stain,
The State Supreme that the Saints attain—
I worship that best thing that ends pain.

Sons of the Well Gone One's very breast,
Quellers of the Mara-host of life's unrest,
Octad that 'mongst groups is deemed the crest,
Bowling do I hail that Order blest.

Translated by Soma Thera.

DEVOTION IN BUDDHISM

I

The Buddha repeatedly discouraged any excessive veneration paid to him personally. He knew that an excess of purely emotional devotion will obstruct or disturb the development of a balanced character, and that it may become a serious obstacle to progress on the path to deliverance. The history of religion has since proved him right, as illustrated by the extravagancies of emotional mysticism in East and West.

There is the story of the monk Vakkali who full of devotion and love for the Buddha, was ever desirous to behold him bodily. To him the Buddha said: "What shall it profit you to see this impure body? Who sees the Teaching (Dhamma), sees me."

Shortly before the Buddha passed away, he said: "If a monk or a nun, a devout man or a devout woman, lives in accordance with the Teaching, is correct in his life, walks in conformity with the Teaching — it is he who rightly honours, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Perfect One (*Tathāgata*) with the worthiest homage".

A true and deep understanding of the Dhamma, together with a conduct that is in conformity with that understanding — these are vastly superior to any external homage or mere emotional devotion. That is the instruction conveyed by these two teachings of the Master.

It will be a mistake, however, to conclude that the Buddha disparaged a reverential and devotional attitude

of mind when it is the natural outflow of a true understanding and a deep admiration of what is great and noble. It would also be a grievous error to believe that the “Seeing of the Teaching” (spoken of in the first saying) is identical with a mere intellectual appreciation of the doctrine and a purely conceptual grasp of it. Such a one-sidedly abstract approach to the very concrete message of the Buddha all too often leads to intellectual smugness. In its barrenness it will certainly not be a substitute for the strong and enlivening impulse imparted by a deep-felt devotion to what is known as great, noble and exemplary. Devotion being a facet and natural accompaniment of Confidence (*saddhā*), is a necessary factor in the ‘balance of faculties’ (*indriya-samatā*) required for final deliverance. Confidence, in all its aspects (and among them, the devotional) is required for resolving any stagnation and other shortcomings resulting from a onesided development of the intellectual faculties (intelligence, insight, wisdom; *paññā*) which often tend to turn around in circles endlessly, without being able to effect a break-through. Here, Devotion, Confidence, Faith (in whatever way we wish to render the Pāli term *saddhā*) may be able to give quick help.

Though the Buddha refused to be made the object of an emotional ‘personality cult’, he, on the other hand, knew that “respect and homage paid to those who are worthy of it, is a great blessing”. The Buddha made this statement in the very first stanza of one of his principal ethical injunctions, the verses on Blessings (*Mahā-Mangala Sutta*).¹ Mentioning the value of a respectful, reverential attitude

1. See THE WHEEL No. 14 ; “Everyman’s Ethics”, p. 19 ff (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

together with the blessings of “avoiding fools and associating the wise”, the Buddha obviously regarded such attitude as fundamental for individual and social progress and for the acquisition of any further and higher Blessings. One who is incapable of any reverential attitude will also be incapable of any spiritual progress beyond the narrow limits of his present mental condition. One who is so blind as not to see or recognize anything higher and better than the little mud-pool of his own petty self and environment, will for a long time suffer from ‘retarded growth’. And he who out of a demonstrative self-assertion, scorns any reverential attitude in himself and in others, is imprisoned in his self-conceit which is a most effective bar to a true maturity of character and to spiritual growth. It is by recognizing and honouring someone or something higher, one honours and enhances one’s own inner potentialities.

*“When the high heart we magnify,
And the sure vision celebrate,
And worship greatness passing by,
Ourselves are great.”*

Since respect, reverence and devotion are partial aspects of the Buddhist concept of Confidence (*saddhā*), one will now understand, also from this angle, why Confidence has been called the seed of any other beneficial quality.

The nobler the object of reverence or devotion, the higher is the blessing bestowed by it. “Those who have joyous confidence in the highest, highest fruit will be theirs” (Anguttara-Nik., The Fours, No. 34). The supreme objects of a Buddhist’s reverence and devotion are his Three Refuges, also called the Three Jewels or Ideals : the

Buddha, his Teaching (*Dhamma*) and the Community of saintly monks (*Sangha*).¹ Here, too, the Buddha is revered not as a personality of such and such a name, nor as a deity, but as the embodiment of Enlightenment. A text often recurring in the Buddhist scriptures, says that a devout lay disciple “has confidence (*saddhā*), he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One”. This confidence, however, is not the outcome of blind faith based on hearsay, but it is derived from the devotee’s reasoned conviction based on his own understanding of the Buddha Word which speaks to him clearly with a voice of unmistakable Enlightenment. This derivation of his assurance is emphasized by the fact that, along with Confidence, also Wisdom is mentioned among the qualities of an ideal lay follower.

We may now ask: Is it not quite natural that feelings of love, gratitude, reverence and devotion seek expression through the entire man, through acts of body and speech as well as through his thoughts and unexpressed sentiments? Will one, for instance, hide one’s feelings towards parents and other beloved ones? Will not one rather express them by loving words and deeds? Will not one cherish their memory in suitable ways, as for instance, by preserving their likeness in one’s home, by placing flowers on their graves, by recalling their noble qualities? In such a way, also one who has become alienated from the devotional aspects of religion, may seek to understand the outward acts of homage which are customary in Buddhist lands: when, with reverential gesture, flowers and incense are placed before a Buddha image and devotional texts are recited which are not prayers but meditations. Provided that such

1. See BODHI LEAVES No. 5; ‘The Three Refuges’ by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

practice does not deteriorate into a thoughtless routine, a follower of the Dhamma will derive benefit if he takes up some form of devotional practice adapting it to his personal temperament and to the social customs of his environment.

Buddhism, however, does not in the least impose upon its followers a *demand* to observe any outward form of devotion or worship. This is entirely left to the choice of individuals whose emotional, devotional and intellectual needs are bound to differ greatly. No Buddhist should feel himself forced into an iron-cast mould, be it of a devotional or a rationalistic shape. As a follower of the Middle Way, a Buddhist should, however, avoid one-sided judgment also in this respect, and should try to appreciate individual needs and preferences of others which differ from those of his own.

More important and of greater general validity, however, than these outward forms of devotion, are the basic capacity for respect and reverence discussed at the beginning, and the practice of meditations or contemplations of a devotional character. Many benefits accrue from these and hence it was for good reasons that the Enlightened One recommended strongly and repeatedly the meditative Recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), along with other kindred Recollections.¹ Here, again, the reference is to the embodied ideal ; and, therefore, the Buddha as a being freed from all traces of vanity and egotism, could well venture to recommend to his disciples a meditation of the Buddha.

What, then, are the benefits of such devotional meditations ? Their first benefit is *mental purification* ; they have

1. See *The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*, transl. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Chapter VII (Lake House Bookshop, Colombo).

been called by the Buddha “efficacious procedures for purifying a defiled mind” (Angutt. Nik., The Threes, No. 71). ‘When a noble disciple contemplates upon the Enlightened One, at that time his mind is not enwrapped in lust, nor in hatred, nor in delusion. At such a time his mind is rightly directed: it has got rid of lust, is aloof from it, is freed from it. Lust is here a name of the five sense desires. By cultivating this contemplation, many beings become purified” (Angutt. Nik., The Sixes, No. 25).

If, by practising that devotional meditation, one endeavours to live, as it were, ‘in the Master’s presence’ (*sattḥā sammukhī bhūto*), one will feel ashamed to do or speak or think anything unworthy, one will shrink back from evil; and as a positive reaction, one will feel inspired to high endeavour, in emulation of the Master’s great example.

Images, and not abstract concepts, are the language of the subconscious. If, therefore, the image of the Enlightened One is often created, within one’s mind, as the embodiment of Man Perfected, it will deeply penetrate into the subconscious mind, and, if sufficiently strong, will act as an ‘automatic brake’ against evil impulses. In such a way, the subconscious may become a powerful ally in gaining self-mastery while normally it is too often the hidden enemy of such endeavour. For that purpose of ‘*educating the subconscious*’, it will be helpful to use a Buddha image, or a picture, as an aid in visualization, and in that way concentration of mind may be attained fairly soon. For evoking and deeply absorbing some features of the Buddha’s mentality, his qualities should be contemplated for instance in the way described in the ‘Path of Purification’ (Visuddhi Magga).

The Recollection of the Buddha, being productive of joy (*pīti*), is an effective way of *invigorating the mind*, of lifting it up from states of listlessness, tension, fatigue, and frustration, which occur during meditation as well as in ordinary life. The Buddha himself advised: "If (in the strenuous practice of a subject of meditation, for instance) in the Contemplation of the Body, bodily agitation (including sense desires), or mental lassitude or distraction should arise in the meditator, then he should turn his mind to a gladdening (or elevating) subject" (*Samy.* 47, 10). And here the Teachers of old recommend especially the Recollection of the Buddha. When under its influence those hindrances to concentration have vanished, the meditator will be able to return to his original subject of meditation.

For a beginner especially, attempts at gaining concentration are often frustrated by an uneasy self-consciousness; the meditator squints, as it were, back upon himself: he becomes disturbingly aware of his body with its little discomforts, and of his mental state struggling against obstacles and thereby strengthening them. This may, for instance, happen when the subjects of meditation are one's own physical or mental processes, but it may also occur with any other subject. In such a situation, it will be profitable to follow the advice given earlier and to turn one's attention from one's own personality to the inspiring visualization of the Buddha and the contemplation of his qualities. The joy thus produced may bring about that self-forgetfulness which is such an important factor for gaining concentration. Joy (*pīti*; 'joyful interest') produces calm (*passaddhi*), calm leads to ease (*sukha*) and ease to concentration (*samādhi*). Thus devotional meditation can serve as a valuable *aid in attaining mental concentration*

which is the basis of liberating Insight. This function of devotional meditation cannot be better described than in the words of the Master.

“When a noble disciple contemplates upon the Enlightened One, at that time his mind is not enwrapped by lust nor by delusion and at that time his mind is rightly directed towards the Perfect One (Tathāgata). And with a rightly directed mind the noble disciple gains enthusiasm for the goal, enthusiasm for the Dhamma, gains the delight derived from the Dhamma. In him thus delighted, joy arises ; to one joyfully minded body and mind become calm ; calmed in body and mind, he feels at ease ; and if at ease, the mind finds concentration. Such a one is called a noble disciple who among a humanity gone wrong, has attained to what is right ; who among a humanity beset by troubles, dwells free of troubles” (Angutt. Nik., The Sixes, No. 10).

Nyanaponika Thera

HOMAGE TO THE BUDDHA BY SABHIYA
ON HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE

Ending, transcending Ills,
Cankerless Arahāt,
thy insight, light, and lore,
have brought me safe across !

For marking my distress,
for freeing me from doubt,
I laud thee, sage benign,
consummate master-mind,
great Kinsman of the Sun !

The doubts I had are solved by thee, O Seer,
O All-Enlighten'd sage immaculate !

With ev'ry perturbation rooted up,
unfever'd, tranquil, strong in Truth art thou !

Great Victor ! Paragon ! Thy words rejoice
all gods, all Nāradas, all Pabbatas.

I hail thee noblest, foremost of mankind ;
nor earth nor heaven holds thy counterpart !

Enlighten'd Master ! Over Māra's hosts
triumphant ! Sage, who, wrong propensities
uprooting, for thyself salvation found
and taught mankind to find salvation too !

Thou hast surmounted all that breeds rebirth
and extirpated canker-growths within !
With naught to bind thee thrall to life, thou'rt free
as forest lion from all fears and dread.

E'en as a lotus fair to water gives
no lodgement, thou by good and bad alike
art unaffected. Stretch thou forth thy feet,
O Victor ! I salute my Master's feet !

DEVOTION IN BUDDHISM

II

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

Dhamma, said the Buddha, may be compared to a snake which if caught by the head is brought under control but if seized by the tail, carries death. Similarly the Dhamma rightly understood and lived, leads to the extinction of all suffering, but will cause harm if misunderstood and misapplied.¹ If we are to accept that Buddhism starves emotion and lays emphasis on reason alone then it would have been impossible for Buddhism to flourish for more than 2500 years as a *living religion* providing the spiritual and cultural requirements of millions. Countries like Burma, Thailand, Ceylon, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam cannot conceivably be supposed to have quenched their spiritual

1. See 'The Discourse on the Simile of the Serpent' (Majjhima Nikāya No. 22 - Alagaddūpama Sutta),

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

In the theistic conception of *bhakti* or faith, devotion is always accompanied by practices like prayers, rituals, vows, and an unquestioned obedience to a Creator God, his earthly incarnation or some deity. There is fear of being punished if the command of God is either questioned or not followed with submission. And wherever there is fear there will arise blind faith, dogmatism, superstition, ritualism, intolerance and such other evil consequences, because fear restricts mental growth, traps the mind and makes it insular. Prayers, rituals and vows lead men to ask and crave for worldly boons and pleasures while alive, and for happy states on earth or in heavenly worlds, after death. Love taking the form of an uncontrolled emotional devotion may and often does, create selfish affection (*sneha*) and a physical relationship between the devotee and his or her lord which in many cases may turn carnal. Being associated with religion such indulgences may remain undetected and even become a holy practice which could be conducted unhindered. This would give one a free licence to roam in the wilderness of vague imaginations. One waits for the saving grace of the God in all activities and thereby loses self-confidence and becomes indolent and a slave to superstitions. Devotion should not be wholly emotional, for it may grow positively harmful in that the devotee may become fanatical or, having become too sensitive emotionally, get upset by little mishaps or gains.

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

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

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

Itipi so Bhagavā - Arahaṃ Sammāsambuddho, vijjā-carāṇasampanno, sugato, lokavidū, anuttaro, purisa-dhammasārathi, satthā devamanussānaṃ, Buddho, Bhagavā'ti.

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

Svākkhāto Bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, Akāliko, ehipassiko, opāyiko, paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi'ti.

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

Supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka - sangho, ujupaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka - sangho, ñāyapaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho ; yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭhapurisaṃpuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasangho, āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo. dakkhi-neyyo añjalikarāṇīyo, anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassā'ti.

Of perfect conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of wise conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of dutiful conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples ; that is to say, the Four Pairs of men,¹ the Eight Persons.

1. The Four Pairs and Eight Persons refer to the four stages of Sainthood endowed with the eightfold Supermundane Knowledge of Path (*Magga*) and Fruition (*Phala*).

This Order of the Lord's Disciples is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of reverential salutation, as an incomparable field of merit to the world. —

Space does not permit to go here into the details of the practice of devotional meditations. Briefly, it is meditating on the true significance of these attributes — nine of the Buddha, six of the Dhamma, ten of the Sangha — and accomplish an inner transformation by implanting them, as it were, within.

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

Hence, to the Buddhists the Buddha is not a God or an incarnation of a God (Avatāra), nor is He an ever-abiding universal principle; and the Buddha has no commandments to give which need be accepted with unquestioning obedience. Prayers to him, or rituals and vows, and blind faith in him have no meaning whatsoever.

Dhamma here constitutes the transcendental truths of Nibbana as well as the Eightfold Path leading to Nibbana as discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha. Here reflection

(*anussati*) is meditation on the Dhamma's transcendental qualities. That is to say, meditation on that perfect state of Deliverance which is freed from greed, hate and delusion — the source of all samsaric turmoil — and is a condition of Peace and Bliss that terminates death and rebirth for all time. It is also meditation on that perfect path which leads to this perfect goal, namely, on Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

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

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

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

*Dhammakāyo yato Satthā, Dhammo satthā tato mato ;
Dhamme thito so sangho ca satthu sankham nigacchati ;*

Since the Teacher is the Truth-embodiment,
so is the Truth the very Teacher,
and the Noble Order being established on the Truth,
Also goes by the name of the Teacher.

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

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

As mentioned earlier, a devotional act calls into play many forces and faculties of the mind. The most important of these is Faith (*Saddhā*) in the Triple Gem, which, in Buddhism, means conviction and confidence born of knowledge. Faith is associated with other factors such as gratitude, love, joy and deep reverence, forming as a whole, what may be called here, the emotional aspect. Inasmuch

as this *Saddhā* or conviction born of knowledge, contains no element of selfish affection (*sineha*) nor personal relationship and blind faith, it differs essentially from the theistic concept of faith and devotion. The basis of *Saddhā* is wise understanding of the true significance of the Triple Gem as closely related to the problem of suffering and the deliverance from it. At least it must be accompanied by a deep conviction in the 'Law of Kamma' as a factor that sustains and perpetuates this endless course of birth and death, and the suffering associated with life.

Since *Saddhā* is the one indispensable factor that governs all spiritual growth it is called the Seed (*bīja*) from which is born the 'tree of wisdom' that bears the 'fruit of deliverance'. There are five mental powers (*bala*), also called spiritual faculties (*indriya*), namely, *Saddhā* - Faith; *Viriya* - Energy; *Sati* - Mindfulness; *Samādhi* - Concentration; *Paññā* - Intuitive insight or Wisdom. Of these the primary factor is *Saddhā* which if properly cultivated, conditions the development of the rest. In its highest, i. e. supermundane sense, *Saddhā* is *Aveccappaśāda*, unshakable faith in the Triple Gem — achievable through the attainment of the Noble Path (*Ariya Magga*). And only in this sense is it true 'self-surrender' which is the culmination of devotion. Self-surrender, in the Buddhist sense, is not a spiritual unification with some other entity or merging with some universal principle nor the sacrifice of one's will at the feet of some one else, a God, deity or teacher. But it is the entire abandonment, down to the last vestige, of all 'self-notion', of 'personality-belief' (belief in an immortal self) - *Sakkāyaditṭhi*. When accomplished this brings to pass the overcoming of at least two other mental fetters (*samyojana*), namely, *Sceptical Doubt* (*vicikicchā*) and *Clinging-to-rites-and rituals* (*Sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). Lastly,

since Saddhā rouses other concomitant factors, such as assurance, joy, gratitude and reverence, one will realise the tremendous significance of the Triple Gem as the true Refuge from the toils and tumults of Samsāra. A deliberate and conscious cultivation of this one factor, therefore, means the development of the entire emotional aspect which forms the source of all mental energy.

This brings us to the philosophical side with its two faculties, the rational and the volitional. The function of the rational faculty is to investigate and probe into the nature of existence in order to understand, at least intellectually, its reality in the true perspective. It is the dispassionate and objective study and scrutiny of things. When one removes the lid of 'self' or 'ego-centric consciousness' from the jar of life and lays it bare for objective analysis and observation only then does true understanding spring up in the mind. It must be agreed that understanding is manifold and of various kinds, so that one particular object may also be explained in quite the opposite way, perhaps reasonably too! Hence, what is intended here is understanding in terms of the Noble Truths according to which existence is regarded not as something permanent, pleasurable and endowed with a self or ego but as an impersonal process, arising and passing away dependent on conditions; that is to say, as impermanent, subject to suffering and unsubstantial (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*).

It is a proven fact that the basic instinct in all beings is the search for happiness and pleasure, and security or safety against death, disease and danger, although it is quite obvious that death is more certain than life. If life were not impermanent then there would be no need to crave for security and protection; likewise, the search for happiness and pleasure is another proof of the intrinsic suffering

in life. The same is true of the self-delusion ; for, if there were such a thing as an abiding self then it would mean that we would be free from the clutches of death and from all misery. 'Self' as an independent entity unaffected by all empirical fetters and limitations presupposes 'ownership' and the status of being the 'master' and 'possessor' of this life. Nobody ever wishes to suffer or to die. If there were an eternal or divine self then it would prevent all forms of suffering, death, etc. But that does not happen. Further where is the need for such a freed, happy and permanent self to strive for freedom, happiness and security ? Hence where is the need for religion which aims at these attainments ? The reality, however, is that there is only a *self-delusion* which is the root of all suffering and the cause of all limitation. Conditioned by this delusion, known to Buddhists as *Avijjā*, beings engage themselves in this mad rush of activities driven all the time by manifold cravings. Actions must produce reactions and these acts of craving that we always and almost helplessly perform cannot escape from producing results, namely the continuity of this stream of life, this cycle of births and deaths. But this inherent unsatisfactoriness in samsaric existence need not create undue anxiety, frustration or pessimism ; in fact, it should be the greatest incentive to hope, assurance and optimism. For the opposite of suffering too must exist. If only these actions are free from *craving* — the root cause of suffering — there is no reason why lasting happiness and peace could not be achieved. This, a deathless state of supermundane happiness called NIBBANA, is the goal of Buddhism.

With this background, it may be noticed, the rational faculty is not limited to a barren intellectualism ; it arouses the volition to transform knowledge into a living truth ;

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

This brings us to the function of the volitional faculty as purposive will, resoluteness or determination. It is the drive, the propulsive agency that transforms knowledge into action. It functions on the basis of understanding as a factor that harnesses mental energy for one-pointed application, for singleness of aim. It frees intellect from dryness and prevents emotion from indulgence and over-activity, that is, from undue dissipation of mental energy, thereby mobilizing purpose and concentrated effort. Although this faculty has been mentioned last, it is not less important than the other two. After all, it is volition that invests every action, whether in body, speech or mind, with the potentiality of producing results. And devotion as an act leading to deliverance must necessarily have a powerful volition. In fact, all these three faculties are mutually complimentary in the realisation of the common goal, Nibbāna.

It may not be inappropriate if the simile of the construction of a building is used to illustrate the functions of these faculties ; for devotion is also a constructive activity

after all. Understanding is like the plan and estimates; Will is the actual execution of the work of construction according to the plan; and Saddhā is like the building materials needed for the construction.

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

Bhikkhu Vanga Buddharakkhita
(*Bangalore, India*)

THE VENERABLE DHARMAPALA'S
SALUTATION TO THE TRIPLE GEM

Lord of great compassion, voyager, Thou,
Across the knowledge-sea, to Thee I bow,
Thou by method fine, vivid and profound,
The path dost well proclaim.

What leadth from the world the men who bring,
Life-mode and love to fullness, that Best Thing,
To which the Perfect One both homage pay,
That Thing do I revere.

Who in path and fruition steadfast stand,
With virtue and such goods, the noble band,
Unrivalled field for reaping merit rich,
That band do I revere.

*From the Udāna Commentary
Translated by Soma Thera.*

FLOWER OFFERING

Nirodha-samāpattito vuṭṭhahitvā viya nisinnassa Bhāgavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa, iminā pupphena pūjemi, pūjemi, pūjemi. Idam puppha-pūjam Buddha-Paccekabuddha Aggasāvaka Mahāsāvaka-Arahantānam sabhāvasīlam, aham'pi tesam anuvattako homi.

Idam puppham idāni vaṇṇenapi suvaṇṇam, gandhenapi sugandham santhānenapi susanthānam khippameva dubbaṇṇam duggandham dussanthānam pappoti.

Evameva sabbe sankhārā aniccā, sabbe sankhārā dukkhā, sabbe dhammā anattā'ti. Iminā vandanamānana-pūjā - patipattiyānubhāvena āsavakkhayāvaham hotu cittam sabbadukkhā pamuccatu.

An English rendering of the above Pali formula repeated whilst offering flowers, is as follows :—

“As if to the Blessed One, the Holy One, the Perfectly Awakened One — newly arisen from supermost ecstasy, with these flowers, reverentially I make offering.

“This reverential flower-offering was a virtuous practice of the Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas, the Chief Disciples, the Great Disciples and the Arahans. I also am following on their path hereby.

“These flowers are now in colour lovely, in scent sweet, in shape beautiful; soon they will be bad-coloured, ill-smelling and ugly. So too all things compounded: they pass away, are pain-laden and soulless.

“May this worship, adoration, and reverential offering, through the lofty dignity and psychic power of the practice,

help to root out the corruptions. May I gain release from all suffering”.

Flower gifts to those loved, trusted and respected have been an ancient and honoured custom of the East. A flower-offering was made by the Buddha Dipankara to the ascetic Sumedha, who too having resolved to be a Buddha then obtained from the Perfect One the first Niyata Vivarana—or assurance of success in the aspiration for Buddhahood.

It is recorded that the gods offered flowers to the future Buddha at His Birth, and again on His Enlightenment and death (*Parinibbana*).

The Buddhists offer flowers to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

The Buddha is the embodiment of wisdom: He is the supremely Enlightened One: He who, out of compassion for the countless throng of sentient beings crossed this Sea of Samsara, of Birth, Decay and Death, after a ceaseless effort extending over aeons.

The Dhamma is the *Navalokuttara Dhamma* (the nine-fold Supermundane or Hypercosmic), i. e. the four Paths and Fruits of Sanctitude thereof (*Magga* and *Phala*) and Nibbana, which does not exist outside Buddhism and which alone offers a solution to the Riddle of Life.

The Sangha are those who have attained these Paths and Fruits, Sotapatti, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī and Arahant. The monks of the present day too are making an earnest endeavour to attain to these sublime states. Hence it is a mistake to suppose that Buddhist monks are a lazy lot, for they are engaged in wholly meritorious work, the difference

in the several individuals is only in the degree of earnestness and zeal displayed. Theirs is a life of renunciation. Only the good Buddhist layman knows and can appreciate this.

There being no Buddha living, the Buddhists worship the three *Cetiya*s (literally meaning, pegs on which to hang one's thoughts), *Paribhogika*, the things used by the Buddha, e.g. the Bo-tree at His Enlightenment, which now serves as a symbol of Bodhi or Enlightenment; *Sarīrika*, the body relics of the Buddha which are now mostly enshrined in the several dagobas; *Uddesika*, the image beautiful of the Buddha. He sees in his mind the golden figure of the Buddha, or six-rayed aura round His head, a radiantly perfect body and the brilliant glory of His mind. It is the mind's eye and not the physical eye that is active. The offering is to One who worked through many aeons out of compassion to that particular one who takes refuge in Him. It is only an acknowledgement of one worthy of honour.

But in no wise does the Buddhist ask of Him pardon or blessings. He only reflects on His perfections, learns to be self-reliant like Him, to be humble and to honour those worthy of honour and so dispel pride. This last, be it noted, is what an envious man is unable to do.

Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā (charity, a virtuous life and meditation) help to root out Greed, Hatred and Ignorance which make this life of ours what it is, a state of painful flux. Let us, as Buddhists would naturally do, submit this act of flower-offering to the cold light of reason and watch its results.

The flower is the acme of nature's perfection. It is beauty itself. Its lovely colour pleases the sight. Its softness pleases the sense of touch. The thought of it also is

gratifying. The gift or *dāna* of it must indeed kill Greed or Lobha in the giver.

Of the two kinds of *sīla* (virtue), the negative and the positive, the flower-offering is of the positive kind, a good *action*. It is productive of a *kusala cetanā*, a meritorious thought, for at the time of offering one reflects that this has been the virtuous practice of the good and saintly of old. and that one is thus striving to follow those noble footsteps; and this is the *Sīla*, or right observance, where Hatred finds no room.

The *Bhāvanā* here is meditation on *Anicca*, *Dukkha*, *Anattā* (the transiency, sorrow and soullessness of life). It is this aspect of the flower-offering that raises this act to the highest psychic levels, to one of real usefulness in helping one to make headway along the Grand Highway — the noble Eightfold Path.

The flower blooms and is beautiful, in that it has lovely colours, emanates sweet scent, and is soft to the touch. But all this is not for long; for soon the flower will fade. This beauty which we adore and covet is a passing show. It is this same beauty that makes us cling to life. It is not real. It is only a mental concept, which varies even geographically. Each nation has its own ideal of perfection of the human form. The Negro has his own and thinks his ideal the best. The Mongolian has one type of beauty, and the Aryan another. What then is “beauty”? It is only an idea. To the Buddhist, beauty is *anicca*. This beautiful body is food for worms. All things we value eventually turn to ashes in our grasp. Samsara’s “beauty” is a stumbling-block on the Noble Path to Nibbana, which is the only Beautiful.

That all things are transitory and therefore painful is not appreciated by the average Westerner, wrapt as he is in the world of sense. Paññā or Wisdom, according to a Buddhist, is the due realisation of these all-pervading facts, the Anicca, Dukka and Anattā (Transiency, Sorrow and Soullessness) of ourselves and all that is about us. The ultimate Truth is understood only thus. Therefore a Buddhist Bhāvanā is on a higher level than that of the yogi who is merely bent on gaining trances, by the cultivation of a 'soul-force' delusion, which the Buddhist knows is a hindrance to ultimate salvation, and therefore to be suppressed.

The nature of a flower-offering is not to be despised; say not that it is "exoteric" Buddhism. Truly, it is exoteric, in its simple grandeur, to most Westerners and some Westernised Easterners. For the direct result of flower-offering is a *i-hetuka* merit, one that is free from Greed, Hatred and Ignorance, and the death of a person in that state of mind results in a *ti-hetuka* birth.

The last words of the Buddha, to the Thera Ananda, on this subject should be borne in mind, and the flower-offering must not be merely a "gift" of love and reverence. The surest way to worship the Lord is to follow His precepts, to *live* the life as detailed by Him. Therefore Dāna, Sīla and Bhāvanā, especially the last, must be included in this act of flower-offering. The flowers themselves serve as the peg on which to hang one's aspiring thoughts, the mind does then rest; it makes the simple act sublime.

Kassapa Thera

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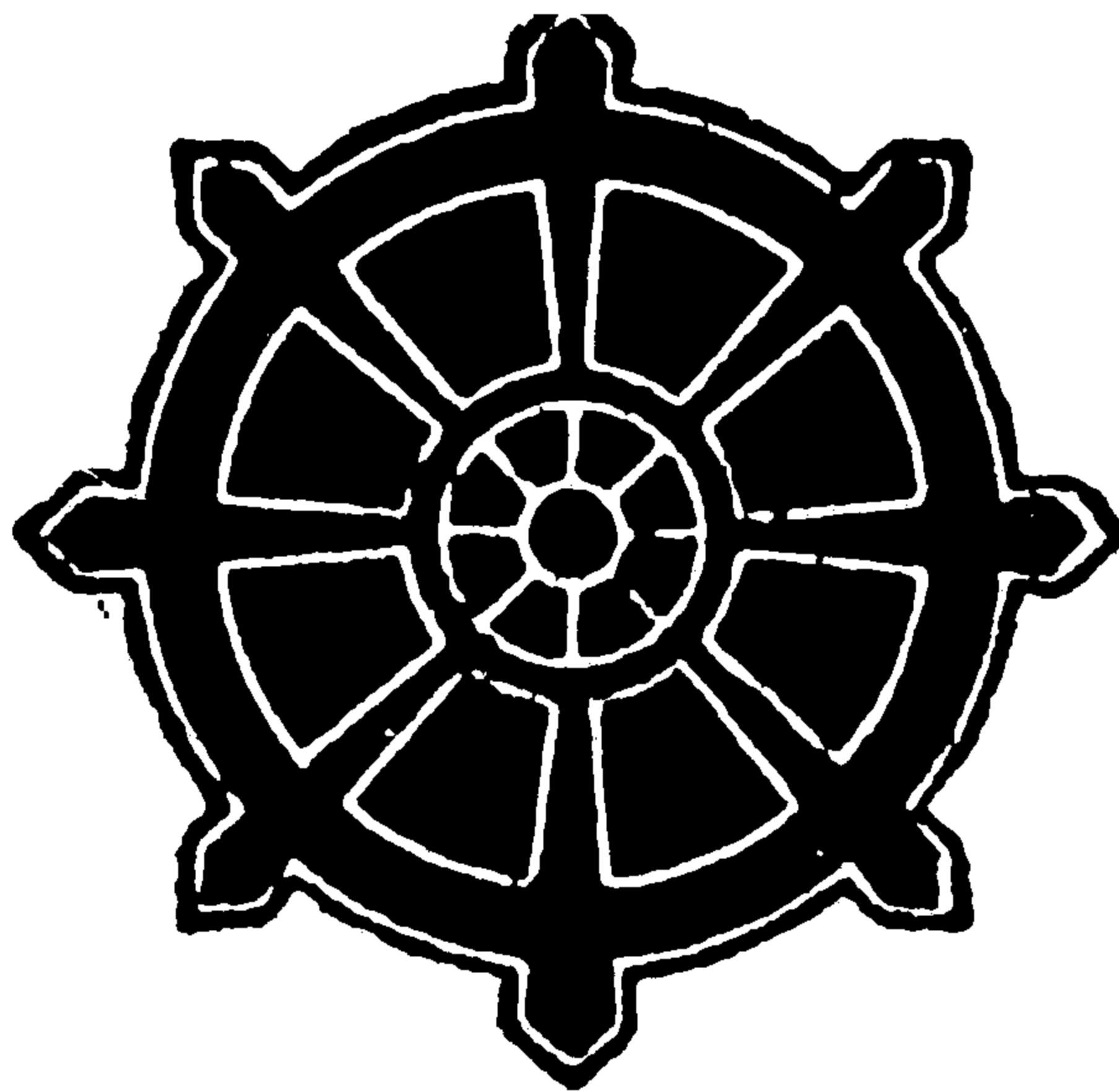
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Live Now

Buddhist Essays



ANANDA PEREIRA

LIVE NOW

Buddhist Essays

ANANDA PEREIRA

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*There's no to-morrow,
No yesterday,
No reason for sorrow
Or need to say
'This thing I remember;
For that I pray.'
There's only today.*

Ananda Pereira

FOREWORD

The essays collected here, appeared first in the years 1951-1952, as editorials in the fortnightly paper "The Buddhist World" (Colombo), edited by the late U Tun Hla Oung (d. 14. 5. 60.) whose service to the cause of Buddhism we remember with appreciation.

The author of these essays is a member of the Attorney-General's Department, and the son of Dr. Cassius A. Pereira, now the Venerable Kassapa Thera, whose poems precede some of the essays.

The Publishers

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*Look to this day.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities
of existence.—
Action, Love, transience.
Yesterday is but a dream,
and to-morrow veiled.*

Live Now!

(Adapted from a poem by Kalidasa)

Kassapa Thera

The secret of happy, successful living lies in doing what needs to be done now, and not worrying about the past and the future. We cannot go back into the past and reshape it nor can we anticipate everything that may happen in the future. There is but one moment of time over which we have some conscious control — the present.

This truth has been recognised not only by the Buddha but by all the great thinkers of the world. They saw that it is futile to live in memories of the past and in dreams of the future, neglecting the present moment and its opportunities. Time moves on. Let us not stand idly by and see our hopes for success turn into memories of failure. It lies in our power to build today something that will endure through many tomorrows, something more solid than castles in the air. The Buddha has shown us the way. The time is now and the choice is ours.

INDOMITABILITY

*We are battalions of Him Who said—
“Confidence have I, and understanding,—
Power to wrest Freedom for myself, and all.
This can I do, and will. Let blood dry up
And let my flesh shrink up and waste to naught,
Till bones and skin remain: yet will I not
From this seat rise till Victory be won.
A Munja-crest I wear in this last fight!
What boots this living on in endless ill?
Rather will I die in battle, ardent,
Than miss high Aim and like a craven live.”
Such was our leader: and beneath His flag,
Shall we, who know the road we have to tread,
The road by him revealed, who mapless went,
And dauntless won the Goal, for us: shall we
Who bear His Name, not fight on, happily,
For all our leader stood? —for Justice, Truth,
And Peace for all, and love, and Final Bliss?
We shall,—or die; that truth may thereby live.*

Kassapa Thera

The Buddha did not preach fatalism, nor is the doctrine of Kamma a doctrine of predetermination. The past influences the present but does not dominate it, for Kamma is action, both past and present.

The past *and present* influence the future. The past is a background against which life goes on from moment to moment. The future is yet to be. Only the present moment exists, and the responsibility of using the present moment for good or for ill lies with each individual. No living being can avoid this responsibility and no intelligent being will seek to do so.

Right through the Buddha's teaching repeated stress is laid on such attributes as self-reliance, mindfulness, resolution and energy. If there was one thing that He did *not* teach, it was fatalism. He taught that all conditioned things (*sankhāra*) are impermanent (*anicca*). Character also is a conditional thing, and in this very quality of impermanence, of changeableness, lies the secret of ultimate deliverance. That which is impure can be purified. That which is weak can be strengthened. That which is immature can be developed into maturity.

The heights are not reached by a sudden leap but by quiet, persistent endeavour. "A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step". There is a quality of mind which makes literally any attainment possible. It pushes on, steadily and doggedly, refusing to be discouraged by handicaps and disappointments, refusing to be stopped by obstacles, refusing to admit defeat, whatever happens. It fights on in spite of all.

This is the sort of mind the Buddha wanted his followers to cultivate. The Indomitable Mind.

It is more glorious than the Sun, more dependable than the stars, more potent than any other force in the world.

It is Invincible.

ACT I

*For good or ill, three doors of action ope
To lead the actor up,—or down to woe.
Speech-door is lowest, body-door comes next,
Mind is most potent, of the fateful three.
Low is all action that the wise will scorn.
Vain are fine words that lag unbacked by deeds.
Ill are the deeds unguided by wise mind,
Baneful are thoughts of foolish hate and lust
Noble is action that the wise will prize,
Grand are fine words that leap to life in deeds.
High are the deeds directed by wise mind,
Lofty are thoughts of selfless sympathy.*

Kassapa Thera

“Having slain mother (craving), father (conceit), two warrior kings (views of Eternalism and Nihilism), and having destroyed a country (senses and sense objects) together with its treasure (clinging), ungrieving goes the Arahāt.”—

Dhammapāḍa, stanza 294.

The Buddha Dhamma is a virile teaching. It has no use for sickly sentimentality. It appeals to the practical minded, those who face facts and are prepared to exert themselves. The facts are Greed, Hatred and Ignorance. Everywhere we see them, in the palaces of the rich and the hovels of the poor, in hospitals, at holiday resorts and in the Courts of Law. Wherever we see them, we must recognize them, because one cannot fight an enemy that one does not recognize.

Greed, Hatred and Ignorance—the ugly trio—these are our true enemies, and have always been so from the beginning of time. Against each of these enemies there is a weapon, sure and deadly in the hand of him who is strong enough to wield it.

The weapon that destroys Greed is Liberality (*Dāna*). That is simple enough to think about, and beautiful enough to admire. But it is a heavy weapon and only the strong can wield it. Let us be strong in giving, as the Bodhisatta was strong, giving wealth, giving limbs, eyes, blood, life itself. There was no limit to His giving, as there is no limit to the courage of a hero.

The weapon that destroys Hatred is Love (*Mettā*). This is not the selfish, clinging love that novelists and film producers exploit to such advantage. Such love is a puny thing compared with the Buddha's *Mettā*, because *Mettā* has nothing of self in it and nothing of clinging. It is limitless, extending to all beings as friends, making no distinction between this person and that. It is not easy to love in this way, but it is worth trying, and the time is now. It may yet save humanity from self-destruction.

The weapon that destroys Ignorance is Meditation (*Bhāvanā*). Buddhist meditation is not day-dreaming, musing, or the building of castles in the air. It is the systematic training of the mind in concentrated thought and the focussing of that trained mind on the nature of life itself. Seen clearly, it is seen as impermanent, unsatisfactory and devoid of any core of reality. This weapon, meditation, is the most difficult of all to wield

and master. It² calls for a training in self-discipline, a training that we all need. The beginning of this training lies in strict observance of the Five Precepts. These precepts strictly observed, build a character strong enough to wield the weapon of *Bhāvanā*. Let us strengthen ourselves, arm ourselves with these three mighty weapons and attack² the three enemies like happy warriors.

IDEALS AND IDEOLOGIES

*I seek the Highest, for myself
And those who trusted me.
I shall not bend down to my will
The folk who seek poor clods?
Of earthy compromise.
What boots it if one dies
Or if the way be dark and grim !
I'll light it with a smile of love
And keep on searching still,—
I seek the Highest.*

Kassapa Thera

History, with an abundance of instances, proves that whenever a group of people formulate an ideology, and set out to create an Utopia in accordance with its principles, there is trouble ahead for other people. The original reformers may be idealists, well - meaning and intelligent; indeed, they usually are, but the misery they bring about appears to be in almost direct proportion to the goodness of their intentions.

Sooner or later, consciously, or unconsciously, these Men of Destiny come to accept the principle that the end justifies the means, and once that is conceded unpleasant things begin to happen very quickly. Emotion deliberately excited, usurps reason, slogans take the place of argument, and people find themselves at each others' throats without knowing exactly why.

No Buddhist, however simple he may be, should ever let himself be duped into such stupid and unseemly behaviour. The Truth he seeks admits of no half-truths and lesser loyalties. It is to be sought and found by each individual for himself and within himself. Nobody, not even a Buddha, can confer Enlightenment upon another. With the example of the Buddha and the Arahantas to inspire him, every Buddhist must strive for himself.

It is for this reason that Buddhists have no need for ideologies and no need to pretend that the end justifies the means. We do not seek to impose our way of life upon others. Our history is not written in the blood of prospective converts, nor do we believe that people can be dragged to Nibbana in chains. In proclaiming the Buddha Dhamma we speak as free men to free men.

The Buddha Dhamma points to ultimate and final Truth as the end. It teaches self-control, mental culture and clear thinking as the means to that end. The end merely directs the means and does not need to justify them. Self-control, mental culture and clear thinking justify themselves and are a blessing at every stage of a being's progress to Enlightenment.

SKILFUL GIVING

*To give, compassion-moved,
To give to one who needs,
With heart of love;
These are the precious seeds
That stand above
All barren show of splendour.
To give, with selfless love,
To give, from deep respect
To teacher, parent, holy man,
Wisdom's Elect,—
Is even grander.
To give, to help good cause,
To spread the Truth,
And knowledge of the Way
To Virtue, Mindfulness,
To dawn of Wisdom's Day,—
Skilful is such giving.*

Kassapa Thera

Giving is an art, and like any other art, it can be cultivated by practice. The miser, the man who thinks only of himself, finds it very difficult indeed to give. For him it is difficult to give even to those who are near and dear to him, not because he does not love them but because he loves himself too much and is too dominated by clinging to part with anything.

Higher on the scale come those who give, and can take pleasure in giving, to those who are near and dear to them, but to no one else. They give to their parents and children and to a limited circle of relatives and

friends, but beyond that their generosity does not extend. It is like a lamp that is shut up within a little box. The inside is illuminated, but not a single ray penetrates the box to brighten the outside world. Such people too are dominated by selfish clinging, but in their case "self" does not mean only "I" but extends a little further to those whom they call 'mine'.

Most of us worldlings belong to this class of giver. The differences between us are only differences of degree. Those of us who have a large circle of friends, to whom we give freely and gladly, are known as generous. Those of us who have a small circle of friends to whom we give are known as stingy. But we keep our giving within this circle, whether it be large or small.

Highest on the scale are those few great ones whose giving knows no bounds. Their generosity extends without limit, to all beings, blazing forth like the light of the sun. Our Buddha was one such, not only in his last birth but in previous existences also, when he was perfecting *dāna pāramī*. In previous existences he gave his wealth, his eyes, his limbs, his life. And in his final existence he gave the greatest of all gifts—the peerless Buddha Dhamma. He gave it freely, to all those who had ears to hear and minds to understand.

With such a noble example to guide us, it is the business of each of us to practise the art of giving. We should constantly try to widen the circle of those to whom we give, and every now and then, ever more frequently, we should strive to break the circle and let our generosity shine out to someone beyond. So, in time, will it become limitless.

CONFIDENCE

*The Floods of Lust, of endless Birth,
Of tangled Views, of Ignorance,—
One crosses these—not staying still,
Nor yet by fool precipitance.
Quenchless the courage on that quest
And absolute the confidence.*

Kassapa Thera

What is the essential difference between a swimmer and a non-swimmer? Both may be elderly, not particularly healthy, in poor physical condition due to lack of exercise. Yet, if they happen to fall into deep water, the swimmer will survive while the non-swimmer, unless somebody else saves him, will drown. Why? Because the swimmer, through knowledge gained from previous experience, has confidence that the water will support him. He does not struggle and fight the water and try to climb right out of it. He trusts it and relaxes, knowing full well that he will not sink and that all he need do is to keep his nose and mouth above the surface. The non-swimmer has no such confidence. He does not trust the water and his ability to float in it. He does not relax. He fights for his life when no fight is necessary, and he loses the fight.

This is only one example of the importance of confidence, confidence born of knowledge. It is an essential quality for success in any activity, any endeavour from the threading of a needle to the practice of *bhāvanā*. It makes all the difference between efficiency, and inefficiency, success and failure. Sometimes it means the difference between life and death.

Some people call it faith. That is as good a word as any other, but it has certain connotations that do not appeal to those of independent mind, people who wish to see and know for themselves. Unfortunately there are some things we cannot experience for ourselves with any hope of survival. The taste of cyanide for instance. There is an old saying—"Experience is a comb that a man gets when he has lost his hair." It is a wise man who profits by the experience of others.

Confidence born of knowledge need not necessarily be confidence born of one's own personal experience. That is why people pay big fees to instructors, to people who have specialized in the various sciences. They have made it their business to acquire the necessary experience and knowledge to be competent to advise others. People who are wise heed such advice and act on it with confidence. Is this mere blind faith, or is it confidence born of knowledge?

To the Buddhist, the Buddha is the greatest instructor of all time. Yet there are those who call themselves Buddhists but who do not act on His advice with confidence. They act with confidence, and with no sense of incongruity, on the advice of the family doctor and the golf coach. They adopt an attitude of scepticism towards a mental giant, but, humbly acknowledge the wisdom of a host of contemporary pygmies.

THE POWER OF MIND

*A lone Seer, from a tropic land,
Sent forth rays of radiant Love,
Intense and immeasurable,
Below, around, above.
And far away, where snowflakes fell,
Death knocked, and round a bed folk sighed.
He past hope, starts, and whispers—"Look!
Look! Love's rose-light!"—and smiling died.*

Kassapa Thera

Mind is power, just as electricity is power. Nobody will deny the power of electricity, but people tend to doubt the power of mind because as yet there is no instrument whereby it can be measured. But, to those who have had some actual experience of its operation, the power of mind is a very real thing. Sometimes it can be a startling thing.

Since time immemorial the East has recognised the power of mind. While the West has progressed far in studying and exploiting the power of matter, the East has progressed far in studying and exploiting this subtler power. Phenomena such as telepathy, hypnotism, clairvoyance and clair-audience have, for ages past, been regarded as almost commonplace in the East, whereas in the countries of the West they are still excitingly new.

Mind-power, like all forces, is neither good nor evil in itself. It can kill as well as cure, destroy as well as create. And again like all forces, it operates in accordance with certain natural laws. Many have been those

who studied these laws, in order that they might use this silent, unseen force. Some used it for evil, and reaped the deadly harvest that it yielded. Others used it for good, and their names are still remembered with reverence.

Greatest of all teachers of mental culture was the Buddha. Understanding fully the rational laws in accordance with which mind-power operates, he taught His followers how to develop and use it for the highest good, the attainment of final deliverance. The first step on the road to mental culture, according to the Buddha-Dhamma, is *Sīla*, or virtue. The man who would control his mind must first learn to control his speech and deed.

The next step is *bhāvanā*, the practice of concentration and the cultivation thereby of a calm, steady "one-pointed" mind. It is not easy. The Buddha has prescribed 40 subjects of meditation for the cultivation of this "one-pointed" mind. In the absence of an experienced *guru*, the aspirant to mental culture must analyse his own nature (always a difficult feat) and choose a subject that suits him.

One of the subjects of meditation that may with benefit be chosen by anybody is *Mettā*, selfless love, sympathetic kindness towards all beings. It may be practised with safety, and indeed with definite advantage even by those whose *Sīla* is as yet imperfect. It is wholesome and good, bringing bodily health, mental calm and rapid attainment of concentration.

To the hurrying multitude, a person seated quietly in the practice of *Mettā Bāhvanā* may appear to be doing nothing. But those who are aware of the nature of mind-power would know better, for such a person is a human dynamo, generating thoughts of love in a world that has almost forgotten how to love. Were there many such, their united power might yet save the world from self-destruction:

“For not by hatreds are hatreds ever quenched here in this world.

By love rather are they quenched. This is an eternal law”.

V I R T U E

*Who stainless lives
Both calmness gives
And power gains.
There fear departs
Where virtue reigns
In righteous hearts.*

Kassapa Thera

In the last essay we mentioned Sîla, or virtue, as the first step on the road to mental culture as taught by the Buddha. By *Bhāvanā*, or the cultivation of a 'one-pointed' mind, a person learns to concentrate mind power. But it is obvious that one can only concentrate the power that is available.

If you stand in the bright sunlight at noon on a clear day and, using a convex lens, concentrate the sun's rays on the back of your hand, you will, almost immediately, feel the sting of the concentrated radiant heat. If, however, you do the same thing at night, using the same lens, but substituting a 40 candle power electric bulb in place of the sun, you will not even notice the increased temperature caused by the concentrated radiant heat unless your skin is exceptionally sensitive.

The same principle applies to the concentration of mind power. The power that can be developed by concentration is in direct proportion to the innate power of the mind, and this power varies in different individuals; what is more important, it varies in the same individual at different times. Even strong characters have their moments of weakness, and weak characters their moments of strength.

The first step, then, on the road to mind power is to develop a consistently firm and purposeful mind as the source of the power to be concentrated. In other words, one must first develop a strong will, as that term is commonly understood. This can most readily and surely be achieved by the constant practice of self-control. Virtue, *Sīla*, is the best form of self-control. It ranges from the five precepts of a lay Buddhist to the innumerable precepts of the *Upasampadā Bhikkhu*. Of course self-control can be practised in other ways as well. One can balance for hours on one's head, or go without food for days on end, or hold an arm up until it withers. But such practices will not tend to purify the mind while strengthening it, as the practice of *Sīla* does.

Hasty and unthinking critics have said of Buddhist virtue that it is negative, in that it lies in abstention from evil and not in doing good. But this criticism is based on a misunderstanding of the purpose of *Sīla* in Buddhism. It is a means to an end and not an end in itself. There is but one end towards which every Buddhist strives, the attainment of *Nibbāna* or final deliverance from the toils of *samsāra*, from the recurrent, painful and entirely disgusting round of birth, decay and death.

It behoves every lay Buddhist to observe the five precepts, *Panca Sīla*. These are the abstentions from five kinds of wrong action:— killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying or slanderous speech, and the taking of intoxicants. He who observes these five precepts consistently and scrupulously develops strong will, a mind that can be concentrated to some effect. He becomes a very considerable source of power.

CONCENTRATION

*Wouldst thou wield cosmic power?
Then, virtue-based,
Seek thou to centre mind
In one clean focus.
Success yields god-like ken;
Yea, more than gods';
For even they know not
The Hypercosmic.*

Kassapa Thera.

In *bhāvanā*, or concentration, we come to the very heart of the system of mental culture taught by the Buddha. It is the key to the highest mental powers and the performance of feats of *iddhi* (supernormal power). Such feats and such powers are not the ultimate end to which the Buddhist aims. They are but by-products of mental culture, and they too are transient. The true follower of the Fully Awakened One has just one aim—the attainment of final deliverance. All else is shoddy, subject to the law of impermanence, devoid of any core of reality.

But let us be frank. Although such powers as clairvoyance and clair-audience and the capacity to perform feats such as levitation do not constitute the ultimate aim of the Buddhist, though they do have their appeal. And like all things, they do have their uses. Imagine the influence of a reformer who could make his audience actually see the states of suffering and the states of bliss of which he speaks.

Those of us who are Buddhists in little more than name spend so much of time and energy in the unblushing pursuit of purely material ends that it would be hypocritical for us to pretend that we do not work for mental powers only because we realize that they are not the final goal. The true reasons lie much closer to hand. We feel that we cannot afford to spare the necessary time and energy. Also we are somewhat sceptical about such things. They are so foreign to the normal course of our lives. In short, we are full-time worldlings.

But what is the normal course of our lives? A tread-mill. We are so preoccupied with the business of earning a living that we have no time to live. We strive to keep up appearances. We work hard for this pathetic little prize and that, and try to feel important when we succeed. When we fail, as most of us must, we pretend that we do not care. And presently death comes to each of us and the sorry little tale is told, only to begin again in the next existence. And so on interminably, life after life like an endless serial story told in countless squalid instalments.

Is it escapism to turn away from such futility? Is it escapism to outgrow one's swaddling clothes, and cast aside one's rattle? The practice of *bhāvanā* offers, as mere by-products, prizes which far surpass anything attainable by material means. These prizes can be won and have been won. They are not figments of the imagination. And ultimately, the practice of *bhāvanā* leads to final deliverance.

The mind, grown calm and powerful, at last sees things as they actually are. With this clear sight there is a flinging away of existence and all that it implies, just as a man would fling away a rotting corpse that he has long carried on his shoulders, imagining it to be a load of sweet-smelling sandalwood. With this act of revulsion there comes the intuition of *Nibbāna*.

INSIGHT

*To see things as they are—
To shed all taints—
To win security—
The Goal of Saints!*

Kassapa Thera

Having purified and strengthened his mind by the practice of *Sīla*, virtue, and *bhāvanā*, concentration, the follower of the Buddha turns this pure, steady, clear-seeing mind to the contemplation of life itself. *Vipassanā bhāvanā*, concentration for insight, is usually undertaken in some quiet place, such as a forest hermitage, or lonely mountain cave, because quietness of surroundings promotes quietness of mind.

Unthinking people with worldly minds are apt to regard such seclusion as a form of escapism, a running-away from life. But it is just the opposite. It is the most direct approach to life humanly possible. The busy worldling it is who constantly runs away from life dodging from this activity to that and never pausing long enough to see things as they actually are. It takes strength to be quiet.

Seven qualities, when combined, lead to the gaining of insight. They are known as the seven *Bojjhangas* or Factors of Enlightenment. They are:— *Sati*, mindfulness; 2. *Dhamma-vicaya*, investigation of truth; 3. *Vīriya*, effort; 4. *Pīti*, joy; 5. *Passaddhi*, tranquillity; 6. *Samādhi*, concentration and 7. *Upekkhā*, equanimity. An examination of these seven qualities gives one some

idea of the sort of individual who is mature enough in character and intellect for the practice of this contemplation, *vipassanā bhāvanā*. One gets an impression of the true ascetic, alert, keen-minded, dauntless, cheerful, calm, concentrated and poised. He is no weakling, running away from life. He is a hero, facing life as lesser beings dare not face it. His mind does not play about any longer with the surfaces of things, but seeks deeply.

In the steadfast practice of such contemplation a time comes when, in a flash of insight, the true nature of life is realised. It is seen as transitory, pain-laden, devoid of soul.

Insight is not achieved by a process of reasoning. It is a direct experience, profound and shattering in its effect. At the first flash of insight the seer becomes a *Sotāpanna*, a Stream - Winner. No longer can he be called a worldling, no longer is he common clay. The process of transmutation, thus begun, proceeds as surely as day succeeds night. In succeeding flashes of insight the seer attains the stages of *Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi*, until finally, full enlightenment is won and he is an *Arahat*. Of beings such as these the Blessed One has said:—

“They whose minds are well perfected in the Factors of Enlightenment,— they who, without craving delight in the renunciation of attachment, they, the corruption-free shining ones, have attained Nibbāna even in this world,”

Dhammapada 89

1. RENUNCIATION

I

*He who, in this world, giving up craving,
would renounce and become a homeless one; he
who has destroyed Craving and Becoming;—
him I call a Brāhmaṇa.*

Dhammapada 415

Renunciation (*Nekkhamma*) is the first of the six Aspirations (*Ajjhasayas*) of a Bodhisatta. A Bodhisatta, in the strict sense, is one who has received assurance from a Buddha that one day, in the distant future, he too will become a Buddha. Gotama Buddha had received such an assurance from Dipankara Buddha. In that existence our Buddha was an ascetic, Sumedha by name, so highly evolved that he could have become an *arahanta*— a Saint. But his was a heroic spirit. With a heart of love for all beings, he chose the immeasurably harder road of the aspirant to Supreme Buddhahood, that countless others too might benefit.

This, in itself, was renunciation of the highest order. Thereafter, through incalculably long periods of time, he who was to be Gotama Buddha battled on, building his character to that towering stature which Buddhas alone attain. His main aspiration, when he could remember it was Buddhahood. To this end he performed the Ten *Paramis* (Perfections) times without number, sacrificing

life itself. But there were existences in the long gulf of time that pass between the appearances of Buddhas when this Supreme Aim was temporarily obscured.

A Bodhisatta is necessarily a powerful character, and power can lead to great evil as well as great good. The driving force that is a Bodhisatta, wrongly directed, can take a downward plunge, deeper and more appalling than anything lesser beings can even imagine. What is it then that keeps a Bodhisatta on a steady course, life after life, for millions and millions of lives, even when he has lost sight of his Supreme Aim? It can be only one thing—the inherent quality of his character.

For this reason alone, if for no other, the Six Aspirations of the Bodhisatta, *every* Bodhisatta, are of interest to us Buddhists. From a man's aspirations one can get a glimpse of his character. A Bodhisatta, life after life, has a deep natural, inevitable leaning towards six things. They are, *Nekkhamma*, *Paviveka*, *Alobha*, *Adosa*, *Amoha*, and *Nissarana* (Renunciation, Seclusion, Non-craving, Non-hating, Non-ignorance and Freedom).

There is good reason for the negative form in which the third, fourth, and fifth Aspirations are couched. We will deal with that in due course. For the present, we confine ourselves to the first Aspiration—Renunciation. To the average worldling, the word "Enough!" signifies only one thing—satiety. He is by instinct a gobbler and cries "enough!" only when, for the time-being, he can gobble no more. It happens, recurrently, in the context of the grosser physical appetites. Hunger is a good example. But in certain other contexts it is so

rare as to be virtually non-existent, Take the appetite for money for instance. The average worldling can never have enough of it, for the simple reason that his greed is insatiable. However much he may have, he goes on wanting more and doing all he can to grab it. To say "enough!" would seem to him like madness.

The story is quite different in the case of one who, like a Bodhisatta, has an instinctive leaning towards renunciation. Whatever his immediate heredity or environment, however alluring the immediate prospects of wealth, power, worldly position or influence, he has a deep natural, inevitable leaning towards renunciation. He says "enough!" not because he is temporarily gorged, but because *renunciation* itself appeals to him as something positively good.

It is not difficult to see the significance of such a trait, in the case of a powerful character such as a Bodhisatta. Life after life, it guides him away from the pursuit of ignoble worldly ends. Life after life, he sheds his worldly shackles and goes free, as a homeless ascetic, even though it be for a period when the word "Buddha" is unknown. It is a rudder holding him steady on his way towards the Final Goal.

1. RENUNCIATION

II

*Who outgrows all Life's toys—
His childhood's o'er;
He no more cares to reap—
He's not a sower.*

Kassapa Thera

Renunciation in Buddhism, *Nekkhamma*, is not so much a giving up as a growing up. We may give up things that we possess, or think we possess, for various different reasons. We may do so in order to please somebody whose good-will we wish to secure. We may do so in order that other people may think highly of us. We may do so from a number of different motives, some good and some bad. But the motive which inspires the true act of renunciation is as simple as it is lofty—a wish to let go.

To take a simple illustration, let us consider the case of a child with a number of toys. He may give up some of them because he is generous, or because he wishes to make friends with another child, or because he is a self-conscious little prig who wishes to appear noble. But he still loves his toys and really wants to have them and play with them. Such acts of giving up are not true acts of renunciation. But this child grows older. His outlook widens, and a time comes when he feels that the toys are a burden to him. He has to look after them, clean them, keep them in working order, but they yield him no pleasure now. Then he thinks, "Why should I hang on to these things any longer? Let anybody take them who wishes to have them." With this thought he lets go of those toys, and

does not care who takes them or what happens to them thereafter. He has outgrown them. That is true renunciation.

All through life we perform acts of true renunciation in the process of growing up. We leave things behind as we progress towards a greater and greater maturity. Possessions that we valued once, and clung to, begin to appear as burdens, and we let go of them, not caring who takes them. But, with all worldlings, there comes a stage of stagnation, of arrested development. And so it is that there are certain things to which all worldlings cling until 'death comes to them and says, "Leave everything and come with me." Then there is a wrench, a clinging to valued possessions, to loved ones, to life itself, and with this clinging the seed is sown for continued existence, fresh possessions, further suffering.

And so life goes on and as a being develops in maturity, a time comes when even the valued possessions of the adult worldling appear to him as burdens, as toys that have lost their appeal. He realises that he does not even possess them in any real sense of the word, his hold on them being subject to certain happenings, such as death, over which he has no control. He sees himself as nothing more than a part-time custodian of a heap of trash.

This is how worldly possessions appear to those who renounce the world. Is it surprising that they let go? Rid of all such burdens, they are progressing on the road to greater maturity. Some day they will attain the ultimate maturity, when every single burden is shed and deliverance is won.

2. SECLUSION

*He who sits alone, rests alone, walks alone, he
who is strenuous and who alone subdues self:
such a man finds delight in the forest depths.*

Dhammapada 305

Seclusion (*Paviveka*) is the second Aspiration of every Bodhisatta. He seeks it naturally, not because he dislikes other people but because he finds something positively good and wholesome in seclusion. Life after life he leaves the crowd and walks alone, taking easily and instinctively to the ascetic life.

The herd instinct is strong in most of us. We like to be with others, all the time. We feel a sense of security in doing what they do, saying what they say, thinking what they think. When circumstances compel us to leave the herd even for a short time, we feel uneasy. We yearn to return as fast as possible.

Today, in many parts of the world, there seems to be an upsurge of childish behaviour among adults. People subscribe to all sorts of dogmas without knowing, or bothering to ask, the reason why. The violence with which Communism, for instance, is advocated by some is as unreasoning as the violence with which it is opposed by others. People are willing to do literally anything rather than think for themselves. They are willing to fight and die for ideologies that they do not understand. They hold "convictions" that they have acquired as involuntarily as they catch measles.

Seclusion is really a quality of aloofness, mental rather than mechanical. As Lord Horder has put it, seclusion is 'a withdrawing of mind at times from the busy-ness of life.' Most of us are too busy with trifles. We need to look at life at times, ourselves included, from a distance as it were. Only thus can we preserve a sense of proportion and a sense of humour. We need to ask 'why?', and we can do this only if we hold aloof.

A Bodhisatta is ever a truth seeker. When a questing mind goes in search of truth it owes allegiance to truth alone. It is ruthless in its integrity. It cuts through the tough shell of dogma and examines the heart, and if that heart is rotten it rejects the dogma without hesitation or regret. If a Bodhisatta finds himself agreeing with the crowd, it is because he has thought things out for himself. He never agrees through cowardice or laziness or lack of integrity.

But, unfortunately, it is in the nature of crowds to be wrong about most things, most of the time. Even when they are right, it usually is for the wrong reasons. So it is inevitable that truth-seekers generally prefer to walk alone. With mind unfettered by prejudice, uncluttered with other people's opinions, the Bodhisatta goes his own road. Whenever it lies in his power to help others, he does so, gladly. But, being wise, he knows that interference in other people's affairs can lead to more harm than good. So, as a rule, he is content to be a witness.

In an environment of seclusion, he finds peace and strength. While others find a sense of security in being members of a herd, he feels safest when he is alone. The forest depths hold no terrors for him. The tremendous trifles of existence cease to worry him. His mind grows calm and concentrated. It bursts the fetters of sensual existence. It soars, clean, clear and serene—seeking, ever seeking. Where truth beckons the Bodhisatta goes.

3. NON - CRAVING

*Whoso in the world controls this stupid
unruly craving, from him sorrows fall away,
like water-drops from a lotus-leaf.*

Dhammapada 336

Alobha, non-craving, is the third Aspiration of every Bodhisatta, existence after existence on his long journey to Final Deliverance.

We said in a previous essay that there is good reason for the negative form in which this lofty aspiration is expressed. There are some who imagine that *Alobha* means generosity or munificence, but they are wrong, and there is a real difference between the two ideas. The man who is generous wishes to accumulate, so that he may give to others. The man who cultivates the quality of non-craving does not wish to accumulate for *any* reason. The generous man crossing a desert and coming upon a bag of gold would pick it up and take it with him, thinking of the others to whom he might give the money. The man, who has cultivated non-craving to a high degree would leave the gold where it lies and go his way; not wishing to burden himself with it for any reason whatsoever.

Most of us have excellent reasons for accumulating possessions of all sorts. We pride ourselves on our altruism, while grabbing as much as we can, as quickly as we can. Each of us feels himself a wiser, more worthy custodian of wealth than most other people.

We intend to be generous of course, and give to those who deserve our charity. But in order to give, we must first have. And so we spend most of our time in the process of acquisition. When it comes to giving away, we are very, very cautious and discriminating.

An aspiration to non-craving goes directly to the root of the matter. To accumulate wealth in order that one might help others is something like eating a vast quantity of food in order that one might vomit. Certain animals do it, to feed their young. It is mixed up with the idea of 'me and mine.' It is an essentially selfish operation. The generous father accumulates wealth in order that he might leave it to *his* children. But it is an eternal truth that *every* act of acquisition means a corresponding deprivation of others. To one who loves all beings equally, without distinction or reserve, this business of grabbing from the world in general in order to give to particular individuals seems utterly stupid.

It is more than stupid. It is dangerous. It can lead to every kind of wickedness and meanness. That is why the quality of non-craving is so important for a Bodhisattva. It keeps him on a clean, straight road. He goes with safety past the traps which ensnare lesser beings. His is a powerful character, and the pursuit of possessions, however altruistic the motive, can lead such a character into great evil. Even Hitler and Mussolini had good motives. So has a tigress, when she carries away your child in order to feed her children.

A Bodhistatta will not let himself be dominated by craving. He lives like a master, ruling his desires with wisdom. His road is long and steep. But his load is light, and he goes forward happily.

4. NON-HATING

“Whoever, by causing pain to others, seeks to win happiness for himself, becomes entangled in the bonds of hate. Such a man is not freed from hatred.”

Dhammapada 291

Adosa (non - hating) is the fourth characteristic Aspiration of every Bodhisatta. Here too there is good reason for the negative form in which the Aspiration is expressed. A Bodhisatta, in his successive existences, may not always be one who is set on good works. He may not be a social reformer or a member of the local anti-crime association. He may be a man who minds his own business and goes his own way. But he does not wish to be a slave, and no bondage is more foolish than that which we impose on ourselves by hating others.

No man can hate another without losing some measure of freedom. Time and energy are two of our most precious assets, whatever we are striving for. But, if we are stupid, we squander them on our enemies as recklessly as an infatuated lover squanders them on his beloved. And hatred is a destructive emotion. It is like a gun whose recoil is more dangerous than the bullet which it discharges. The damage done in front is as nothing compared to the damage done behind.

We, as Buddhists, should realize that the road of hatred is the road of slavery and suffering. It is not a matter of forgiving our enemies. If we see things as

they really are, which few of us do, we will know that we *cannot* harm our enemies. Whatever pain they may suffer at our hands is merely the result of their own bad Kamma, the paying-off of their own debts. In the meantime, by making ourselves the agency through which they pay off their debts, we incur new debts which we in our turn will have to pay. And so it will go on, life after life for countless lives, unless we see the folly of it all and put a stop to this meaningless self-torture. It is, in the ultimate analysis, a matter of forgiving ourselves, of excusing ourselves from further participation in a painful and utterly stupid activity. Only a masochist would see things in this light and yet persist in hatred.

Just as the road of hatred is the road of suffering and bondage, so the road of non-hatred is the road of happiness and freedom. This is the road of all Bodhisattas, life after life, in their long striving for Supreme Buddhahood. They are not willing to be the tools of other peoples' bad Kamma. They seek no worldly advance or seeming success that entails suffering to others. They are content to live and let live. They are not to be drawn into crusades and holy wars.

It is well for us Buddhists to remember this always. Hatred is an ugly word, but it can easily be disguised under the name of "righteous indignation" and held up as something worth while. We should be on our guard always.

5. NON-IGNORANCE

*The fool who knows that he is a fool is,
at least to that extent, a wise man.*

The fool who thinks he is wise is a fool indeed.

Dhammapada 63

Amoha (non-ignorance) is the fifth Aspiration of every Bodhisatta. Once again, there is reason for the negative form in which the Aspiration is put. A Bodhisatta may not, in every birth, be a student of the current arts or sciences. He may not even be an educated man in the worldly sense. But he is always one who strives to see things as they really are. He has a basic integrity of mind which stubbornly refuses to be misled by appearances. He has no pretences, and he is not beguiled by the pretences of others.

Most of us go through life with certain mental reservations which do not permit us to ask ourselves the questions that really matter. We are like children, obedient children, who take a lot of things on trust, accepting without question the voice of Authority. Thus, Authority tells us that patriotism is a good quality, that worldly success is praiseworthy, that the Scout-movement helps to build character and that the Public School Spirit is the very essence of manly virtue. So we fight for our respective countries in time of war, try hard to make money in times of peace, send our children to Scout camps and, if we can afford it to Public Schools. If anybody presumes to question the wisdom of our actions, we "know" that he is either a fool or a knave.

A Bodhisatta must be one who does not mind being considered a fool or a knave. If it is foolish not to think that one's own country is always in the right, then he is a fool. If it is knavish not to make money when the opportunity offers, then he is a knave. If it is ignoble to think for oneself and try to see things as they really are, then he is content to be the meanest of men. He asks his own questions, finds his own answers, and is strong enough to abide by them.

One of the questions he asks, life after life, is whether any phenomenon whatsoever is eternal. Life after life he sees that all phenomena are transient. He sees, too, that in transient phenomena there can be no real happiness or contentment. And so he seeks something beyond everything that he knows, something that does not change, something real. His is necessarily a long quest, for the answer comes only with the attainment of Buddhahood. But it is always a quest, never an assumption of having found the final answer, until that answer has really been found.

How many of us are wise enough to admit that we are fools? We say, as Buddhists, that all things are transient. But, to judge by our actions, our plans, our hopes, that statement does not carry much conviction to our own minds. Why? Because Moha (Ignorance) dominates our minds.

6. FREEDOM

He who, discarding human bonds and transcending celestial ties, is completely delivered of all bonds,- him I call a brahmana.

Dhammapada 417

Nissarana (Freedom) is the last of the six distinctive Aspirations of every Bodhisatta. It is, perhaps, the strongest of them all. It is because he loves freedom that a Bodhisatta seeks to win it, and to teach others the way to win it. He seeks leadership in the true sense, not to dominate others but to liberate them.

It takes vision to see the bonds that bind us. Few have that kind of vision. We would heartily agree that income tax is a bond, but we find it hard to regard in this light the income on which the tax is levied. Debts, of course, are bonds; but what of the desires which make us borrow money? We see that a man undergoing a jail sentence for some crime he has committed is in bondage, but most of us are inclined to regard the successful swindler as a free man.

Even before he attains Final Enlightenment, a Bodhisatta has clarity of vision, and this vision helps him to see bonds where others see only blessings. Thus, wealth, children, sovereignty over others, and a host of other things which most worldings regard as desirable, he sees as bonds. These so-called blessings, while they last, may bring a fleeting moment of pleasure. But a Bodhisatta gladly renounces such pleasure, just as any

sane man would refrain from licking a drop of honey off the nose of a hungry python, whose coils would instantly flash around him.

It is precisely for this reason that the Bodhisatta as Prince Themiya, underwent all manner of hardship in order to avoid becoming a king. He had been a king in a previous existence, which he remembered. And he remembered also the state of suffering into which his Kamma took him, as a direct result of the exercise of kingly authority. The zest with which election campaigns are conducted, even in Buddhist lands, bears witness to the fact that the spirit of Themiya is absent in most politicians. Of course, every politician has noble reasons for wanting to be elected. He wishes to 'serve his country'. But thinking men might find it a little difficult to understand how the spirit of service and the spirit of Themiya could be so different in their manifestation.

We can always find excellent reasons for doing what our desires prompt us to do. In pandering to our desires we may be honest and admit the truth, or we may be cunning rogues and seek to conceal it, or we may even be so foolish as not to see it. But one thing we definitely cannot be, while dominated by desire: we cannot be free. Freedom means letting go.

A Bodhisatta, loving freedom, is not willing to trade it in exchange for the prize which the world has to offer. He, above all others, is imbued with the spirit of service, but a sure instinct tells him that no service can be worthwhile which is performed at the sacrifice of personal freedom. He avoids fresh bonds, and strives to break any that he already has. He seeks to help others neither as a master, nor as a slave, but as a friend.

ESCAPISM

Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in entering a mountain cave, is found that place, where abiding, one may escape the consequences of an evil deed.

Dhammapada 127

There are people who seek to find fault with the Buddha Dhamma on the ground that it teaches Escapism. They do not know what they are talking about. Escapism may be broadly defined as the attempt to avoid facing disagreeable facts. It is a very different thing to the action of any sensible person who actually escapes, or tries to escape, from danger or suffering. For instance, if you find yourself in a burning house, it would be Escapism to take a large dose of whisky and go to bed, assuring yourself that everything will be all right by the time you wake up. It would not be escapism to leave the house before it is too late.

Buddhism teaches people to face facts. It does not try to pretend that everything is for the best, either in this life or in the next. It does not seek to delude people into the belief that a benevolent, all-powerful Deity presides over their destinies, or that salvation can be attained by unquestioning faith in such a Deity. It does not deal in dope, telling people, "Swallow this pill, and when death comes, it will bring you life, everlastingly beautiful and glorious"

Buddhism teaches us to use our own powers of observation and reasoning and *face the facts*. The truth of *Anicca*, Impermanence, is not an esoteric teaching, or

something to be taken on trust. We can see it all about us, every day of our lives. Flowers bloom and fade. People grow up, then grow old, then die. Everything is in a process of change. Nothing is stable for two consecutive instants. If anything seems stable it is only because the process of change is relatively slow. But it can be, and often is, speeded up, as when a healthy man gets infected with tuberculosis.

From this truth of *anicca*, the truth *dukkha* follows necessarily. *Dukkha* means suffering, and suffering is inevitable when all life is associated with change. No sensitive adult can look upon the scenes of his childhood without a feeling of sadness. No sensitive person, even if he and all his present associates are healthy and prosperous, can think of the sick and the poor in this world without feeling sad. And health, even in the healthiest of us, is also subject to change. Sickness, old-age and death are merely biding their time.

From these truths of *Anicca* and *Dukkha* emerges the truth of *Anatta*. There is nothing in this process of which one can say, "This is mine. This am I. This is my Soul". Seeking a soul in this process is like stripping away the sheaths of a plantain tree in order to find the heart-wood. There is no heart-wood. It is merely a compound of changing, unstable ingredients, giving an appearance of solidity and stability.

And Buddhism teaches us to face the fact of rebirth. It is easier to be a materialist, and to console oneself with the promise of deep, dreamless, eternal sleep at life's close. To many thinking people, the idea of total extinction at death is not in the least disagreeable. Indeed,

it would be comforting, if it were true. But unfortunately, it is not true. The process goes on and on, life after life. We live again and again, interminably, reaping as we have sown, the present the result of the past, the future the result of the present and the past.

The Buddha teaches us to face these facts honestly. And yet He tells us not to despair, but to be of good courage, because there is a way of working out our Deliverance—the way of *Sila*, *Samādhi*; *Pannā*, Virtue. Concentration of mind and Wisdom. Is this Escapism?

THE GOD IDEA

The man who is not credulous, who understands the Uncreate (Nibbāna), who has cut off the link, who has put an end to occasion (of good and evil), who has vomited all desires—he, indeed, is the noblest of men.

Dhammapada 97

Buddhists are sometimes asked by non-Buddhists whether they believe in God, and if not, why not? If they reply, as they should, that the Buddha has denied the existence of a God, in the sense of a Supreme Being or Creator of all that is, Buddhists are sometimes confronted with the time-worn, repeatedly exploded and as repeatedly resurrected, "Watchmaker" argument.

It goes like this. Even so small and relatively simple a piece of machinery as a watch must have a maker. It cannot come into existence automatically. So it follows that the Universe, with all its complex balance of forces, all its wonders, all its stars and planets and other celestial bodies working in perfect co-ordination, must have had a creator.

The objections to the argument are threefold, and fatal:—

1. No watchmaker ever came into existence automatically. If one is to be logical, this should apply to the Universe-maker as well. He too must have had a maker, who in his turn must have had a maker, and so on in a receding vista of makers. The argument thus ends in futility, for where is one to stop?

2. No watchmaker ever made a watch out of sheer nothingness. How, then, can we postulate a Universe Maker who achieved this impossible feat? Granted that he too, like the watchmaker, had materials, how did the materials come into existence? Did they always exist?

3. If the argument is an argument at all, it leads inevitably to the conclusion that there is no *one* Universe-Maker but a number of them. Even so simple a mechanism as a watch, or a motor-car, is the creation of several people, each a specialist. If the Universe was created by a conscious and intelligent agency that agency probably consisted of a syndicate, a team of makers, rather than one sole maker. We do not seek to maintain such a conclusion, but only point out that it is a logical conclusion, perfectly consistent with the data provided, and the reasoning sought to be applied thereto.

The Buddha spoke of gods; not one God, with a capital G, but many gods. He called them *devas*. He taught the hard truth that these gods too, like human beings, are subject to decay and death. The inexorable law of change applies to gods too, just as it applies to men. They may live long, much longer than humans, because of their own good *kamma*. They may be very powerful, again because of their good *kamma*. Such longevity and power may even lead them to the erroneous belief that they are eternal and all-powerful, but this is their greatest fallacy. In due time, when the good *kamma* which maintains them in their glory is expended, they too die as humans die, as cattle die, as butterflies die. And when they die, they too are reborn, for they have not won free from the round of birth and death.

All gods, however lofty, however powerful, are living beings in *sumsāra*. As such they are mind-body (and in the case of the *Arūpāvacaradevas*, pure mind) fluxes. Mind and body are ever changing. In this changing process, what is the Creator? The Buddha said there is only one Creator—Desire. It is Desire that keeps the process going, Phoenix-like, life after life.

There is no exception to this rule. It is a basic truth. If there is a god, he too is constantly creating himself by reason of Desire. That is *all* he creates. Is there then an Uncreated (*Akata*)? According to the Buddha, yes. To us worldlings (*puthujjanas*) it is but a name—*Nibbāna*. It is a name that stands for happiness, final release from the round of rebirth. There is no God in this noble teaching, no Supreme Being to whom we must cringe. We stand on our own feet; we are our own creators, our own masters, and, in the fullness of time we will be our own saviours.

THE SOUL IDEA

*“Soul-less is everything that is—”
When this with wisdom one discerns,
Disgusted then is one with Ill,—
This is the Path to Purity.*

Dhammapada 279

There are some who, despite repeated and authoritative assurances to the contrary, still entertain the false view that the Buddha adopted an equivocal attitude with regard to belief in Soul. This is only natural, as all worldlings, however learned and intelligent they may be, do cherish a belief in a Soul. Reason plays a relatively small part in what people believe or do not believe. Whatever reasons may be urged against the Soul idea, the idea itself persists until a being attains the First Stage of Sainthood. When that stage is reached *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, belief in a Soul, vanishes, never to, return.

From this very phenomenon, as taught by the Buddha, the thinking person *must* deduce that the Soul idea is false. One does not, surely, advance to the stage of *Sotāpanna* in order to rid oneself of a true belief! If the Soul idea is correct, and a Soul really does exist, then, on the Buddha's own statement, the worldling is more enlightened in this respect than the *Sotāpanna*; or indeed, even the *Arahanta*. But this is absurd, for the Buddha taught a road of evolution to greater and greater understanding.

Such understanding is the fruit of growth, not of logic. We almost said spiritual growth, but dit not,

because the word “spiritual” has become somewhat debased through excessive use in other contexts. It now smacks of cheap emotionalism and spurious religiosity. The growth of the individual towards Sainthood, in the Buddhist sense, is a very slow and gradual process, admitting of no short cuts and pretences. It takes, literally, aeons.

Of course, this does not mean that Buddhism denies the possibility of sudden “reformation” and achievement of sanctity. The notorious robber *Angulimāla*, who became an *Arahanta*, is a case in point. But, as in his case, the suddenness of such advance is only apparent, and due to the inability of the average observer to relate the present phenomenon to its true background in past existences. The potential Saint, in such a being as *Angulimāla*, is already there in his character, needing but a shift in the balance of personality to be transmuted from potential to reality. Such a shift can only be effected by a Buddha, and that is why a Buddha is called “*Anuttaro purisa damma sārathi*” (Guide incomparable for the training of individuals).

People sometimes tend to forget the reason why an Aspirant to Buddhahood strives through incalculable periods of time to achieve His final goal. It is not in order that He might found yet another “ism,” to titillate men’s intellects and provide absorbing topics of debate in cultured circles. It is only in order that He might help others to win release from the round of rebirth and all its attendant miseries. The help a Buddha gives is His Teaching, for He teaches the Eternal Dhamma, the Way of Release that other Buddhas have

taught before Him. The doctrine of *Anattā*, Soul-lessness, is an integral part of this eternal Dhamma. It is not a thing to be savoured intellectually and played with. It is Reality, something that we worldlings can only barely glimpse intellectually, but which the Saint *realizes*, with a certitude that is final.

ME AND MINE

*“These sons are mine, this wealth I hold”—
The fool raves thus and comes to ruin;
When self itself owns not a “self”—
Who are thy sons, what is thy pelf!*

Dhammapada 62

In the last essay we endeavoured to state the doctrine of Anattā, Soul-lessness, taught by the Buddha. It was, perforce, a very bare statement and we therefore feel that some further thought should be devoted to the subject.

It should, first of all, be understood clearly that this doctrine is not a mere theory but a Truth, propounded by One who saw things as they really are. The Buddha did not speak in the tentative and hypothetical terms adopted by lesser men for the simple reason that His Teaching was the result of *direct knowledge*, and not of logic.

It should be borne in mind that the Anattā doctrine is of practical application in our everyday lives. It is not something of purely academic interest, to be stored away in some sealed compartment of our minds. The Buddha intended us to apply it to our own lives, to test it on the touchstone of personal experience and prove its truth for ourselves. It is true that ultimate Realization can only come with the attainment of the four stages of Sanctity, but short of that, we do have the ability to think things out and arrive at certain convictions based on personal experience.

Experience teaches us that a good deal of ill-health, both physical and mental, is due to worry. Modern medical science is definitely of the view that such diseases as diabetes, high blood-pressure and gastric ulcer are aggravated, if not actually brought about, by anxiety states. Doctors are inclining more and more to the opinion that, in the treatment of such diseases, and indeed most functional disorders, close attention should be paid to the mental condition of the patient.

Of all adverse mental states, the most obviously unhealthy and potentially dangerous is prolonged worry. Why, we naturally ask, do people worry? In the ultimate analysis there is only one answer. People worry because of thoughts of "me and mine." We yearn for security, for ourselves and for those we love, in a changing world that offers no permanent security. He who builds sand-castles on the beach is afraid of every wave. He who offers hostages to fortune, becomes the plaything of fortune. He who identifies himself with any existing state of affairs, and is anxious to preserve that state of affairs inviolate, knows no peace of mind. Thus we worry about our "selves," our health, our children, our friends, our possessions—yearning always to maintain stability in that which is inherently unstable.

The Buddha made no pretence of offering stability in the unstable. For this reason some foolish people call Him a pessimist, just as a child who has built a sand-castle will regard as pessimistic any prediction of its dissolution. But the Buddha did offer people something infinitely better than the stability they foolishly seek in unstable phenomena. He offered them a method to attain *ultimate stability, ultimate security, in That which is eternally stable and secure*. He said, in effect,

“Do not imagine there is a soul, a core of permanence in body or mind. That is a road of anxiety and suffering. See these merely as changing phenomena and work for That which does not change.” If we remember this message in our daily lives, we will have taken a big step in the right direction. We may not attain Nibbāna here and now, but we will at least realize that there is no substitute for Nibbāna, and we will worry less about the unstable environment in which we live.

TRAVEL

*Few indeed are they who go to the Further Shore.
The rest of mankind only runs about on the hither bank.*

Dhammapada 85

This body of flesh and blood and bones is a passing thing. So too is the flickering phenomenon, called personality, which is associated with it. There is nothing permanent here, nothing that can be called "a soul". And yet the Buddha tells us that this compound of linked processes, which is called a living being, does not begin with birth or end with death. It goes on from life to life, ever changing.

We have come a long way, all of us. Nobody can see a beginning. Each one of us, as a changing process, is very very old. We are older than the solar system and the stars and the nebulae, in their present form.

The Buddha has said that in this long journey each of us has experienced everything there is to be experienced on the "hither bank", that is, in World. We have loved and hated, joyed and sorrowed, been everywhere, seen everything, done everything, many many times. This business has been going on so long that, if we could but remember the past, we would be heartily sick of the whole thing. But we do not remember. That is why, life after life, we keep on doing the same old things again and again. We are still running about on the "hither bank", playing with the things that are there.

From the highest heavens to the lowest hells we run. If somebody like a Buddha tells us to quit fooling

about and try to get across to the "Further Shore," we do not pay heed.

We can stay here as long as we wish. Indeed, we shall stay here for a long time even after it has dawned on us that we are making fools of ourselves. It is not easy to get to the "Further Shore", for the "Further Shore" is *Nibbāna* which only Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and Arahantas attain. To cross over, we too must evolve as they evolved. That is the only journey we have not made, the only journey worth making.

People think that by going from one spot to another on the surface of the earth they are travelling. So they are; like maggots crawling over a rotten orange. Other people, more ambitious and imaginative, dream of going from the earth to the moon, or to other planets. *That* they feel, will be *travelling*! So it will; like insects flying from one rotten orange to another. But the Buddha tells us that we have tried *all* the rotten oranges at one time or another. They are all on the "hither bank", and there is nothing new in them.

Out, far out in space, so far that the mind cannot imagine the distances, there are stars, many millions of them. It would be the height of egotism to deny that life must exist on some of the planets revolving about those other stars, just as the earth revolves about the sun. If there is life. why not human life? It may well be. And so what? It only means that out there, just as here, there is greed, there is hatred, there is ignorance. Need we travel out to such planets? Need we go so far to see the same foolish faces, hear the same ugly noises, smell the same stinks that are all around us here on earth?

Speaking for ourselves, we have no desire to go to all that trouble merely to renew our acquaintance with the unpleasant.

The distance by which we separate ourselves from the unpleasant is not measured in miles. A good book can do it, for a while. So can meditation, if one has practised meditation and is good at it. Quietness is necessary. One will not sit to meditate on a railway line which is in use, nor in the middle of a busy street, nor on a shooting-range while target practice is going on. One will not turn on the radio, especially if a race commentary is on the air. With quietness and stillness come concentration and clear thought. *This*, at last, is the preparation for a real adventure; a journey utterly new. Its end? The "Further Shore." Good luck!

*Atītaṃ nānusocanti, nappajappanti 'nāgataṃ
Paccuppannaṃ yāpenti, tena vaṇṇo pasīdati.*

*Anāgatappajappāya atītaṃ nānusocanā
Etena bālā sūssanti, naḷo'va harito luto.*

Bewailing not the past,
Of the future incurious,
Living in the present—
By this health glows.

Anxious about the future
And bewailing the past,
Thus do fools wither away—
Like cut green reeds.

Translated by Kassapa Thera

From the Saṃyutta Nikāya,

Vol. I: Sāgāthā Vagga, No. 10

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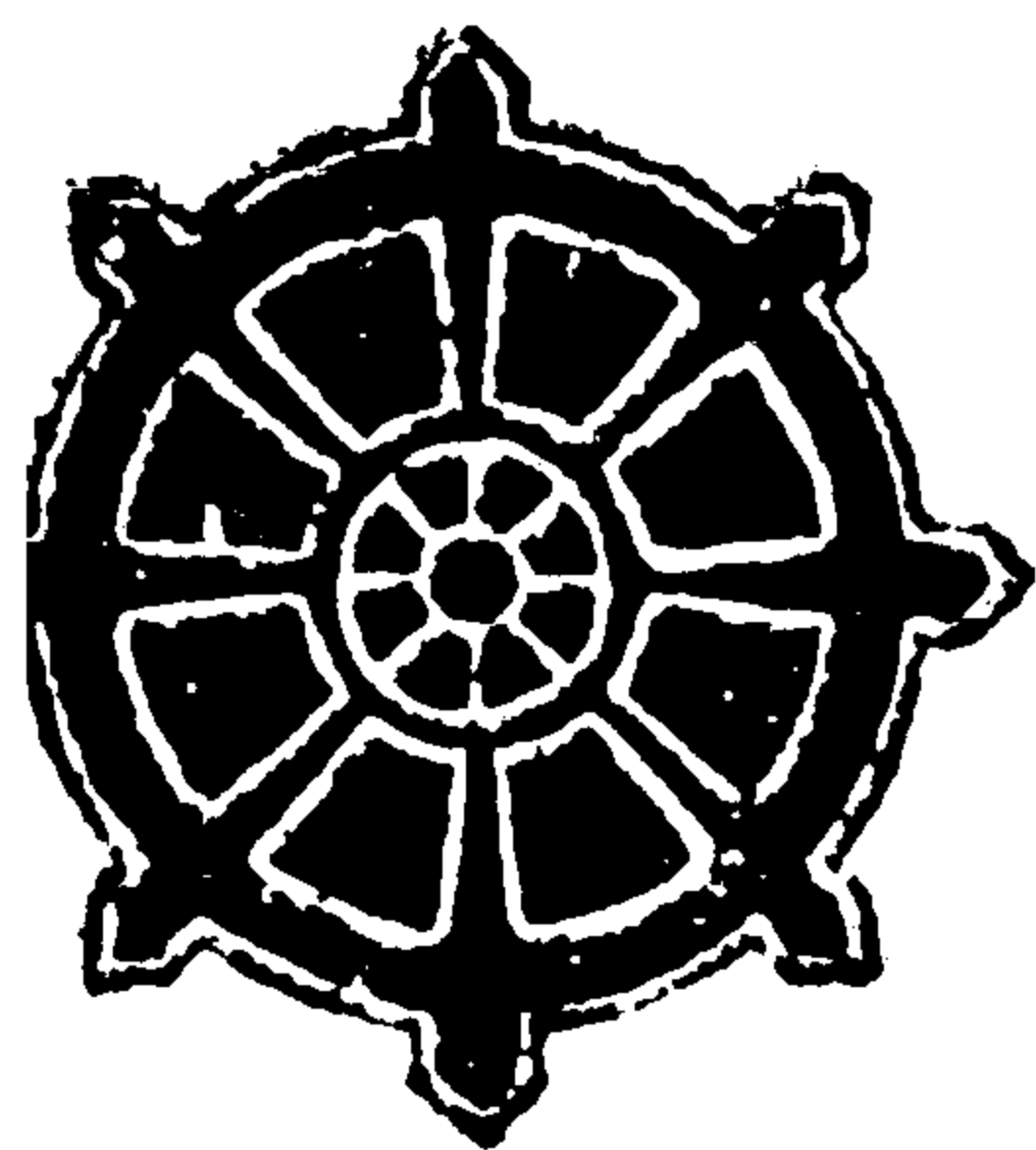
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PRINTED AT
THE UNION PRINTING WORKS
210, COLOMBO STREET, KANDY CEYLON



THE LIGHT OF ASIA

Chapters VI—VIII

THE WHEEL
PUBLICATION
No. 29

EDWIN ARNOLD

THE LIGHT OF ASIA

OR

THE GREAT RENUNCIATION
(MAHABHINISHKRAMANA)

BEING

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF GAUTAMA
PRINCE OF INDIA AND FOUNDER OF BUDDHISM

(As Told in Verse by an Indian Buddhist)

By

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

M. A., K. C. I. E., C. S. I.

Chapters VI—VIII

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Kandy

1961

Ceylon

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Considering that in some countries reached by our publications, Edwin Arnold's great poem may not be easily available, we offer here to the readers of "The Wheel" series the last three chapters of "The Light of Asia". These chapters were chosen for prior publication since they are the culmination of the poem, describing the Buddha's Enlightenment, and giving the poet's inspiring rendering of the Teaching.

The first part of the poem, the Chapters One to Five, will be issued in due course.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

BOOK THE SIXTH

THOU, who wouldst see where dawned the light at last,
North-westwards from the "Thousand Gardens" go
By Gunga's valley till thy steps be set
On the green hills where those twin streamlets spring,
Nilājan and Mohāna; follow them,
Winding beneath broad-leaved mahua-trees,
'Mid thickets of the sansār and the bir,
Till on the plain the shining sisters meet
In Phalgu's bed, flowing by rocky banks
To Gaya and the red Barabar hills.
Hard by that river spreads a thorny waste,
Uruwelaya named in ancient days,
With sandhills broken; on its verge a wood
Waves sea-green plumes and tassels thwart the sky,
With undergrowth wherethrough a still flood steals,
Dappled with lotus-blossoms, blue and white,
And peopled with quick fish and tortoises.
Near it the village of Senani reared
Its roofs of grass, nestled amid the palms,
Peaceful with simple folk and pastoral toils.

There in the sylvan solitudes once more
Lord Buddha lived, musing the woes of men,
The ways of fate, the doctrines of the books,
The lessons of the creatures of the brake,
The secrets of the silence whence all come,
The secrets of the gloom whereto all go,
The life which lies between, like that arch flung
From cloud to cloud across the sky, which hath

Mists for its masonry and vapoury piers,
Melting to void again which was so fair
With sapphire hues, garnet, and chrysoprase.
Moon after moon our Lord sate in the wood,
So meditating these that he forgot
Oft times the hour of food, rising from thoughts
Prolonged beyond the sunrise and the moon.
To see his bowl unfilled, and eat perforce
Of wild fruit fallen from the boughs o'erhead,
Shaken to earth by chattering ape or plucked
By purple parokeet. Therefore his grace
Faded; his body, worn by stress of soul,
Lost day by day the marks thirty and two,
Which testify the Buddha. Scarce that leaf,
Fluttering so dry and withered to his feet
From off the sāl-branch, bore less likeness
Of spring's soft greenery than he of him
Who was the princely flower of all his land.

And once, at such a time the o'rewrought Prince
Fell to the earth in deadly swoon all spent,
Even as one slain, who hath no longer breath
Nor any stir of blood; so wan he was,
So motionless. But there came by that way
A shepherd boy, who saw Siddhārtha lie
With lids fast-closed, and lines of nameless pain
Fixed on his lips—the fiery noonday sun
Beating upon his head—who, plucking boughs
From wild-rose apple trees, knitted them thick
Into a bower to shade the sacred face.
Also he poured upon the Master's lips
Drops of warm milk, pressed from his she-goat's bag

Lest, being low caste, he, by touching, wrong one
So high and holy seeming. But the books
Tell how the jambu-branches, planted thus,
Shot with quick life, in wealth of leaf and flower
And glowing fruitage interlaced and close,
So that the bower grew like a tent of silk
Pitched for a king at hunting, decked with studs
Of silver-work and bosses of red gold.
And the boy worshipped, deeming him some God;
But our Lord gaining breath, arose and asked
Milk in the shepherd's lota. "Ah, my Lord,
I cannot give thee," quoth the lad; "thou seest
I am a Sudra, and my touch defiles!"
Then the World-honoured spake; "Pity and need
Make all flesh kin. There is no caste in blood,
Which runneth of one hue, nor caste in tears,
Which trickle salt with all; neither comes man
To birth with tilka-mark stamped on the brow,
Nor sacred thread on neck. Who doth right deed
Is twice-born, and who doeth ill deeds vile.
Give me to drink, my brother; when I come
Unto my quest it shall be good for thee."
Thereat the peasant's heart was glad and gave.

And on another day there passed that road
A band of tinselled girls, the nautch-dancers
Of Indra's temple in the town, with those
Who made their music—one that beat a drum
Set round with peacock-feathers, one that blew
The piping bānsuli and one that twitched
A three-string sitar. Lightly tripped they down
From ledge to ledge and through the chequered paths

To some gay festival, the silver bells
Chiming soft peals about the small brown feet,
Armlets and wrist-rings tattling answer shrill;
While he that bore the sitar thrummed and twanged
His threads of brass, and she beside him sang—

*“ Fair goes the dancing when the sitar’s tuned;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high,
And we will dance away the hearts of men.*

*The string o’erstretched breaks, and the music flies;
The string o’erslack is dumb, and music dies;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high.”*

So sang the nautch-girl to the pipe and wires,
Fluttering like some vain, painted butterfly
From glade to glade along the forest path,
Nor dreamed her light words echoed on the ear
Of him, that holy man, who sate so rapt
Under the fig-tree by the path. But Buddha
Lifted his great brow as the wantons passed,
And spake : “ The foolish oft times teach the wise;
I strain too much this string of life, belike,
Meaning to make such music as shall save.
Mine eyes are dim now that they see the truth,
My strength is waned now that my need is most;
Would that I had such help as man must have,
For I shall die, whose life was all men’s hope.”

Now by that river dwelt a landholder
Pious and rich, master of many herds,
A goodly chief, the friend of all the poor;
And from his house the village drew its name—
“ Senani.” Pleasant and in peace he lived,

Having for wife Sujāta, loveliest
Of all the dark-eyed daughters of the plain;
Gentle and true, simple and kind was she,
Noble of mien, with gracious speech to all
And gladsome looks—a pearl of womanhood—
Passing calm years of household happiness
Beside her lord in that still Indian home,
Save that no male child blessed their wedded love.
Wherefore, with many prayers she had besought
Lukshmi; and many nights at full-moon gone
Round the great Lingam, nine times nine, with gifts
Of rice and jasmine wreaths and sandal oil
Praying a boy; also Sujāta vowed—
If this should be—an offering of food
Unto the Wood-God plenteous delicate,
Set in a bowl of gold under his tree,
Such as the lips of Devs may taste and take.
And this had been: for there was born to her
A beauteous boy, now three months old, who lay
Between Sujāta's breasts, while she did pace
With grateful footsteps to the Wood-God's shrine,
One arm clasping her crimson sari close
To wrap the babe, that jewel of her joys,
The other lifted high in comely curve
To steady on her head the bowl and dish
Which held the dainty victuals for the God.

But Radha, sent before to sweep the ground
And tie the scarlet threads around the tree,
Came eager, crying, “ Ah, dear Mistress ! look.
There is the Wood-God sitting in his place,
Revealed, with folded hands upon his knees.

See how the light shines round about his brow !
How mild and great he seems, with heavenly eyes !
Good fortune is it thus to meet the gods.”

So,—thinking him divine,—Sujāta drew
Tremblingly nigh, and kissed the earth and said,
With sweet face bent, “Would that the Holy One
Inhabiting this grove, Giver of good,
Merciful unto me his handmaiden,
Vouchsafing now his presence, might accept
These our poor gifts of snowy curds, fresh made
With milk as white made as new-carved ivory !”

There with into the golden bowl she poured
The curds and milk, and on the hands of Buddh
Dropped attar from a crystal flask—distilled
Out of the hearts of roses : and he ate,
Speaking no word, while the glad mother stood
In reverence apart. But of that meal
So wondrous was the virtue that our Lord
Felt strength and life return as though the nights
Of watching and the days of fast had passed
In dream, as though the spirit with the flesh
Shared that fine meat and plumed its wings anew,
Like some delighted bird at sudden streams
Weary with flight o’er endless wastes of sand,
Which laves the desert dust from neck and crest.
And more Sujāta worshipped, seeing our Lord
Grow fairer and his countenance more bright :
“Art thou indeed the God ?” she lowly asked,
“And hath my gift found favour ?”

But Buddh said,
“ What is it thou dost bring me ?”

“ Holy One !”

Answered Sujāta, “ from our droves I took
Milk of a hundred mothers, newly-calved,
And with that milk I fed fifty white cows,
And with their milk twenty-and-five, and then
With theirs twelve more, and yet again with theirs
The six noblest and best of all our herds.
That yield I boiled with sandal and fine spice
In silver lotus, adding rice, well grown
From chosen seed, set in new-broken ground,
So picked that every grain was like a pearl.
This did I of true heart, because I vowed
Under thy tree, if I should bear a boy
I would make offering for my joy, and now
I have my son, and all my life is bliss !”

Softly our Lord drew down the crimson fold,
And, laying on the little head those hands
Which help the worlds, he said, “ Long be thy bliss !
And lightly fall on him the load of life !
For thou hast helpen me who am no God,
But one, thy Brother ; heretofore a Prince
And now a wanderer, seeking night and day
These six hard years that light which somewhere shines
To lighten all men’s darkness, if they knew !
And I shall find the light ; yea, now it dawned
Glorious and helpful, when my weak flesh failed
Which this pure food, fair Sister, hath restored,
Drawn manifold through lives to quicken life
As life itself passes by many births

To happier heights and purging off of sins.
Yet dost thou truly find it sweet enough
Only to live ? Can life and love suffice ?”

Answered Sujāta, “Worshipful ! my heart
Is little, and a little rain will fill
The lily’s cup which hardly moistens the field.
It is enough for me to feel life’s sun
Shine in my Lord’s grace and my baby’s smile,
Making the loving summer of our home.
Pleasant my days pass filled with household cares
From sunrise when I wake to praise the gods,
And give forth grain, and trim the tulsi-plant,
And set my handmaids to their tasks, till noon,
When my Lord lays his head upon my lap
Lulled by soft songs and wavings of the fan;
And so to supper-time at quiet eve,
When by his side I stand and serve the cakes.
Then the stars light their silver lamps for sleep,
After the temple and the talk with friends.
How should I not be happy, blest so much,
And bearing him this boy whose tiny hand
Shall lead his soul to Swarga, if it need ?
For holy books teach when a man shall plant
Trees for the travellers’ shade, dig a well
For the folks’ comfort, and beget a son,
It shall be good for such after their death ;
And what the books say that I humbly take,
Being not wiser than those great of old
Who spake with gods, and knew the hymns and charms,
And all the ways of virtue and of peace.
Also I think that good must come of good

And ill of evil—surely—unto all—
In every place and time—seeing sweet fruit
Groweth from wholesome roots, and bitter things
From poison stocks; yea, seeing, too, how spite
Breeds hate, and kindness friends, and patience peace
Even while we live; and when 'tis willed we die
Shall there not be as good a ' Then ' as ' Now ' ?
Haply much better ! since one grain of rice
Shoots a green feather gemmed with fifty pearls,
And all the starry champak's white and gold
Lurks in those little, naked, grey spring-buds.
Ah, Sir ! I know there might be woes to bear
Would lay fond Patience with her face in dust.
If this my babe pass first I think my heart
Would break—almost I hope my heart would break ;
That I might clasp him dead and wait my Lord —
In whatsoever world holds faithful wives—
Duteous, attending till this hour should come.
But if Death called Senāni, I should mount
The pile and lay that dear head in my lap,
My daily way, rejoicing when the torch
Lit the quick flame and rolled the choking smoke
For it is written if an Indian wife
Die so, her love shall give her husband's soul
For every hair upon her head a crore
Of years in Swarga. Therefore fear I not:
And therefore, Holy Sir ! my life is glad,
Nowise forgetting yet those other lives
Painful and poor, wicked and miserable,
Whereon the gods grant pity ! But for me,
What good I see humbly I seek to do.

And live obedient to the law, in trust
That what will come, and must come, shall come well.”

Then spake our Lord, “Thou teachest them who teach,
Wiser than wisdom in thy simple lore.
Be thou content to know not, knowing thus
Thy way of right and duty : grow, thou flower !
With thy sweet kind in peaceful shade—the light
Of Truth’s high noon is not for tender leaves
Which must spread broad in other suns, and lift
In later lives a crowned head to the sky.
Thou who hast worshipped me, I worship thee !
Excellent heart ! learned unknowingly,
As the dove is which flieth home by love.
In thee is seen why there is hope for man
And where we hold the wheel of life at will.
Peace go with thee, and comfort all thy days !
As thou accomplishest, may I achieve !
He whom thou thoughtest God bids thee wish this.”

“Mayest thou achieve !” she said, with earnest eyes
Bent on her babe ; who reached its tender hands
To Buddh—knowing, belike, as children know,
More than we deem, and reverencing our Lord ;
But he arose—made strong with that pure meat—
And bent his footsteps where a great Tree grew,
The Bōdhi-tree (thenceforward in all years
Never to fade, and ever to be kept
In homage of the world) beneath whose leaves
It was ordained the Truth should come to Buddh ;
Which now the Master knew ; wherefore he went
With measured pace steadfast, majestic,

Unto the Tree of Wisdom Oh, ye Worlds!
Rejoice! our Lord wended unto the Tree!

Whom—as he passed into its ample shade,
Cloistered with columned dropping stems, and roof
With vaults of glistering green—the conscious earth
Worshipped with waving grass and sudden flush
Of flowers about his feet. The forest-boughs
Bent down to shade him; from the river sighed
Cool wafts of wind laden with lotus-scents
Breathed by the water-gods. Large wondering eyes
Of woodland creatures, panther, boar and, deer—
At peace that eve, gazed on his face benign
From cave and thicket. From its cold cleft wound
The mottled deadly snake, dancing its hood
In honour of our Lord; bright butterflies
Fluttered their vans, azure and green and gold,
To be his fan-bearers; the fierce kite dropped
Its prey and screamed; the stripped palm squirrel raced
From stem to stem to see; the weaver bird
Chirped from her swinging nest; the lizard ran;
The koil sang her hymn; the doves flocked round;
Even the creeping things were 'ware and glad.
Voices of earth and air joined in one song,
Which unto ears that hear said, "Lord and Friend!
Lover and Saviour! Thou who hast subdued
Angers and prides, desires and fears and doubts,
Thou that for each and all has given thyself,
Pass, to the Tree! The sad world blesseth thee
Who art the Buddh that shall assuage her woes,
Pass Hailed and Honoured! strive thy last for us,
King and high Conqueror! thine hour is come;

This is the Night the ages waited for ! ”
Then fell the night, even as our Master sate
Under that Tree. But he who is the Prince
Of Darkness, Mara—knowing this was Buddh
Who should deliver men, and now the hour
When he should find the Truth and save the worlds—
Gave unto all his evil powers command.
Wherefore there trooped from every deepest pit
The fiends who war with Wisdom and the Light,
Arati, Trishna, Raga, and their crew
Of passions, horrors, ignorances, lusts,
The brood of gloom and dread; all hating Buddh,
Seeking to shake his mind; nor knoweth one,
Not even the wisest, how those fiends of Hell
Battled that night to keep the Truth from Buddh:
Sometimes with terrors of the tempest, blasts
Of demon-armies clouding all the wind
With thunder, and with blinding lightning flung
In jagged javelins of purple wrath
From splitting skies; sometimes with wiles and words
Fair-sounding, ’mid hushed leaves and softened airs
From shapes of witching beauty; wanton songs,
Whispers of love; sometimes with royal allures
Of proffered rule; sometimes with mocking doubts,
Making truth vain. But whether these befell
Without and visible, or whether Buddh
Strove with fell spirits in his inmost heart,
Judge ye:—I write what ancient books have writ.

The ten chief Sins came—Mara’s mighty ones,
Angels of evil—Attāvada first,
The Sin of Self, who in the Universe

As in a mirror sees her fond face shown,
 And, crying “ I ”, would have the world say “ I,”
 And all things perish so if she endure.
 “ If thou be’st Buddh, ” she said, “ let others grope
 Lightless; it is enough that Thou art Thou
 Changelessly; rise and take the bliss of gods
 Who change not, heed not, strive not.” But Buddh spake,
 “The right in thee is base, the wrong a curse;
 Cheat such as love themselves.” Then came wan Doubt,
 He that denies—the mocking Sin—and this
 Hissed in the Master’s ear “ All things are shows,
 And vain the knowledge of their vanity;
 Thou dost but chase the shadow of thyself;
 Rise and go hence, there is no better way
 Than patient scorn, nor any help for man,
 Nor any staying of his whirling wheel.”
 But quoth our Lord, “ Thou hast no part with me,
 False Visikitcha ! subtlest of man’s foes.”
 And third came she who gives dark creeds their power,
 Silabbat paramāsa, sorceress.
 Draped fair in many lands as lowly Faith,
 But ever juggling souls with rites and prayers;
 The keeper of those keys which lock up Hells
 And open Heavens. “Wilt thou dare,” she said,
 “ Put by our sacred books, dethrone our gods,
 Unpeople all the temples, shaking down
 That law which feeds the priests and props the realms ?”
 But Buddha answered, “ What thou bidd’st me keep
 Is from which passes, but the free Truth stands;
 Get thee unto thy darkness.” Next there drew
 Gallantly nigh a braver Tempter, he,
 Kama, the King of passions, who hath sway

Over the gods themselves, Lord of all loves,
Ruler of pleasure's realm. Laughing he came
Unto the tree, bearing his bow of gold
Wreathed with red blooms, and arrows of desire
Pointed with five-tongued delicate flame, which stings
The heart it smites sharper than poisoned barb:
And round him came into that lonely place
Bands of bright shapes with heavenly eyes and lips
Singing in lovely words the praise of Love
To music of invisible sweet chords,
So witching, that it seemed the night stood still
To hear them, and the listening stars and moon
Paused in their orbits while these hymned to Buddh
Of lost delights, and how a mortal man
Findeth nought dearer in the Three wide worlds
Than are the yielded loving fragrant breasts
Of Beauty and the rosy breast-blossoms,
Love's rubies; nay, and toucheth nought more high
Than is that dulcet harmony of form
Seen in the lines and charms of loveliness,
Unspeakable, yet speaking, soul to soul,
Owned by the bounding blood, worshipped by will
Which leaps to seize it, knowing this is best,
This the true heaven where mortals are like gods,
Makers and Masters, this the gift of gifts
Ever renewed and worth a thousand woes,
For who hath grieved when soft arms shut him safe,
And all life melted to a happy sigh,
And all the world was given in one warm kiss?
So sang they with soft float of beckoning hands,
Eyes lighted with love-flames, alluring smiles;
In wanton dance their supple sides and limbs

Revealing and concealing like burst buds
Which tell their colour, but hide yet their hearts.
Never so matchless grace delighted eye
As troop by troop these midnight-dancers swept
Nearer the Tree, each daintier than the last,
Murmuring "O great Siddhārtha ! I am thine,
Taste of my mouth and see if youth is sweet !"
Also, when nothing moved our Master's mind,
Lo! Kama waved his magic bow, and lo!
The band of dancers opened, and a shape,
Fairest and stateliest of the throng, came forth
Wearing the guise of sweet Yasodhara.
Tender the passion of those dark eyes seemed
Brimming with tears; yearning those outspread arms
Opened towards him; musical that moan
Wherewith the beauteous shadow named his name,
Sighing, "My prince! I die for lack of thee!
What heaven hast thou found like that we knew
By bright Rohini in the Pleasure-house,
Where all these weary years I weep for thee?
Return, Siddhārtha ! ah ! return. But touch
My lips again, but let me to thy breast
Once, and these fruitless dreams will end! Oh, look!
Am I not she thou lovedst ?" But Buddh said,
"For that sweet sake of her thou playest thus,
Fair and false Shadow! is thy playing vain ;
I curse thee not who wear'st a form so dear,
Yet as thou art so are all earthly shows,
Melt to thy void again!" Thereat, a cry
Thrilled through the grove, and all that comely rout
Faded with flickering wafts of flame, and trail
Of vaporous robes.

Next, under darkening skies
And noise of rising storm, came fiercer Sins,
The rearmost of the Ten; Patigha—Hate—
With serpents coiled about her waist, which suck
Poisonous milk from both her hanging dugs,
And with her curses mix their angry hiss.
Little wrought she upon that Holy One
Who with his calm eyes dumb'd her bitter lips
And made her black snakes writhe to hide their fangs.
Then followed Rupaṇa—Lust of days—
That sensual Sin which out of greed for life
Forgets to live; and next him Lust of Fame,
Nobler Arupaṇa, she whose spell
Beguiles the wise, mother of daring deeds,
Battles and toils. And haughty Maṇa came,
The Fiend of Pride; and smooth Self-Righteousness
Uddhachcha; and —with many a hideous band
Of vile and formless things, which crept and flapped
Toad-like and bat-like—Ignorance, the Dam
Of Fear and Wrong, Avidya, hideous hag,
Whose footsteps left the midnight darker, while
The rooted mountains shook, the wild winds howled,
The broken clouds shed from their caverns streams
Of levin-lighted rain; stars shot from heaven,
The solid earth shuddered as if one laid
Flame to her gaping wounds; the torn black air
Was full of whistling wings, of screams and yells,
Of evil faces peering, of vast fronts
Terrible and majestic, Lords of Hell
Who from a thousand Limbos led their troops
To tempt the Master.

But Buddh heeded not,

Sitting serene, with perfect virtue walled
As is a stronghold by its gates and ramps;
Also the Sacred Tree--the Bōdhi-tree—
Amid that tumult stirred not, but each leaf
Glistened as still as when on moonlit eves
No zephyr spills the gathering gems of dew;
For all this clamour raged outside the shade
Spread by those cloistered stems:

In the third watch,—

The earth being still, the hellish legions fled,
A soft air breathing from the sinking moon—
Our Lord attained *Samma-sambuddh*; he saw,
By light which shines beyond our mortal ken,
The line of all his lives in all the worlds;
Far back, and farther back, and farthest yet,
Five hundred lives and fifty. Even as one
At rest upon a mountain-summit, marks
His path wind up by precipice and crag,
Past thick-set woods shrunk to a patch; through bogs
Glittering false-green; down hollows where he toiled
Breathless; on dizzy ridges where his feet
Had well nigh slipped; beyond the sunny lawns
The cataract, and the cavern, and the pool,
Backward to those dim flats wherefrom he sprang
To reach the blue; thus Buddha did behold
Life's upward steps long-linked, from levels low
Where breath is base, to higher slopes and higher
Whereon the ten great Virtues wait to lead
The climber skyward. Also, Buddha saw
How new life reaps what the old life did sow;
How where its march breaks off its march begins;
Holding the gain and answering for the loss;

And how in each life good begets more good,
Evil fresh evil: Death but casting up
Debit or credit, whereupon th' account
In merits or demerits stamps itself
By sure arithmic—where no tittle drops—
Certain and just, on some new-springing life;
Wherein are packed and scored past thoughts and deeds,
Strivings and triumphs, memories and marks
Of lives foregone:

And in the middle watch
Our Lord attained *Abhidjñā*—insight vast
Ranging beyond this sphere to spheres unnamed,
System on system, countless worlds and suns
Moving in splendid measures, band by band
Linked in division, one, yet separate,
The silver islands of a sapphire sea
Shoreless, unfathomed, undiminished, stirred
With waves which roll in restless tides of change
He saw those Lords of Light who hold their worlds
By bonds invisible, how they themselves
Circle obedient round mightier orbs
Which serve profounder splendours, star to star
Flashing the ceaseless radiance of life
From centres ever shifting unto cirques
Knowing no uttermost. These he beheld
With unsealed vision, and of all those worlds,
Cycle on epicycle, all their tale
Of Kalpas, Mahakalpas—terms of time
Which no man grasps; yea, though he knew to count
The drops in Gunga from her springs to the sea,
Measureless unto speech—whereby these wax

And wane; whereby each of this heavenly host
Fulfil its shining life, and darkling dies.
Sakwal by Sakwal, depths and heights he passed
Transported through the blue infinitudes.
Marking behind all modes, above all spheres,
Beyond the burning impulse of each orb
That fixed decree at silent work which wills
Evolve the dark to light, the dead to life,
To fulness void, to form the yet unformed,
Good unto better, better unto best,
By wordless edict; having none to bid,
None to forbid; for this is past all gods.
Immutable, unspeakable, supreme;
A Power which builds, unbuilds; and builds again,
Ruling all things accordant to the rule
Of virtue, which is beauty, truth, and use:
So that all things do well which serve the Power.
And ill which hinder; nay, the worm does well
Obedient to its kind; the hawk does well
Which carries bleeding quarries to its young:
The dewdrop and the star shine sisterly
Globing together in the common work;
And man who lives to die, dies to live well
So if he guide his ways by blamelessness
And earnest will to hinder not but help
All things both great and small which suffer life.
These did our Lord see in the middle watch.

But, when the fourth watch came the secret came
Of Sorrow, which with evil mars the law,
As damp and dross hold back the goldsmith's fire
Then was the Duhkha-Satya opened him
First of the "Noble Truths;" how Sorrow is

Shadow to life, moving where life doth move;
 Not to be laid aside until one lays
 Living aside with all its changing states,
 Birth, growth, decay, love, hatred, pleasure, pain,
 Being and doing. How that none strips off
 These sad delights and pleasant griefs who lacks
 Knowledge to know them snares; but he who knows
 Avidya—Delusion—sets those snares,
 Loves life no longer, but ensues escape.
 The eyes of such a one are wide, he sees
 Delusion breeds Sankhāra, Tendency—
 Perverse; Tendency Energy—Vidnnān—
 Whereby comes Namarupa, local Form
 And Name and Bodiment, bringing the man
 With senses naked to the sensible,
 A helpless mirror of all shows which pass
 Across his heart; and so Vedanā grows—
 Sense-life'—false in its gladness, fell in sadness,
 But sad or glad, the Mother of Desire,
 Trishna, that thirst which makes the living drink
 Deeper and deeper of the false salt waves
 Whereon they float, pleasures, ambitions, wealth,
 Praise, fame or domination, conquest, love;
 Rich meats and robes, and fair abodes and pride
 Of ancient lines, and lust of days, and strife,
 To live, and sin that flow from strife, some sweet,
 Some bitter. Thus Life's thirst quenches itself
 With draughts which double thirst, but who is wise
 Tears from his soul this Thrishna, feeds his sense
 No longer on false shows, files his firm mind
 To seek not, strive not, wrong not; bearing meek
 All ills which flow from foregone wrongfulness,

And so constraining passions that they die
Famished; till all the sum of ended life—
The *Karma*—all that total of a soul
Which is the things it did, the thoughts it had,
The 'Self' it wove—with woof of viewless time,
Crossed on the warp invisible of acts—
The outcome of him on the Universe,
Grows pure and sinless; either never more
Needing to find a body and a place,
Or so informing what fresh frame it takes
In new existence that the new toils prove
Lighter and lighter not to be at all.
Thus "finishing the path", free from Earth's cheats:
Released from all the Skandhas of the flesh;
Broken from ties—from Upādānas—saved
From whirling on the Wheel: aroused and sane
As is a man awakened from hateful dreams.
Until—greater than Kings, than Gods more glad!
The aching craze to live ends, and life glides—
Lifeless—to nameless quiet, nameless joy,
Blessed NIRVANA—sinless, stirless rest—
That change which never changes!

Lo ! the Dawn
Sprang with Buddh's victory ! lo! in the East
Flamed the first fires of beauteous day, poured forth
Through fleeting folds of Night's black drapery.
High in the widening blue the herald-star
Faded to paler silver as there shot
Brighter and brightest bars of rosy gleam
Across the grey. Far off the shadowy hills
Saw the great Sun, before the world was 'ware,

And donned their crowns of crimson; flower by flower
Felt the warm breath of Morn and 'gan unfold
Their tender lids. Over the spangled grass
Swept the swift footsteps of the lovely Light,
Turning the tears of Night to joyous gems,
Decking the earth with radiance, 'broidering
The sinking storm clouds with a golden fringe,
Gilding the feathers of the palms, which waved
Glad salutation: darting beams of gold
Into the glades; touching with magie wand
The stream to rippled ruby; in the brake
Finding the mild eyes of the antelopes
And saying "It is day!" in nestled sleep
Touching the small heads under many a wing
And whispering "Children praise the light of day!"
Whereat there piped anthems of all the birds.
The Kōil's fluted song, the Bulbul's hymn,
The "morning, morning" of the painted thrush.
The twitter of the sunbirds starting forth
To find the honey ere the bees be out.
The grey crow's caw, the parrot's scream, the strokes
Of the green hammersmith, the myna's chirp.
The never-finished love-talk of the doves:
Yea! and so holy was the influence
Of that high Dawn which came with victory
That, far and near, in homes of men there spread
An unknown peace. The slayer hid his knife;
The robber laid his plunder back; the shroff
Counted full tale of coins; all evil hearts
Grew gentle, kind hearts gentler, as the balm
Of that divinest Daybreak lightened Earth.
Kings at fierce war called truce; the sick men leaped

Laughing from beds of pain; the dying smiled
As though they knew that happy Morn was sprung
From fountains farther than the utmost East;
And o'er the heart of sad Yasōdhara,
Sitting forlorn at Prince Siddhārtha's bed,
Came sudden bliss, as if love should not fail
Nor such vast sorrow miss to end in joy.
So glad the World was—though it wist not why—
That over desolate wastes went swooning songs
Of mirth, the voice of bodiless Prets and Bhuts
Foreseeing Buddh; and Devas in the air
Cried “It is finished, finished!” and the priests
Stood with the wondering people in the streets
Watching those golden splendours flood the sky,
And saying “There hath happed some mighty thing.
Also in Ran and Jungle grew that day
Friendship amongst the creatures; spotted deer
Browsed fearless where the tigress fed her cubs,
And cheetahs lapped the pool beside the bucks;
Under the eagle's rock the brown hares scoured
While his fierce beak but preened and idle wing;
The snake sunned all his jewels in the beam
With deadly fangs in sheath; the shrike let pass
The nesting-finch; the emerald halcyons
Sate dreaming while the fishes played beneath,
Nor hawked the merops, though the butterflies --
Crimson and blue and amber—flitted thick
Around his perch; the Sprit of our Lord
Lay potent upon man and bird and beast,
Even while he mused under that Bōdhi-tree,
Glorified with the Conquest gained for all,
And lightened by a Light greater than Day's.

Then he arose—radiant, rejoicing, strong—
Beneath the Tree, and lifting high his voice
Spake this, in hearing of all Times and Worlds:—

*Anekojatisangsarang
Sandhawissang anibhisang
Gahakarakan gawesanto
Dukkha jati punappunang.
Gahakaraka dithosi;
Puna gehang nakahasi:
Sabba te phasuka bhagga,
Gahakutang wisangkhitanq:
Wisangkharagatang chittang,
Tanhanangkhayamojhaga.*

MANY A HOUSE OF LIFE
HATH HELD ME—SEEKING EVER HIM WHO WROUGHT
THESE PRISONS OF THE SENSES, SORROW-FRAUGHT;
SORE WAS MY CEASELESS STRIFE !
BUT NOW,
THOU BUILDER OF THIS TABERNACLE—THOU !
I KNOW THEE ! NEVER SHALT THOU BUILD AGAIN
THESE WALLS OF PAIN,
NOR RAISE THE ROOF-TREE OF DECEITS, NOR LAY
FRESH RAFTERS ON THE CLAY ;
BROKEN THY HOUSE IS, AND THE RIDGE-POLE SPLIT !
DELUSION FASHIONED IT !
SAFE PASS I THENCE—DELIVERANCE TO OBTAIN.

BOOK THE SEVENTH

SORROWFUL dwelt the king Suddōdana
All those long years among the Sākya Lords
Lacking the speech and presence of his Son;
Sorrowful sate the sweet Yasōdhara
All those long years, knowing no joy of life,
Widowed of him her living Liege and Prince.
And ever, on the news of some recluse
Seen far away by pasturing camel-men
Or traders threading devious paths for gain,
Messengers from the King had gone and come,
Bringing account of many a holy sage
Lonely and lost to home; but nought of him
The crown of white Kapilavastu's line,
The glory of her monarch and his hope,
The heart's content of sweet Yasodhara,
Far-wandered now, forgetful, changed, or dead.

But on a day in the Wasanta-time,
When silver sprays swing on the mango trees
And all the earth is clad with garb of spring,
The Princess sate by that bright garden-stream
Whose gliding glass, bordered with lotus-cups,
Mirrored so often in the bliss gone by
Their clinging hands and meeting lips. Her lids
Were wan with tears, her tender cheeks had thinned,
Her lips' delicious curves were drawn with grief;
The lustrous glory of hair was hid—
Close-bound as widows use; no ornament

She wore, nor any jewel clasped the cloth—
Coarse, and of mourning-white—crossed on her breast.
Slow moved and painfully those small fine feet
Which had the roe's gait and the rose-leaf's fall
In old years at the loving voice of him.
Her eyes, those lamps of love,—which were as if
Sunlight should shine from out the deepest dark,
Illumining Night's peace with Daytime's glow—
Unlighted now, and roving aimlessly,
Scarce marked the clustering signs of coming Spring,
So the silk lashes drooped over their orbs.
In one hand was a girdle thick with pearls,
Siddhārtha's—treasured since that night he fled—
(Ah, bitter Night! mother of weeping days!
When was fond Love so pitiless to love,
Save that this scorned to limit love by life?)
The other led her little son, a boy
Divinely fair, the pledge Siddhārtha left—
Named Rahula—now seven years old, who tripped
Gladsome beside his mother, light of heart
To see the spring-blooms burgeon o'er the world.

So, while they lingered by the lotus-pools,
And, lightly laughhing, Rahula flung rice
To feed the blue and purple fish; and she
With sad eyes watched the swiftly-flying cranes,
Sighing, "Oh! creatures of the wandering wing,
If ye shall light where my dear Lord is hid,
Say that Yasōdhara lives nigh to death
For one word of his mouth, one touch of him!"—
Thus, as they played and sighed—mother and child—
Came some among the damsels of the Court

Saying "Great Princess! there have entered in
At the south gate merchants of Hastinpur,
Tripusha called and Bhalluk, men of worth,
Long travelled from the loud sea's edge, who bring
Marvellous lovely webs pictured with gold,
Waved blades of gilded steel, wrought bowls in brass,
Cut ivories, spice simples, and unknown birds,
Treasures of far-off peoples; but they bring
That which doth begger these, for He is seen!
Thy Lord—our Lord,—the hope of all the land—
Siddhārtha! they have seen him face to face,
Yea, and have worshipped him with knees and brows,
And offered offerings; for he is become
All which was shown, a Teacher of the wise,
World-honoured, holy, wonderful: a Buddh
Who doth deliver men and save all flesh
By sweetest speech and pity vast as Heaven:
And, lo! he journeyeth hither, these do say."

Then—while the glad blood bounded in her veins
As Gunga leaps when first the mountain snows
Melt at her springs—uprose Yasōdhara
And clapped her palms, and laughed, with brimming tears
Beading her lashes. "Oh! call quick," she cried,
"These merchants to my purdah, for mine ears
Thirst like parched throats to drink their blessed news,
Go bring them in,—but, if their tale be true,
Say I will fill their girdles with much gold,
With gems that Kings shall envy: come ye too,
My girls, for ye shall have guerdon of this
If there be gifts to speak my grateful heart."

So went those merchants to the Pleasure-House,

Full softly pacing through its golden ways
With naked feet, amid the peering maids,
Much wondering at the glories of the Court.
Whom, when they came without the purdah's folds,
A voice, tender and eager, filled and charmed
With trembling music, saying, "Ye are come
From far, fair Sirs! and ye have seen my Lord—
Yea, worshipped—for he is become a Buddh,
World-honoured, holy, and delivers men,
And journeyeth hither. Speak! for, if this be,
Friends are ye of my House, welcome and dear."

Then answer made Tripusha, "We have seen
That sacred Master, Princess! we have bowed
Before his feet; for who was lost a Prince
Is found a greater than the King of kings.
Under the Bōdhi-tree by Phalgu's bank
That which shall save the world hath late been wrought
By him,—the Friend of all, the Prince of all—
Thine most, High Lady! from whose tears men win
The Comfort of this World the Master speaks.
Lo! he is well, as one beyond all ills,
Uplifted as a god from earthly woes,
Shining with risen Truth, golden and clear,
Moreover as he entereth town by town,
Preaching those noble ways which lead to peace,
The hearts of men follow his path as leaves
Troop to the wind or sheep draw after one
Who knows the pastures. We ourselves have heard,
By Gaya in the green Tchirnika grove,
Those wondrous lips and done them reverence:
He cometh hither ere the first rains fall."

Thus spake he, and Yasōdhara, for joy,
Scarce mastered breath to answer, "Be it well
Now and at all times with ye, worthy friends!
Who bring good tidings; but of this great thing
Wist ye how it befell?

Then Bhalluk told
Such as the people of the valleys knew
Of that dread night of conflict, when the air
Darkened with fiendish shadows, and the earth
Quaked, and the waters swelled with Mara's wrath.
Also how gloriously that morning broke
Radiant with rising hopes for man, and how
The Lord was found rejoicing 'neath his Tree.
But many days the burden of release—
To be escaped beyond all storms of doubt,
Safe on Truth's shore—lay, spake he, on that heart
A golden load; for how shall men—Buddh mused—
Who love their sins and cleave to cheats of sense,
And drink of error from a thousand springs,
Having no mind to see, nor strength to break
The fleshly snare which binds them---how should such
Receive the Twelve Nidānas and the Law
Redeeming all, yet strange to profit by,
As the caged bird oft shuns its opened door?
So had we missed the helpful victory
If, in this earth without a refuge, Buddh,
Winning the way, had deemed it all too hard
For mortal feet and passed, none following him.
Yet pondered the compassion of our Lord;
But in that hour there ran a voice as sharp
As cry of travail, so as if the earth

Moaned in birth-throe, “ *Nasyami aham bhu
Nasyati loka:*” SURELY I AM LOST,
I AND MY CREATURES: then a pause; and next
A pleading sigh borne on the western wind,
“ *Sruyatam dharma, Bhagwat:*” OH, SUPREME:
LET THY GREAT LAW BE UTTERED! Whereupon
The Master cast his vision forth on flesh,
Saw who should hear and who must wait to hear,
As the keen Sun gilding the lotus-lakes
Seeth which buds will open to his beams
And which are not yet risen from their roots:
Then spake, divinely smiling, “Yea! I preach!
Whoso will listen let him learn the Law.”

Afterwards passed he, said they, by the hills
Unto Benares, where he taught the Five,
Showing how birth and death should be destroyed,
And how man hath no fate except past deeds,
No Hell but what he makes, no Heaven too high
For those to reach whose passions sleep subdued.
This was the fifteenth day of Vaishya
Mid-afternoon, and that night was full moon.

But, of the Rishis, first Kaundinya
Owned the Four Truths and entered on the Paths;
And after him Bhadraka, Asvajit,
Basava, Mahanāma; also there
Within the Deer-park. at the feet of Buddh,
Yasad the Prince with nobles fifty-four,
Hearing the blessed word our Master spake,
Worshipped and followed; for there sprang up peace
And knowledge of a new time come for men

In all who heard, as spring the flowers and grass
When water sparkles through a sandy plain.

These sixty—said they—did our Lord send forth,
Made perfect in restraint and passion-free;
To teach the Way; but the World-honoured turned
South from the Deer-park and Isipatan
To Yashti and King Bimbisāra's realm,
Where many days he taught; and after these
King Bimbisāra and his folk believed,
Learning the law of love and ordered life.
Also he gave the Master, of free gift,—
Pouring forth water on the hands of Buddh,—
The Bamboo-Garden, named Weluvana,
Wherein are streams and caves and lovely glades;
And the King set a stone there, carved with this:—

*Ye dharmā hetupphavā
Ye sāmāhetu Tathāgato;
Aha yesaṃ cā yo nirodho
Evaṃ vadi Mahā Samano.*

“What life's course and cause sustain
These Tathāgato made plain;
What delivers from life's woe
That our Lord hath made us know.”

And, in that Garden—said they— there was held
A high Assembly, where the Teacher spake
Wisdom and power, winning all souls which heard;
So that nine hundred took the yellow robe—
Such as the Master wears,—and spread his Law;
And this the gāthā was wherewith he closed:—

Sabba papassa akaranan;
Kusalassa upasampada:
Sa chitta pariyodapanan;
Etan Budhanusasanan:

“Evil swells the debts to pay,
Good delivers and acquits;
Shun evil, follow good; hold sway
Over thyself. This is the Way.”

Whom, when they ended, speaking so of him,
With gifts, and thanks which made the jewels dull,
The Princess recompensed. “But by what road
Wendeth my Lord?” she asked; the merchants said,
‘Yōjans threescore stretch from the city-walls
To Rajagriha, whence the easy path
Passeth by Sona hither, and the hills.
Our oxen, treading eight slow koss a day,
Came in one moon.”

Then the King hearing word,
Sent nobles of the Court—well-mounted lords—
Nine separate messengers, each embassy
Bidden to say, “The King Sudhōdana—
Nearer the pyre by seven long years of lack,
Wherethrough he hath not ceased to seek for thee—
Prays of his son to come unto his own,
The Throne and people of this longing Realm,
Lest he shall die and see thy face no more.”
Also nine horsemen sent Yasōdhara
Bidden to say, “The Princess of thy House—
Rahula’s mother—craves to see thy face
As the night-blowing moon flower’s swelling heart

Pines for the moon, as pale asōka-buds
Wait for a woman's foot : if thou hast found
More than was lost, she prays her part in this,
Rahula's part, but most of all thyself."
So sped the Sākya Lords, but it befell
That each one, with the message in his mouth,
Entered the Bamboo-Garden in that hour
When Buddha taught his law; and—hearing—each
Forgot to speak, lost thought of King and quest,
Of the sad Princess even; only gazed
Eye-rapt upon the Master; only hung
Heart-caught upon the speech compassionate,
Commanding, perfect, pure, enlightening all,
Poured from those sacred lips. Look! like a bee
Winged for the hive, who sees the mōgras spread
And scents their utter sweetness on the air,
If he be honey-filled, it matters not;
If night be nigh, or rain, he will not heed;
Needs must he light on those delicious blooms
And drain their nectar; so these messengers
One with another, hearing Buddha's words,
Let go the purpose of their speed, and mixed,
Heedless of all, amid the Master's train.
Wherefore the King bade that Udayi go —
Chieftest in all the Court, and faithfullest,
Siddhārtha's playmate in the happier days—
Who as he drew anear the garden, plucked
Blown tufts of tree-wool from the grove and scaled
The entrance of his hearing; thus he came
Safe through the lofty peril of the place.
And told the message of the King, and hers.

Then meekly bowed his head and spake our Lord
Before the people, "Surely I shall go!
It is my duty as it was my will;
Let no man miss to render reverence
To those who lend him life, whereby come means
To live and die no more, but safe attain
Blissful Nirvāna, if ye keep the Law,
Purging past wrong and adding nought thereto,
Complete in love and lovely charities,
Let the King know and let the Princess hear
I take the way forewith." This told, the folk
Of white Kapilavastu and its fields
Made ready for the entrance of their Prince.
At the south gate a bright pavilion rose
With flower-wreathed pillars, and the walls of silk
Wrought on their red and green with woven gold.
Also the roads were laid with scented boughs
Of neem and mango, and full mussuks shed
Sandal and jasmine on the dust: and flags
Fluttered and on the day when he should come
It was ordained how many elephants—
With silver howdahs and their tusks gold-tipped—
Should wait beyond the ford, and where the drums
Should boom "Siddhārtha cometh!" where the lords
Should light and worship, and the dancing girls
Where they should strew their flowers, with dance
and song,
So that the steed he rode might tramp knee-deep
In rose and balsam, and the ways be fair;
While the town rang with music and high joy.
This was ordained, and all men's ears were pricked

Dawn after dawn to catch the first drum's beat
Announcing, "Now he cometh!"

But it fell—

Eager to be before—Yasōdhara
Rode in her litter to the city-walls
Where soared the bright pavilion. All around
A beauteous garden smiled—Nigrōdha named—
Shaded with bel-trees and the green-plumed dates,
New-trimmed and gay with winding walks and banks
Of fruits and flowers; for the southern road
Skirted its lawns, on this hand leaf and bloom.
On that the suburb-huts where base-borns dwelt
Outside the gates, a patient folk and poor,
Whose touch for Kshatriya and priest of Brahm
Were sore defilement Yet those, too, were quick
With expectation, rising ere the dawn
To peer along the road, to climb the trees
At far-off trumpet of some elephant,
Or stir of temple-drum; and when none came,
Busied with lowly chares to please the Prince;
Sweeping their door-stones, setting forth their flags
Stringing the fluted fig-leaves into chains,
New furbishing the Lingam, decking new
Yesterday's faded arch of boughs, but aye
Questioning wayfarers if any noise
Be on the road of great Siddhārtha. These
The princess marked with lovely languid eyes.
Watching, as they, the southward plain, and bent
Like them to listen if the passers gave
News of the path. So fell it she beheld
One slow approaching with his head close shorn,
A yellow cloth over his shoulder cast,

Girt as the hermits are, and in his hand
An earthen bowl, shaped melonwise, the which
Meekly at each hut-door he held a space,
Taking the granted dole with gentle thanks
And all as gently passing where none gave.
Two followed him wearing the yellow robe,
But he who bore the bowl so lordly seemed,
So reverend, and with such a passage moved,
With so commanding presence filled the air,
With such sweet eyes of holiness smote all,
That, as they reached him alms the givers gazed
Awestruck upon his face, and some bent down
In worship, and some ran to fetch fresh gifts,
Grieved to be poor; till slowly group by group,
Children and men and women drew behind
Into his steps, whispering with covered lips,
“Who is he? who? when looked a Rishi thus?”
But as he came with quiet footfall on
Nigh the pavilion, lo! the silken door
Lifted, and, all unveiled, Yasōdhara
Stood in his path crying, “Siddhārtha! Lord!”
With wide eyes streaming and with close-clasped
hands,
Then sobbing fell upon his feet, and lay.

Afterwards, when this weeping lady passed
Into the Noble Paths, and one had prayed
Answer from Buddha wherefore—being vowed
Quit of all mortal passion and the touch,
Flower-soft and conquering, of a woman’s hands—
He suffered such embrace, the Master said:
“The greater beareth with the lesser love

So it may raise it unto easier heights.
Take heed that no man, being 'scaped from bonds,
Vexeth bound souls with boasts of liberty.
Free are ye rather that your freedom spread
By patient winning and sweet wisdom's skill.
Three eras of long toil bring Bodhisāts—
Who will be guides and help this darkling world—
Unto deliverance and the first is named
Of deep 'Resolve', the second of 'Attempt'
The third of 'Nomination'. Lo! I lived
In era of Resolve, desiring good,
Searching for wisdom, but mine eyes were sealed.
Count the grey seeds on yonder castor-clump,
So many rains it is since I was Ram,
A merchant of the coast which looketh south
To Lanka and the hiding-place of pearls:
Also in that far time Yasōdhara
Dwelt with me in our village by the sea,
Tender as now, and Lukshmi was her name.
And I remember how I journeyed thence
Seeking our gain, for poor the household was
And lowly. Not the less with wistful tears
She prayed me that I should not part, nor tempt
Perils by land and water. 'How could love
Leave what it loved?' she wailed; yet, venturing, I
Passed to the Straits, and after storm and toil
And deadly strife with creatures of the deep,
And woes beneath the midnight and the noon,
Searching the wave I won therefrom a pearl
Moonlike and glorious, such as Kings might buy
Emptying their treasury. Then came I glad
Unto mine hills, but over all that land

Famine spread sore; ill was I stead to leave
 In journey home, and hardly reached my door—
 Aching for food—with that white wealth of the sea
 Tied in my girdle. Yet no food was there;
 And on the threshold she for whom I toiled—
 More than myself—lay with her speechless lips
 Nigh unto death for one small gift of grain.
 Then cried I, 'If there be who hath of grain,
 Here is a kingdom's ransom for one life;
 Give Lukshimi bread and take my moonlight pearl."
 Whereat one brought the last of all his hoard,
 Millet—three seers—and clutched the beauteous thing
 But Lukshmi lived, and sighed with gathered life,
 'Lo! thou didst love indeed!' I spent my pea
 Well in that life to comfort heart and mind.
 Else quite uncomforted; but these pure pearls,
 My last great gain, won from a deeper wave—
 The Twelve Nidānas and the Law of Good—
 Cannot be spent, nor dimmed, and most fulfil
 Their perfect beauty being freeliest given.
 For like as is to Meru yonder hill
 Heaped by the little ants, and like as dew
 Dropped in the footmark of a bounding roe
 Unto the shoreless seas, so was that gift
 Unto my present giving; and so love—
 Vaster in being free from toils of sense—
 Was wisest stooping to the weaker heart;
 And so the feet of sweet Yasōdhara
 Passed into peace and bliss, being softly led."

But when the King heard how Siddhārtha came
 Shorn, with the mendicant's sad-coloured cloth,

And stretching out a bowl to gather orts
From base-borns' leavings, wrathful sorrow drove
Love from his heart. Thrice on the ground he spat,
Plucked at his silvered beard, and strode straight forth
Lackeyed by trembling lords. Frowning he clomb
Upon his war-horse, drove the spurs, and dashed.
Angered, through wondering streets and lanes of folk
Scarce finding breath to say, "The King! bow down!"
Ere the loud cavalcade had clattered by:
Which—at the turning by the Temple-wall,
Where the south gate was seen encountered full
A mighty crowd, to every edge of it
Poured fast more people, till the roads were lost.
Blotted by that huge company which thronged
And grew, close following him whose look serene
Met the old King's. Nor lived the father's wrath
Longer than while the gentle eyes of Buddh
Lingered in worship on his troubled brows,
Then downcast sank, with his true knee, to earth
In proud humility. So dear it seemed
To see the Prince, to know him whole, to mark
That glory greater than of earthly state
Crowning his head, that majesty which brought
All men, so awed and silent, in his steps.
Nathless, the King broke forth, "Ends it in this
That great Siddhārtha steals into his realm,
Wrapt in a clout, shorn, sandalled, craving food
Of low-borns, he whose life was a god's?
My son! heir of this spacious power, and heir
Of Kings who did but clap their palms to have
What earth could give or eager service bring?
Thou should'st have come apparelled in thy rank

With shining spear, and tramp of horses and foot
Lo! all my soldiers camped upon the road,
And all my city waited at the gates;
Where hast thou sojourned through these evil years
Whilst thy crowned father mourned? and she, too, ther
Lived as the widows use, foregoing joys;
Never once hearing sound of song or string,
Nor wearing once the festal robe, till now
When in her cloth of gold she welcomes home
A begger-spouse in yellow remnants clad.
Son! why is this?

“My Father!” came reply,
“It is the custom of my race.”

“Thy race,”

Answered the King, “counteth a hundred thrones
From Maha Sammāt, but no deed like this.”

“Not of a mortal line,” the Master said,
“I spake, but of a descent invisible,
The Buddhas who have been and who shall be
Of these am I, and what they did I do,
And this, which now befalls, so fell before,
That at his gate a King in warrior-mail
Should meet his son, a Prince in hermit-weeds;
And that, by love and self-control, being more
Than mightiest Kings in all their puissance,
The appointed helper of the Worlds should bow—
As now do I—and with all lowly love
Proffer, where it is owed for tender debts,
The first-fruits of the treasure he hath brought:
Which now I proffer.”

Then the King amazed
Inquired “What treasure?” and the Teacher took
Meekly the royal palm, and while they paced
Through worshipping streets—the Princess and the King
On either side—he told the things which make
For peace and pureness, those Four noble Truths
Which hold all wisdom as shores shut the seas,
Those eight right Rules whereby who will may walk—
Monarch or slave— upon the perfect Path
That hath its Stages Four and Precepts Eight,
Whereby whoso will live—mighty or mean,
Wise or unlearned, man, woman, young or old —
Shall, soon or late, break from the wheels of life,
Attaining blest Nirvāna. So they came
Into the Palace porch, Suddhōdana
With brows unknit drinking the mighty words,
And in his own hand carrying Buddha’s bowl.
Whilst a new light brightened the lovely eyes
Of sweet Yasōdhara and sunned her tears;
And that night entered they the Way of Peace.

BOOK THE EIGHTH

A BROAD mead spreads by swift Kohāna's bank
At Nagara; five days shall bring a man
In OX-wain thither from Benares' shrines
Eastward and northward journeying. The horns
Of white Himāla look upon the place,
Which all the year is glad with blooms, and girt
By groves made green from the bright streamlet's wave.
Soft are its slopes and cool its fragrant shades,
And holy all the spirit of the spot
Unto this time: the breath of eve comes hushed
Over the tangled thickets, and high heaps
Of carved red stones cloven by root and stem
Of creeping fig, and clad with waving veil
Of leaf and grass. The still snake glistens forth
From crumbled work of lac and cedar-beams
To coil his folds there on deep-graven slabs;
The lizard dwells and darts o'er painted floors
Where Kings have paced; the grey fox litters safe
Under the broken thrones; only the peaks,
And stream, and sloping lawns, and gentle airs
Abide unchanged. All else, like all fair shows
Of life, are fled—for this is where it stood,
The city of Suddhōdana, the hill
Whereon, upon an eve of gold and blue,
At sinking sun Lord Buddha set himself
To teach the Low in hearing of his own.

Lo! ye shall read it in the Sacred Books
How, being met in that glad pleasaunce-place—
A garden in old days with hanging walks,
Fountains, and tanks, and rose-banked terraces
Girdled by gay pavilions and the sweep
Of stately palace-fronts—the Master sate
Eminent, worshipped, all the earnest throng
Watching the opening of his lips to learn
That wisdom which hath made our Asia mild;
Whereto four thousand lakhs of living souls
Witness this day. Upon the King's right hand
He sate, and round were ranged the Sākya Lords
Ananda, Devadatta—all the Court;
Behind stood Seriyut and Mugallan, chief
Of the calm brethren in the yellow garb,
A goodly company. Between his knees
Rahula smiled, with wondering childish eyes
Bent on the awful face, while at his feet
Sate sweet Yasōdhara, her heartaches gone,
Foreseeing that fair love which doth not feed
On fleeting sense, that life which knows no age,
That blessed last of deaths when Death is dead,
His victory and hers. Wherefore she laid
Her hand upon his hands, folding around
Her silver shoulder cloth his yellow-robe,
Nearest in all the world to him whose woe
The Three Worlds waited for. I cannot tell
A small part of the splendid lore which broke
From Buddha's lips: I am a late-come scribe
Who love the Master and his love of men,
And tell this legend, knowing he was wise,

But have not wit to speak beyond the books;
And time hath blurred their script and ancient sense,
Which once was new and mighty, moving all.
A little of that large discourse I know
Which Buddha spake on the soft Indian eve;
So, too, I know it writ that they who heard
Were more—lakhs more—crores more—than could be seen
For all the Devas and the Dead thronged there,
Till Heaven was emptied to the seventh zone
And uttermost dark Hells opened their bars;
Also the daylight lingered past its time
In rose-leaf radiance on the watching peaks,
So that it seemed Night listened in the glens
And Noon upon the mountains; yea! they write,
The Evening stood between them like some maid
Celestial, love-struck, rapt; the smooth-rolled clouds
Her braided hair: the studded stars the pearls
And diamonds of her coronal; the moon
Her forehead-jewel, and the deepening dark
Her woven garments. 'Twas her close-held breath
Which came in scented sighs across the lawns
While our Lord taught, and, while he taught, who
heard—

Though he were stranger in the land, or slave,
High caste or low, come of the Aryan blood
Or Mlech or Jungle-dweller—seemed to hear
What tongue his fellows talked. Nay, outside those
Who crowded by the river, great and small,
The birds and beasts and creeping things—'tis writ—
Had sense of Buddha's vast embracing love
And took the promise of his piteous speech;
So that their lives—prisoned in shape of ape,

Tiger, or deer, shagged bear, jackal, or wolf,
Foul-feeding kite, pearled dove, or peacock gemmed,
Squat toad, or speckled serpent, lizard, bat;
Yea, or of fish fanning the river-waves—
Touched meekly at the skirts of brotherhood
With man who hath less innocence than these
And in mute gladness knew their bondage broke
Whilst Buddha spake these things before the King:—
OM, AMITAYA! measure not with words

Th' Immeasurable ; nor sink the string of thought
Into the Fathomless. Who asks doth err,
Who answers, errs! Say nought!

The Books teach Darkness was, at first of all,
And Brahm, sole meditating in that Night;
Look not for Brahm and the Beginning there!
Nor him, nor any light

Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes.

Or any searcher know by mortal mind;
Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

Stars sweep and question not. This is enough
That life and death and joy and woe abide;
And cause and sequence, and the course of time,
And being's ceaseless tide,

Which, ever changing, runs, linked like a river
By ripples following ripples, fast or slow—
The same yet not the same—from far-off fountain
To where its waters flow

Into the seas. These, steaming to the Sun,
Give the lost wavelets back in cloudy fleece
To trickle down the hills, and glide again;
Having no pause or peace.

This is enough to know, the phantasms are;
The Heavens, Earths, worlds, and changes changing
them,
A mighty whirling wheel of strife and stress
Which none can stay or stem.
Pray not! the Darkness will not brighten! Ask
Nought from the Silence, for it cannot speak!
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
Ah! Brothers, Sisters! seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
Each man his prison makes.
Each hath such lordship as the loftiest ones;
Nay, for with Powers above, around, below,
As with all flesh and whatsoever lives,
Act maketh joy and woe.
What hath been bringeth what shall be, and is,
Worse—better—last for first and first for last;
The Angels in the Heavens of Gladness reap
Fruits of a holy past:
The devils in the underworlds wear out
Deeds that were wicked in an age gone by:
Nothing endures: fair virtues waste with time,
Foul sins grow purged thereby.
Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince
For gentle worthiness and merit won;
Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.
Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
And sink it lower than the worm or gnat;
The end of many myriad lives is this,
The end of myriads that.

Only, while turns this wheel invisible,
No pause, no peace, no staying-place can be;
Who mounts may fall, who falls will mount; the
spokes
Go round unceasingly !

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If ye lay bound upon the wheel of change,
And no way were of breaking from the chain,
The Heart of boundless Being is a curse,
The Soul of Things fell Pain.

Ye are not bound ! the Soul of Things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest;
Stronger than woe is will: that which was Good
Doth pass to Better—Best.

I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers' tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,
Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty!
Ho ! ye who suffer ! know

Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
None other holds you that ye live and die,
And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
Its spokes of agony,

Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.

Behold, I show you Truth ! Lower than hell,
Higher than Heaven, outside the utmost stars,
Farther than Brahm doth dwell,

Before beginning, and without an end,

As space eternal and as surety sure,
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,
Only its laws endure.

This is its touch upon the blossomed rose,
The fashion of its hand shaped lotus-leaves;
In dark soil and the silence of the seeds
The robe of Spring it weaves;
That is its painting on the glorious clouds,
And these its emeralds on the peacock's train;
It hath its stations in the stars; its slaves
In lightning, wind, and rain,
Out of the dark it wrought the heart of man,
Out of dull shells the pheasant's pencilled neck:
Ever at toil, it brings to loveliness
All ancient wrath and wreck.
The grey eggs in the golden sun-bird's nest
Its treasures are, the bees' six-sided cell
Its honey-pot; the ant wots of its ways,
The white doves know them well.
It spreadeth forth for flight the eagle's wings
What time she beareth home her prey; it sends
The she-wolf to her cubs; for unloved things
It findeth food and friends.
It is not marred nor stayed in any use
All liketh it; the sweet white milk it brings
To mothers' breasts; it brings the white drops, too,
Wherewith the young snake stings.
The ordered music of the marching orbs
It makes in viewless canopy of sky;
In deep abyss of earth it hides up gold,
Sards, sapphires, lazuli.
Ever and ever fetchiug secrets forth,
It sitteth in the green of forest-glades
Nursing strange seedlings at the cedar's root,
Devising leaves, blooms, blades.

It slayeth and it saveth, nowise moved
 Except unto the working out of doom;
 Its threads are Love and Life; and Death and Pain
 The shuttles of its loom.
 It maketh and unmaketh, mending all;
 What it hath wrought is better than had been;
 Slow grows the splendid pattern that it plans
 Its wistful hands between.
 This is its work upon the things ye see:
 The unseen things are more; men's hearts and minds,
 The thoughts, of peoples and their ways and wills,
 Those, too, the great Law binds.
 Unseen it helpeth ye with faithful hands,
 Unheard it speaketh stronger than the storm.
 Pity and Love are man's because long stress
 Moulded blind mass to form.
 It will not be contemned of any one;
 Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;
 The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
 The hidden ill with pains.
 It seeth everywhere and marketh all:
 Do right—it recompenseth! do one wrong—
 The equal retribution must be made,
 Though DHARMA tarry long.
 It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
 Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
 Times are as nought, to-morrow it will judge,
 Or after many days.
 By this the slayer's knife did stab himself;
 The unjust judge hath lost his own defender;
 The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief
 And spoiler rob, to render.

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!

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The Books say well, my Brothers! each man's life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!
So is a man's fate born.

He cometh, reaper of the things he sowed,
Sesamum, corn so much cast in past birth;
And so much weed and poison-stuff, which mar
Him and the aching earth.

If he shall labour rightly, rooting these,
And planting wholesome seedlings where they grew
Fruitful and fair and clean the ground shall be,
And rich the harvest due.

If he who liveth, learning whence woe springs,
Endureth patiently, striving to pay
His utmost debt for ancient evils done
In Love and Truth alway;

If making none to lack, he thoroughly purge
The lie and lust of self forth from his blood;
Suffering all meekly, rendering for offence
Nothing but grace and good;

If he shall day by day dwell merciful,
Holy and just and kind and true; and rend
Desire from where it clings with bleeding roots,
Till love of life have end:

He—dying—leaveth as the sum of him
A life-count closed, whose ills are dead and quit,
Whose good is quick and mighty, far and near,
So that fruits follow it.

No need hath such to live as ye name life
That which began in him when he began
Is finished: he hath wrought the purpose through
Of what did make him Man.

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace; nor deaths
And lives recur. He goes

Unto NIRVANA. He is one with Life,
Yet lives not. He is blest ceasing to be.
OM MANI PADME, OM! the Dewdrop slips
Into the shining sea!

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This is the doctrine of the KARMA. Learn!

Only when all the dross of sin is quit,
Only when life dies like a white flame spent
Death dies along with it.

Say not "I am," "I was," or "I shall be,"

Think not ye pass from house to house of flesh
Like travellers who remember and forget,
Ill-lodged or well-lodged. Fresh

Issues upon the Universe that sum
 Which is the lattermost of lives. It makes
 Its habitation as the worm spins silk
 And dwells therein. It takes
 Function and substance as the snake's egg hatched
 Takes scale and fang; as feathered reed-seeds fly
 O'er rock and loam and sand, until they find
 Their marsh and multiply.
 Also it issues forth to help or hurt.
 When Death the bitter murderer doth smite,
 Red roams the unpurged fragment of him, driven
 On winds of plague and blight.
 But when the mild and just die, sweet airs breathe;
 The world grows richer, as if desert-stream
 Should sink away to sparkle up again
 Purer, with broader gleam;
 So merit won winneth the happier age
 Which by demerit halteth short of end;
 Yet must this Law of Love reign King of all
 Before the Kalpas end.
 What lets?—Brothers! the Darkness lets! which breeds
 Ignorance, mazed whereby ye take these shows
 For true, and thirst to have, and, having, cling
 To lusts which work you woes.
 Ye that will tread the Middle Road, whose course
 Bright Reason traces and soft Quiet smoothes;
 Ye who will take the high Nirvāna-way,
 List the Four Noble Truths.
 The First Truth is of *Sorrow*. Be not mocked!
 Life which ye prize is long drawn agony:
 Only its pains abide; its pleasures are
 As birds which light and fly.

Ache of the birth, ache of the helpless days,
 Ache of hot youth and ache of manhood's prime;
 Ache of the chill grey years and choking death,
 These fill your piteous time.

Sweet is fond Love, but funeral-flames must kiss
 The breasts which pillow and the lips which cling;
 Gallant is warlike Might, but vultures pick
 The joints of chief and King.

Beauteous is Earth, but all its forest-broods
 Plot mutual slaughter, hungering to live;
 Of sapphire are the skies, but when men cry
 Famished, no drops they give.

Ask of the sick, the mourners, ask of him
 who tottereth on his staff, lone and forlorn,
 "Liketh thee life?"—these say the babe is wise
 That weepeth, being born.

The Second Truth is *Sorrow's Cause*. What grief
 Springs of itself and springs not of Desire?
 Senses and things perceived mingle and light
 Passion's quick spark of fire:

So flameth Trishna, lust and thirst of things.
 Eager ye cleave to shadows, dote on dreams;
 A false Self in the midst ye plant, and make
 A world around which seems;

Blind to the heights beyond, deaf to the sound
 Of sweet airs breathed from far past Indra's sky;
 Dumb to the summons of the true life kept
 For him who false puts by.

So grow the strifes and lusts which make earth's war,
 So grieve poor cheated hearts and flow salt tears;
 So wax the passions, envies, angers, hates;
 So years chase blood-stained years

With wild red feet So, where the grain should grow
Spreads the birān-weed with its evil root
And poisonous blossoms; hardly good seeds find
Soil where to fall and shoot;

And, drugged with poisonous drink, the soul departs,
And, fierce with thirst to drink, Karma returns;
Sense-struck again the sodden Self begins,
And new deceits it earns.

The Third is *Sorrow's Ceasing*. This is peace
To conquer love of self and lust of life,
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,
To still the inward strife;

For love to clasp Eternal Beauty close;
For glory to be Lord of self; for pleasure
To live beyond the gods; for countless wealth
To lay up lasting treasure

Of perfect service rendered, duties done
In charity, soft speech, and stainless days:
These riches shall not fade away in life,
Nor any death dispraise.

Then Sorrow ends, for Life and Death have ceased;
How should lamps flicker when their oil is spent?
The old sad count is clear, the new is clean;
Thus hath a man content.

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The Fourth Truth is *The Way*. It openeth wide,
Plain for all feet to tread, easy and near,
The *Noble Eightfold Path*; it goeth straight
To peace and refuge. Hear!

Manifold tracks lead to yon sister-peaks
 Around whose snows the gilded clouds are curled;
 By steep or gentle slopes the climber comes
 Where breaks that other world.

Strong limbs may dare the rugged road which storms
 Soaring and perilous, the mountain's breast;
 The weak must wind from slower ledge to ledge,
 With many a place of rest.

So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
 By lower or by upper heights it goes.
 The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
 Will reach the sunlit snows.

The First good level is *Right Doctrine*. Walk
 In fear of Dharma, shunning all offence;
 In heed of Karma, which doth make man's fate;
 In lordship over sense.

The Second is *Right Purpose*. Have good-will
 To all that lives, letting unkindness die
 And greed and wrath; so that your lives be made
 Like soft airs passing by.

The Third is *Right Discourse*. Govern the lips
 As they were palace-doors, the King within;
 Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words
 Which from that presence win.

The Fourth is *Right Behaviour*. Let each act
 Assail a fault or help a merit grow;
 Like threads of silver seen through crystal beads
 Let love through good deeds show.

Four higher roadways be. Only those feet
 May tread them which have done with earthly things,
Right Purity, Right Thought, Right Loneliness.
Right Rapture. Spread no wings

For Sunward flight, thou soul with unplumed vans!
Sweet is the lower air, and safe and known
The homely levels; only strong ones leave
The nest each makes his own.

Dear is the love, I know, of Wife and Child;
Pleasant the friends and pastimes of your years,
Fruitful of good Life's gentle charities;
Firm-set, though false, its fears.

Live—ye who must—such lives as live on these;
Make golden stairways of your weakness; rise
By daily sojourn with those phantasies
To lovelier verities,

So shall ye pass to clearer heights and find
Easier ascents and lighter loads of sins,
And larger will to burst the bonds of sense,
Entering the Path. Who wins

To such commencement hath the *First Stage* touched,
He knows the noble Truths, the Eightfold Road;
By few or many steps such shall attain
NIRVANA'S blest abode.

Who standeth at the *Second Stage*, made free
From doubts, delusions, and the inward strife,
Lord of all lusts, quit of the priests and books,
Shall live but one more life.

Yet onward lies the *Third Stage*: purged and pure
Hath grown the stately spirit here, hath risen
To love all living things in perfect peace.
His life at end, life's prison

Is broken. Nay, there are who surely pass
Living and visible to utmost goal
By *Fourth Stage* of the Holy ones—the Buddhs—
And they of stainless soul.

Lo! like fierce foes slain by some warrior,
Ten sins along these Stages lie in dust,
The Love of Self, False Faith and Doubt are three,
Two more Hatred and Lust.

Who of these Five is conqueror hath trod
Three stages out of Four: yet there abide
The Love of Life on earth, Desire for Heaven,
Self-Praise, Error, and Pride.

As one who stands on yonder snowy horn
Having naught o'er him but the boundless blue,
So, these sins being slain, the man is come
NIRVANA'S verge unto.

Him the Gods envy from their lower seats;
Him the Three Worlds in ruin should not shake;
All life is lived for him, all deaths are dead;
Karma will no more make

New houses. Seeking nothing, he gains all;
Foregoing self, the Universe grows "I":
If any teach NIRVANA is to cease,
Say unto such they lie.

If any teach NIRVANA is to live,
Say unto such they err; not knowing this,
Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,
Nor lifeless, timeless, bliss.

Enter the path! There is no grief like Hate!
No pains like passion, no deceit like sense!
Enter the path! far hath he gone whose foot
Treads down one fond offence.

Enter the Path! There spring the healing streams
Quenching all thirst! there bloom th' immortal flowers
Carpeting all the way with joy! there throng
Swiftest and sweetest hours!

More is the treasure of the Law than gems;
Sweeter than comb its sweetness; its delights
Delightful past compare. Thereby to live
Hear the *Five Rules* aright:—

Kill not—for pity's sake—and lest ye slay
The meanest thing upon its upward way.

Give freely and receive, but take from none
By greed, or force, or fraud, what is his own.

Bear not false witness, slander not, nor lie;
Truth is the speech of inward purity.

Shun drugs and drinks which work the wit abuse;
Clear minds, clean bodies, need no Sōma juice.

Touch not thy neighbour's wife, neither commit
Sins of the flesh unlawful and unfit.

These words the Master spake of duties due
To father, mother, children, fellows, friends;
Teaching how such as may not swiftly break
The clinging chains of sense—whose feet are weak
To tread the higher road—should order so
This life of flesh that all their hither days
Pass blameless in discharge of charities
And first true footfalls in the Eightfold Path;
Living pure, reverent, patient, pitiful;
Loving all things which live even as themselves:
Because what falls for ill is fruit of ill
Wrought in the past, and what falls well of good;
And that by howsomuch the householder
Purgeth himself of self and helps the world,
By so much happier comes he to next stage,
In so much bettered being. This he spake;

As also long before, when our Lord walked
 By Rāgajriha in the bamboo-grove:
 For on a dawn he walked there and beheld
 The householder Singāla newly bathed,
 Bowing himself with bare head to the earth,
 To Heaven, and all four quarters; while he threw
 Rice, red and white, from both hands. "Wherefore thus
 Bowest thou, Brother?" said the Lord; and he,
 "It is the way, Great Sir! our fathers taught
 At every dawn before the toil begins,
 To hold off evil from the sky above
 And earth beneath, and all the winds which blow."
 Then the World-honoured spake: "Scatter not rice,
 But offer loving thought and acts to all:
 To parents as the East, where rises light;
 To teachers as the South, whence rich gifts come;
 To wife and children as the West, where gleam
 Colours of love and calm, and all days end;
 To friends and kinsmen and all men as North;
 To humblest living things beneath, to Saints
 And Angels and the blessed Dead above;
 So shall all evil be shut off, and so
 The six main quarters will be safely kept."

But to his Own, Them of the yellow robe —
 Those who, as wakened eagles, soar with scorn
 From life's low vale, and wing towards the Sun—
 To these he taught the Ten Observances
 The *Dasa-Sil*, and how a mendicant
 Must know the *Three Doors* and the *Triple Thoughts*;
 The *Sixfold States of mind*: the *Fivefold Powers*;
 The *Eight High Gates of Purity*; the *Modes*

Of understanding; Iddhi; Upeksha;
The *Five Great Meditations*, which are food
Sweeter than Amrit for the holy soul;
The *Jhanas* and the *Three Chief Refuges*.
Also he taught his Own how they should dwell,
How live, free from the snares of love and wealth;
What eat and drink and carry—three plain cloths,—
Yellow, of stitched stuff, worn with shoulder bare—
A girdle, almsbowl, strainer. Thus he laid
The great foundations of our Sangha well,
That noble Order of the Yellow Robe
Which to this day standeth to help the World.

So all that night he spake, teaching the Law
And on no eyes fell sleep—for they who heard
Rejoiced with tireless joy. Also the King,
When this was finished, rose upon his throne
And with bared feet bowed low before his Son
Kissing his hem, and said, “Take me, O Son!
Lowest and least of all thy Company.”
And sweet Yasōdhara, all happy now,—
Cried “Give to Rāhula—thou Blessed One!
The Treasure of the Kingdom of thy Word
For his inheritance.” Thus passed these Three
Into the Path.

Here endeth what I write
Who love the Master for his love of us.
A little knowing, little have I told
Touching the Teacher and the Ways of Peace.
Forty-five rains thereafter showed he those
In many lands and many tongues, and gave

Our Asia Light, that still is beautiful,
Conquering the world with spirit of strong grace:
All which is written in the holy Books,
And where he passed, and what proud Emperors
Carved his sweet words upon the rocks and caves:
And how—in fulness of the times—it fell
The Buddha died; the great Tathāgato,
Even as a man amongst men, fulfilling all:
And how a thousand thousand lakhs since then
Have trod the Path which leads whither he went
Unto NIRVANA, where the Silence lives.

AH ! BLESSED LORD ! OH, HIGH DELIVERER !
FORGIVE THIS FEEBLE SCRIPT, WHICH DOTTH THEE WRONG,
MEASURING WITH LITTLE WIT THY LOFTY LOVE.
AH ! LOVER ! BROTHER ! GUIDE ! LAMP OF THE LAW !
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THY NAME AND THEE !
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THY LAW OF GOOD !
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THY ORDER ! OM !
THE DEW IS ON THE LOTUS !—RISE, GREAT SUN !
AND LIFT MY LEAF AND MIX ME WITH THE WAVE.
OM MANI PADME HUM, THE SUNRISE COMES !
THE DEWDROP SLIPS INTO THE SHINING SEA !

THE END

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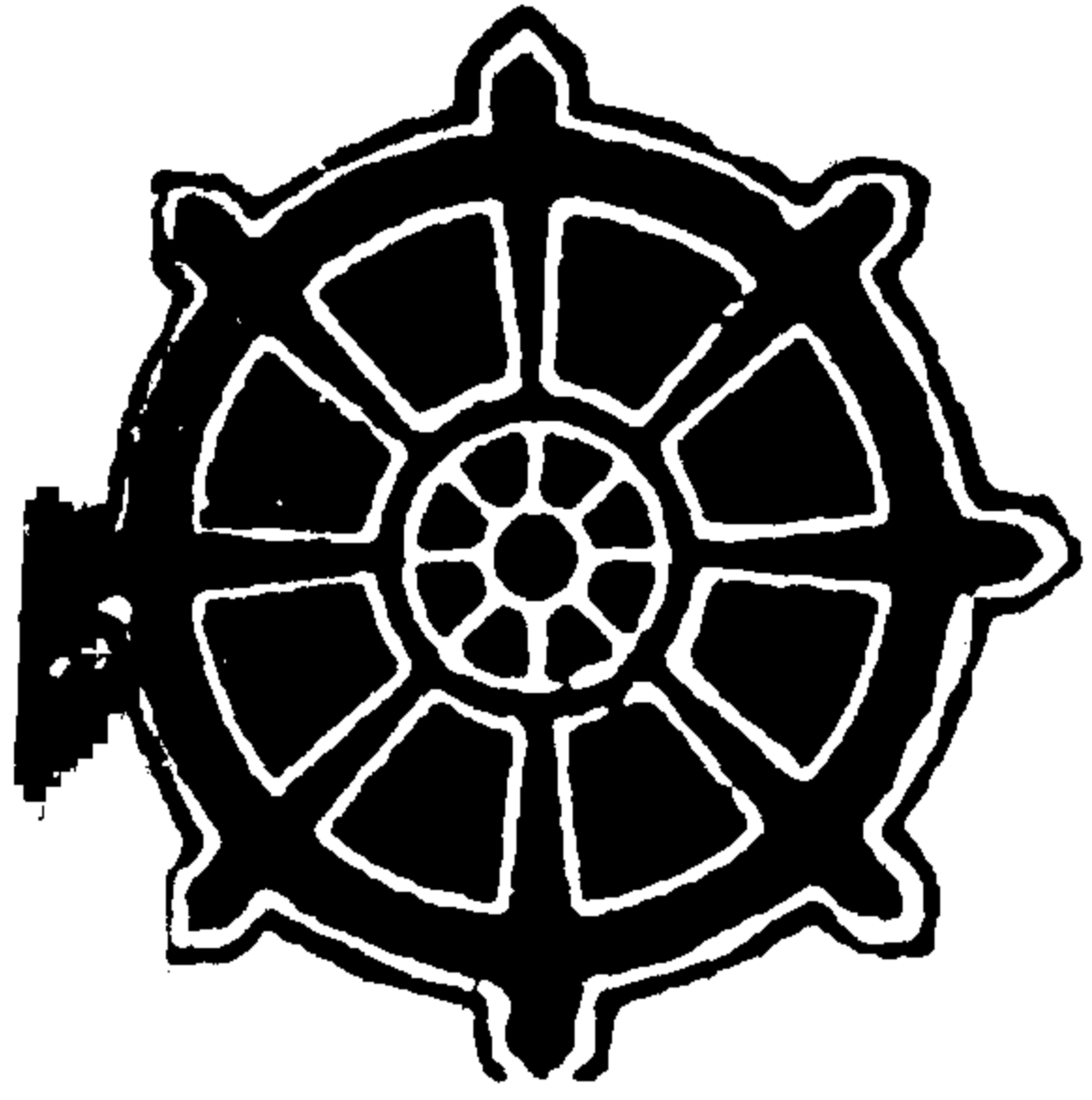
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Women in Early Buddhist Literature

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Women in Early Buddhist Literature

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President of the Pali Text Society

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C E Y L O N

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Lecture to the
All-Ceylon Buddhist Women's Association
Colombo, 18th January 1961

14670

WOMEN IN EARLY BUDDHIST LITERATURE

Following a true tradition of Buddhist teaching, more will have to be left unsaid here than can possibly be said. The subject of women is large; and the contents of the Pali Canon on which this article is based are vast. One can make therefore only a relatively small selection of matters that I hope may prove to be of some interest.

Women are often the main upholders and supporters of a religion or faith or movement. This was certainly so with Buddhism when it was at its beginnings, and hence we are able to find a good deal about them in those portions of the Pali Canon known as the Vinaya-piṭaka and the Sutta-piṭaka. The Vinaya, which comprises the rules and regulations for monastic discipline, contains two sections: the Bhikkhuni-vibhanga and the Bhikkhunikhanda, both of which deal with the conduct nuns, or bhikkhunīs, and female probationers should observe, and with the legislation that was laid down for the proper management of their Order—now unfortunately extinct. In the Buddha's times however it seems that quantities of women became nuns, so as to seek for peace, inner and outer, self-mastery, the light of knowledge, and so on, and perhaps especially for various forms of that freedom which lies at the very heart and centre of the Buddha's Teaching: "As this great ocean has but one taste, that of salt, so has this Dhamma but one taste, that of freedom". The ardour and the energy of these early nuns,

whether they were active in preaching the Word of the Buddha or were absorbed in contemplation and meditation, come through to us in three portions of the Suttapiṭaka that are specially devoted to the verses such nuns are held to have uttered, mostly at the time they attained arahantship or won a vision of nibbāna. There is, first and most important and unique in any literature, the *Therīgāthā*, consisting entirely of sets of verses of varying length attributed to seventy three women who became Therīs or Elder nuns. Then there is the Bhikkhuni - saṃyutta, a part of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, where other verses are collected that are ascribed to ten of these women Elders; and thirdly, there are in the *Apadāna* biographies in verse of forty nuns said to have been contemporary with the Buddha—as against 547 biographies of monks and to most of whom verses are attributed also in the *Therīgāthā*.

One cannot say therefore that nuns have been neglected in early Buddhist literature. With the exception of the *Suttanipāta*, I think they are mentioned in every Pali canonical work, even in the *Theragāthā* (ver.1257), the Anthology of verses attributed to monks who were Elders. Against this, nowhere in the great Nikāyas of the Sutta-piṭaka: the Dīgha, Majjhima, Saṃyutta or Anguttara, is it possible to find any large section where lay-women devotees are the central figures. It is true there are records of long conversations held between the Buddha and this or that woman lay-follower. For example, with Visākhā, the most eminent and generous benefactor and supporter of the Order of monks and nuns (A.i. 26), to whom the Buddha granted eight boons: that as long as she lived she might be allowed to give robes to the members of the Order for the rainy season; food for monks coming into the town of Sāvatthī;

food for those leaving it; food for the sick; food for those that wait on the sick; medicines for the sick; a constant supply of rice-gruel for any needing it; and bathing robes for the nuns (Vin.i.290 ff.). Then too there was Queen Mallikā, chief consort of King Pasenadi of Kosala, with whom the Buddha converses now and again; and Nakulamātā, the pious and devoted wife of Nakulapitā. And this is typical: such records exist but they are scattered through the Vinaya and the Nikāyas. These, then, have to be searched and carefully sifted in order to build up any reliable picture of the position held by lay-women at the time and the place to which this literature purports to refer.

And, broadly speaking, this refers to India in the 6th Century B.C. where the Buddha Gotama was living during the forty-five years that he was propounding his Teaching on suffering and the escape from it, which then, and for all the centuries since has so deeply affected the lives of millions of people down to the present day.

What with the nuns and the monks, the women lay-devotees and the men-devotees, it is not possible in speaking of women in Early Buddhist literature to keep separate these component parts of the fourfold community that grew up around the Buddha, because they were not separate in life. The sexes were not segregated, and though naturally nuns had their quarters apart from those of the monks, they yet had to carry out some of their official acts, such as ordination, in conjunction with an Order of monks. Nor was the cloister cut off from the world. On the contrary, there was much intermingling. The laity gave almsfood to the monks and nuns, and often to the other sectarians who

abounded in India at that date, either at the doors of their houses or they invited them to come in for their one meal a day. In return, the monks and the nuns, both of whom could claim some great preachers, taught Dhamma to the laity, thus giving them the gift that excels all others. This freedom of movement enjoyed by the nuns has a parallel with and is perhaps connected with the freedom of movement that was the happy lot of the laywomen who knew not the cramping and enervating system of purdah, though their life might contain other disadvantages.

In India, as I see it, at the time when the Buddha was living and teaching there, women were emerging into a relatively free state after they had suffered a certain amount, but perhaps an over-estimated amount, of ignominy, of obedience and subservience to men, and exclusion from this or that worldly occupation or religious education or observance, all of which is generally made out to have been their portion in pre-Buddhist Indian epochs. We have to be a little on our guard against such statements. For example, there is no evidence that women were debarred from taking part in the great debates on philosophical matters that were a feature of Indian life at that time. Famous in the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad*, for example, is the lady Gārgi who pushed a debate with Yājñavalkya to a point beyond which as he told her, no further questions should be asked, for they hardly admitted of an answer (III.6)—a distinction no male questioner achieved. A somewhat comparable discussion or “minor catechism” is recorded in the Pali *Majjhima-Nikāya* (i.304). But here it is the man, the lay-devotee Visākha, who, when he asked his former wife, who had become the nun Dhammadinnā, what is the counterpart of nibbāna, was told by her that this question goes too

far and is beyond the scope of an answer. Dhammadinnā knew very well what she was talking about and was outstanding as the most eminent among the Buddhist nuns who were speakers on Dhamma (A.i,25). We too have to believe her.

Leaving the realms of high philosophy, we must now look at what is regarded as woman's proper sphere, namely the home. We have to remember that in India women as mothers had always commanded much veneration and gratitude. By bearing a son she had done what she could and what had been expected of her to ensure the continuance of the family line, and had provided for the due performance of the "rites of the ancestors". Only a son could carry these out; they were thought to be very necessary for bringing peace and serenity to the father, and the grandfather too, after they had died, and so to prevent them from returning as ghosts to harry the family. If a woman had no son, she might be superseded by a second and a third wife or even turned out of the house.

But with the coming of Buddhism, the traditional structure and functions of society undoubtedly underwent some alterations. So numerous were the followers of this new Teaching and so rapidly did it spread, that they may be held responsible for various not unimportant social changes, such as a reduction in size and frequency of the vast animal-sacrifices the brahmins had already engaged in for centuries — though even now these have not been abolished entirely from India. Buddhism teaches that sacrifice is internal: a composure of mind to be gained by abandoning all ideas that anything in the world is "mine" or "I" or my self. For, "by things without, none is made

pure, so the wise say" (S.i.169). So the old-time sacrifices came to be derided and debased:

"The sacrifices called The Horse, The Man,
The "Throwing of the Peg," the "Drinking Rite,"
The "House Unbarred," with all their cruelty
Have little fruit. Where goats and sheep and kine
Of divers sorts are sacrificed, go not
Those sages great who've travelled the right way.

But sacrifices free from cruelty
Which men keep up for the profit of the clan,
Where goats and sheep and kine of divers sorts
Are never sacrificed — to such as these
Go sages great who've travelled the right way"

(A. ii. 42-43, S. i. 76).

The noble lady, Queen Mallikā took a very strong line and on one occasion was able to dissuade her husband King Pasenadi from holding a great animal sacrifice which had been recommended to him by a brahman as a means for saving his life. She was horrified, and exclaimed: "Where did you ever hear of the saving of life for one by the death of another? Just because a stupid brahman told you to, why must you plunge the whole populace in suffering?" (DhA. ii. 8; cf. Jā. i. 335). For not only would the animals be slain and lost to their owners thereby endangering their means of livelihood; but from a Buddhist point of view such a contravention of true Dhamma and its first moral injunction, *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*, would prolong the sacrificer's bondage to the wheel of saṃsāra: "Long is saṃsāra for fools who do not know true Dhamma" (Dhp. 60).

The mention of saṃsāra brings us almost inevitably to kamma, that inexorable impersonal force by which beings are bound to the ever-rolling wheel of saṃsāra. Not that kamma was a new concept introduced by Buddhism. It was age-old, but Buddhism made it very central and illuminated it particularly in relation to "this long long faring-on and circling-on" of beings born only to die and be born again and yet again so long as "ignorance," the root cause of all suffering and anguish, persists. It is held that after the dissolution of his body here the so-called "being," will be followed by a new birth and again new ones after that, all according to kamma; that is according to what the "being" had done, whether of good or bad, both in this last birth and in anterior ones, until all the effects of his volitional deeds of body, speech and thought have worn to their karmic end. The effects of good deeds and bad deeds work in independent series, and are not to be weighed or balanced against one another, or wiped out the one by the other: "As is the seed that is sown, so is the fruit that is gathered. The doer of good (gathers) good, of evil, evil" (S.i.227). Or again, to take another quotation at random, and one that is as much Upanishadic as Buddhist in sentiment: "The uprising of a being is from what has come to be; by what he has done, by that he uprises" (M.i.390). In a word, he, "the being" is responsible for his own saṃsāra — not his mother or his father, or brother or sister, or his friends and acquaintances. So it is he himself who will experience the ripening of the deed he himself did.

All this implies that, for women, there was a lessening, an easing of the pious hope that a child could be got by prayers offered to some divinity such as the moon, or by

circumambulating a tree. For the workings of kamma will not be affected by such devices. This is a reason why Buddhism had no truck with rites at all. They are a fetter, to be avoided and feared, and useless against the tremendous force of kamma, whether their aim were to give a woman a child or purify a person of his wrong-doings. As the nun Puṇṇā so succinctly observed, if bathing and ablution in rivers and wells could purify a person, then fishes and crocodiles, turtles and water-snakes would be purified and go straight to heaven (Thig. 241).

So, the insistence on impersonal kamma spelt a decrease in a wife's anxiety to give birth to a son, because it was no longer held that the future state of the father or grandfather depended on the obsequies for the departed ancestors that had devolved formerly on the sons. Rather, their future state was now shown to depend solely on the volitional acts they themselves had done. Therefore, as a performer of funeral or ancestral rites a son no longer had a part to play. Nor, apparently, and this was another innovation, would it be any great catastrophe if the family lineage were vested in a woman, at any rate for the time being. On the Western Coast of India there exists even today a very old class of brahmans called Nairs according to whose traditions the inheritance always passes through the female. At all events, the idea, however novel, that after all sons were not a vital necessity but that a daughter might be every whit as acceptable and could also carry on the family line, was early recognised, and perhaps even introduced by, the Buddha. The following words are ascribed to him when he was trying to comfort his friend King Pasenadi, wretched and disappointed on hearing that his Queen Mallikā, had just given birth to a daughter:

“A woman-child, O Lord of men, may prove
Even a better offspring than a male.
For she may grow up wise and virtuous,
Her husband’s mother rev’rencing, true wife.
The child she may bear may do great deeds,
And rule great realms, yea, such a son
Of noble wife becomes his country’s guide”
(S.i.86).

Not that I think in pre-Buddhist India there had been any consistent ill-treatment of little girls or injustice shown to them for the very reason that they were not boys. Female infanticide, if it obtained at all, must have been extremely rare. It had not the support of custom or tradition, Macdonell and Keith going so far as to say: “There is no proof that the Vedic Indians (roughly 2,000 B.C.) practised exposure of female children”.¹ Besides, the teaching of *ahimsā*, non-harming, non-injury, so ancient that its beginnings are lost in the mists of time, held sway, even if in moderation, over the whole of India. It was a teaching much accentuated by the Jains who were precursors of the Buddha and also contemporary with him. Though they were among his greatest rivals, he would not have wished to go against them on such a point or thought a different teaching possible. And they had the backing of public opinion. *Ahimsā* certainly would not have tolerated the murder of a defenceless human being. From this teaching the first of the five *sīla* or precepts for ethical conduct, drew its strength for Jain and Buddhist alike: the abstention from killing or harming any living creature was binding on monks and nuns during the whole of their monastic careers, and on the

1. *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, ii.114.

laity too. Moreover, the economic conditions prevailing in India from the 7th to the 4th Centuries B.C. would appear to have been quite flourishing enough to allow for the survival of little girls. And finally, as the Buddha spoke out strongly against blood-sacrifice, so he would not have permitted the sacrifice of children, boys or girls, though indeed for the purposes of infant-sacrifice boys were apparently usually the victims in non-Buddhist India. Even as late as towards the end of last century some little boys were immured in the stone-work of the new bridge over the Hooghly river near Calcutta as an offering to the gods to protect the bridge, and the human beings using it.

If sons were born to courtesans they did however run a certain risk of being murdered. For example, Sālavatī had been established as the courtesan of Rājagaha by the urban council. When she gave birth to a son, she told her slave-woman to put him in a winnowing-basket and throw him away on a rubbish heap (Vin.i.269). On the other hand, the courtesan Ambapālī who was to become famous as one of the most loyal and generous supporters of Buddhist monks (D.ii.88), and the lady known as Abhaya's mother each had a son who became a monk. When this latter lady had heard her son preach she left the world and entered the Buddhist Order of nuns. Daughters born to courtesans do not appear to have been regarded as a disaster, and we hear of at least two who followed the same calling as their mothers, though later they became nuns and gained arahantship (Thīg. 39, SnA. 244).

In those days it was customary for at all events a brahman to embark on the final or "forest" stage of his life only when he was fairly well advanced in years. He would

then leave his wife as mother-in-law in his eldest son's house, Women must have been prepared for this eventuality. But, with the coming of Buddhism, there was no longer need for a man to wait to "make his soul" until he was approaching the end of his life, then to seek the solitude of the forest. For once the Order of Buddhist monks had been established, and that was very early in the Buddha's teaching life, it was ruled that a man as young as 20 years, but not less, could be fully ordained, and at the age of fifteen he could leave his home and go into monastic homelessness as a novice. In both cases he had to have the consent of his mother and father, sometimes given very reluctantly. In a way, then, the establishment of the Order of monks no less than that of nuns might be regarded as a new menace to the happiness of women. For now there was nothing to stop their sons and daughters from taking up the "religious life" while they were still quite young.

At the beginning of his career the Buddha had been accused of being a breaker of homes, of turning wives into widows and rendering mothers childless. For this new menace, if we may thus speak of the twofold Order, did not merely swallow up children. A woman might now lose a young husband to the monks, but generally only after he had obtained her consent. Yet, how often, one may ask, was this withheld? And how often did not women, like Cāpā, the daughter of a trapper, hope that the son to whom she had given birth would save her from desertion by her husband :

"And this child blossom, O my husband, see
Thy gift to me — now surely thou wilt not
Forsake her who hath borne a son to thee?" (Thīg. 300).

I think it was perhaps a sign of the changing times that if a husband, no longer dependent on a son for his funeral obsequies since they no longer mattered, felt a strong enough pull to leave the world and become a monk, nothing could restrain him, even as nothing had restrained the Bodhisatta Siddhattha who became the Buddha Gotama from leaving his home and wife and child at the age of 29 to seek for the cause of *dukkha*, anguish or suffering, and the escape from it.

In the same way, neither the thought of his son nor of Cāpā's beauty could keep back her husband Upaka from going forth to find the Lord, though it is true he was a Naked Ascetic and not a typical householder. He was adamant on the point. His may have been a case of a husband's exerting his authority, *issariya*, against which not all the five powers of which a woman may be possessed can prevail: beauty (which Cāpā had), wealth, relations (her father was still alive), a son (which she had), and ethical conduct, *sīla*. It is said that a woman endowed with these five powers may dwell with confidence as mistress of the house, get the better of her husband and keep him under her thumb (S.iv.246), but that if she is lacking in these powers the family may not let her stay in the house, but may drive her forth and expel her (S. iv. 248), a fate from which only the possession of moral habit could in theory save her.

On the expulsion of the wife, it may be assumed that the husband was then free to take another wife, even as kings, whether or not they were followers of the Buddha's Teaching, might have a number of consorts. Certainly women too could re-marry, as is seen from the strange

history of Isidāsī who married at least four husbands one after the other and for some reason was displeasing to them all — a reason she attributed to an evil deed she did seven births ago. She then entered the Order of nuns.

Another fear that a woman may have felt on marrying was that of a co-wife, one who may or may not have been installed in the house already. Isidāsī had such an experience with her last husband:

“... Another wife he had,
A virtuous dame of parts and of repute,
Enamoured of her mate. And thus I brought
Discord and enmity within that house”

(Thīg. 446).

Thus both wives suffered.

Kisāgotamī too, one of the most widely known of all the Therīs, was a woman who had endured much sorrow :

“Woeful is woman’s lot, hath he declared,
Charioteer of men to be tamed :
Woeful when sharing home with hostile wives,
Woeful when giving birth in bitter pain,
Some seeking death or e’er they suffer twice,
Piercing the throat; the delicate poison take”

(Thīg. 216-217),

But the risk of marriage had to be run, and was still the most normal career open to a young woman. As it is said :
“A woman’s goal is a man, her ambition is for adornment,
her resolve is for a child, her desire is to be without a rival,
her fulfilment is authority” (A, iii. 363).

We have seen that a husband might desert his wife or throw her out of the house. Further, her relations, even against her will, might take away a wife from the husband she was fond of and given her to another man (M.ii.109). A drastic case is recorded where a husband cut his wife in two rather than let her suffer this fate, and he then committed suicide. This is one of several episodes brought together to show that in the Buddhist view grief and suffering rather than happiness and joy are born of affection.

Owing to a woman's rather uncertain position after her marriage, though, except for the co-wives perhaps no more uncertain than in our own days, it behoved a girl to reflect well before her marriage on what her duties would be afterwards. An interesting statement of these, ascribed to the Buddha himself, has fortunately survived, and may be regarded as an indication that he liked marriages to be happy:

"Therefore, girls, train yourselves thus: To whatever husband our parents shall give us, for him we will rise up early, be the last to retire, be willing workers, order all things sweetly and speak affectionately. Train yourselves thus, girls.

And in this way too, girls: we will honour and respect all whom our husband honours and respects, whether mother or father, recluse or brahman, and on their arrival will offer them water and a seat.

And in this way too, girls: We will be deft and nimble at our husband's home-crafts, whether they be of wool or cotton, making it our business to understand the work so as to do it and get it done. Train yourselves thus, girls.

And in this way, too, girls: Whatever our husband's household consists of — servants and messengers and work-people — we will know the work of each one of them by what has been done, and their remissness by what has not been done; we will know the strength and the weakness of the sick; we will portion out the soft food and the solid food to each according to his share. Train yourselves thus, girls.

And this way too, girls: The treasure, grain, silver and gold that our husband brings home we will keep safely, acting as no robber or spend-thrift in regard to it. Train yourselves thus, girls" (A.iii. 37-38, iv.265).

If all goes well, then the wife is called the "comrade supreme" (S.i.37), and a number of devoted couples are mentioned in the Pāli Canon, such as Queen Mallikā and King Pasenadi, Nakulamātā and Nakulapitā, and Dhamma-dinnā and Visākha.

Nakulamātā and Nakulapitā were considered by the Buddha to be the most eminent among his lay-disciples for their close companionship with one another (A.i.26). And they were matched in their faith in his Teaching, their self-control, and the affectionate way in which they spoke to one another (A.ii.62). A commentary (AA.i.400) asserts that for 500 births they had been parents or relatives of the Buddha, or more strictly speaking of the Bodhisatta: "Him of the ten powers" is the term the Commentary uses to avoid this awkwardness — and so in this life they treated him like a son. Nakulamātā, as was the custom for brides, was taken to Nakulapitā's home, and as they tell the Buddha, ever since that time, when he was still a mere lad

and she only a girl, neither is aware of having transgressed against the other in thought, much less in person, and each expresses the longing to be together not only here and now but in a future state also. The Buddha reassures them on this point, and gives as his reason that both of them are on the same level in regard to their belief, their ethical conduct, their generosity and wisdom (A.ii.6lf). In these respects therefore a woman may be the equal of a man.

Another record relates how Nakulamātā once comforted her husband when he was dangerously ill and worrying about what would happen to her and the children should he die. "Do not fret", she said, "I am deft at spinning cotton and carding wool and so would be able, were you to die, to support the children and run the household. Nor would I go to another man. Even greater than when you were alive would be my desire to see the Bhagavan and the Order of monks. As long as the Bhagavan has female disciples, clad in white, I shall be one of them, fulfilling the precepts of ethical behaviour, and gaining inward tranquillity of mind. I shall live confident, without doubt or questioning, following the Teacher's instruction. So do not die, householder, while you are fretting, for so to die is anguish" (A.iii.295ff.). Since restlessness and worry are one of the five Hindrances to gaining mind-control, and since to die with an anxious mind works against happiness in the life to come, it is important to develop serenity of mind and impassibility of body.

Husbands might be prevented from crooked dealings if their wives were upholders of the Buddhist way of life. For example, the brahman Dhānañjāni was not being diligent. "Under the king's patronage he plundered brahman.

householders, and under *their* patronage he plundered the king. His wife, who had had faith in the Buddhist Teaching and had come from a family having faith had died, and he had married another woman. But she had no faith herself and came from a family lacking in faith'' (M.ii.185). Here the first wife is clearly thought of as able to keep her husband straight, while the second one at all events seems to countenance his double-dealings even if she does nothing herself to aid and abet him actively.

Equally with a man a woman might bring a family to prosperity: "All families that have attained great possessions have done so for one or other of the following reasons: they search for what is lost; repair what is dilapidated; eat and drink in moderation; and place in authority, *issariya*, a virtuous woman or man" (A.ii.249).

In pre-Buddhist days a woman had been looked down on if she did not marry — growing old at home, she was called "one who sits with her father". But in early Buddhist times an unmarried girl might go unabused, contented and adequately occupied in caring for her parents and younger brothers and sisters. Hers would have been a domestic life. Or she might become the mistress of great possessions, of slaves, villages, and rich fields, as did Subhā, the goldsmith's daughter. But once Dhamma had been taught to her, by Mahāpajāpatī, who had been the Buddha's foster-mother and then became the first nun, she found that "all worldly pleasures irk me sore", that "silver and gold lead neither to peace nor to enlightenment", so she entered the Order of Buddhist nuns. And truly, this was a great boon to the unmarried woman. It gave her, and the married woman too, the means of escaping from some crushing sorrow, from

difficult worldly circumstances, or from the ceaseless round of menial tasks that have to be performed in the home. Isidāsi's verses contain a whole catalogue of these (Isidāsi was the one who had had at least four husbands in succession (Thīg. 407ff.)). Muttā sums up her domestic drudgery more succinctly (Thīg. 11):

“O free indeed, O gloriously free
Am I in freedom from three crooked things:
From quern, from mortar, and my crooked lord”.

And then, rejoicingly,

“Free am I from birth and dying,
Becoming's cord removed”.

I hope to have shown that, in spite of her many trials and tribulations, a virtuous woman could have power in her home, bear the children she wanted and enjoy the love and respect of her husband and family circle. Again, in the home, there were the serving-women, whether themselves unmarried or not I cannot say, the foster-mothers, brought in for the occasion, and the women musicians and dancers, for the most part, of course, in the homes of the well-to-do. Outside the home, it would seem that a woman's powers and opportunities were limited. Though they worked in the fields, apparently they did not become doctors, or even nurses, judges or lawyers nor, apart from looking after their own possessions, did they engage in business (A.ii.82). The only profession really open to them was the oldest one in the world. The Buddha neither scorned nor rebuked courtesans, but tried to help them by making them realise the impermanence of all conditioned things, including the many forms of beauty. The Order of Nuns was as open to

them as it was to any other woman who qualified for the higher ordination.

And indeed it was to the Order of Nuns that a woman could go not merely if she felt the nagging worries of domestic life to be unendurable, but also if she had a positive vocation for spiritual endeavour. In principle, there was nothing very novel in women leaving the world for the houseless state. The Jain Order of Nuns was in being already, and there were women “wanderers” and free-lance debaters, all seeking for Truth and philosophical understanding. An example of a fine woman disputant is Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesin. Formerly a follower of the Jains, she now toured the country seeking for knowledge among other learned persons. She would stick a rose-apple bough into a heap of sand as a sign that she would debate with anyone who would debate with her (Pss.Sist.65). One day Sāriputta, one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha, took up her challenge. But he answered all the questions she put to him, and then overthrew her in the debate by asking the single question: “The one — what is it?” Leaving aside the intricate literary material that surrounds this question and the deep significance of the correct answer that “All beings subsist by food”, we can do no more here than notice some of the main results of the debate as they affected Bhaddā. First, she was taken by Sāriputta to the Buddha and after she had heard him speak, she gained arahantship. Secondly, she entered the Order of Nuns as one who was already an arahant; this was unusual. Thirdly, the Buddha himself admitted her with the words: “Come, Bhaddā”, and that was her ordination. Great importance came to be attached to this case of a woman being ordained by the Buddha himself, and Dhammapāla ends his commentary

on the Verses of the Women Elders, the *Therīgāthā*, with a note on it.

Another Bhaddā, Bhaddhā Kāpilānī (Thīg.63ff.), is also noteworthy for providing the only case to be recorded (or the record of which has survived) of a woman going forth into homelessness at the same time as her husband (Thag. 1051ff.). We need not however regard this as an isolated incident. Both of them felt a positive call to the homeless life, acted in mutual agreement, helped one another to put on the yellow robes of a recluse, to shave off the hair and sling the begging-bowl from the shoulders. Then they set out together, but only to part quite soon and go to the Buddha by different ways for fear people should say that even in their new state they could not do without one another. For then, as Bhaddā and her husband Kassapa realised, such people would run the risk of rebirth in sorrowful states as a result of the false accusations they had made. It is said that, owing to the power of such virtue, the great earth trembled (ThagA.iii.133). Indeed the second of the eight reasons why earthquakes (D.ii.107f.) occur is that a person has attained to mastery over his mind and then develops perception of a minute portion of the earth — and these two had earnestly discussed which route each of them would take, thereby intimating their mastery over mind — over desire too perhaps.

Another woman who felt a true vocation was Dhamma-dinnā, whom I have mentioned earlier. Though happily married to Visākha, a devout citizen of Rājagaha, she yet asked for his consent to go forth into homelessness, for apparently, as with Bhaddā Kāpilānī and her husband Kassapa, the pull of religion was stronger than any earthly

tie. Visākha at once sent her to a nunnery in a golden palanquin (Pss. Sist. 16), but unlike Kassapa, seems to have felt no desire himself to enter the Order of monks. Dhammadinnā gained arahantship, and then returned to Rājāgaha where she was eagerly questioned by her former husband on matters pertaining to Dhamma. If the questions showed a deep insight, the answers showed a deeper. Thus, as a result of this dialogue between a nun and a layman, recorded in the Cūlavedalla Sutta (M.Sta.44), the Buddha ranked the nun Dhammadinnā foremost among those nuns who could preach—and these were not lacking in number; and he also endorsed all she had said, declaring that he would have answered all Visākha's questions exactly as she had done. According to the commentary (MA.ii.371), this Discourse may therefore be taken as the Conqueror's speech rather than the disciple's. It thus becomes *Buddhavacana*, the word of the Buddha, in virtue of its having won his approval in these terms.

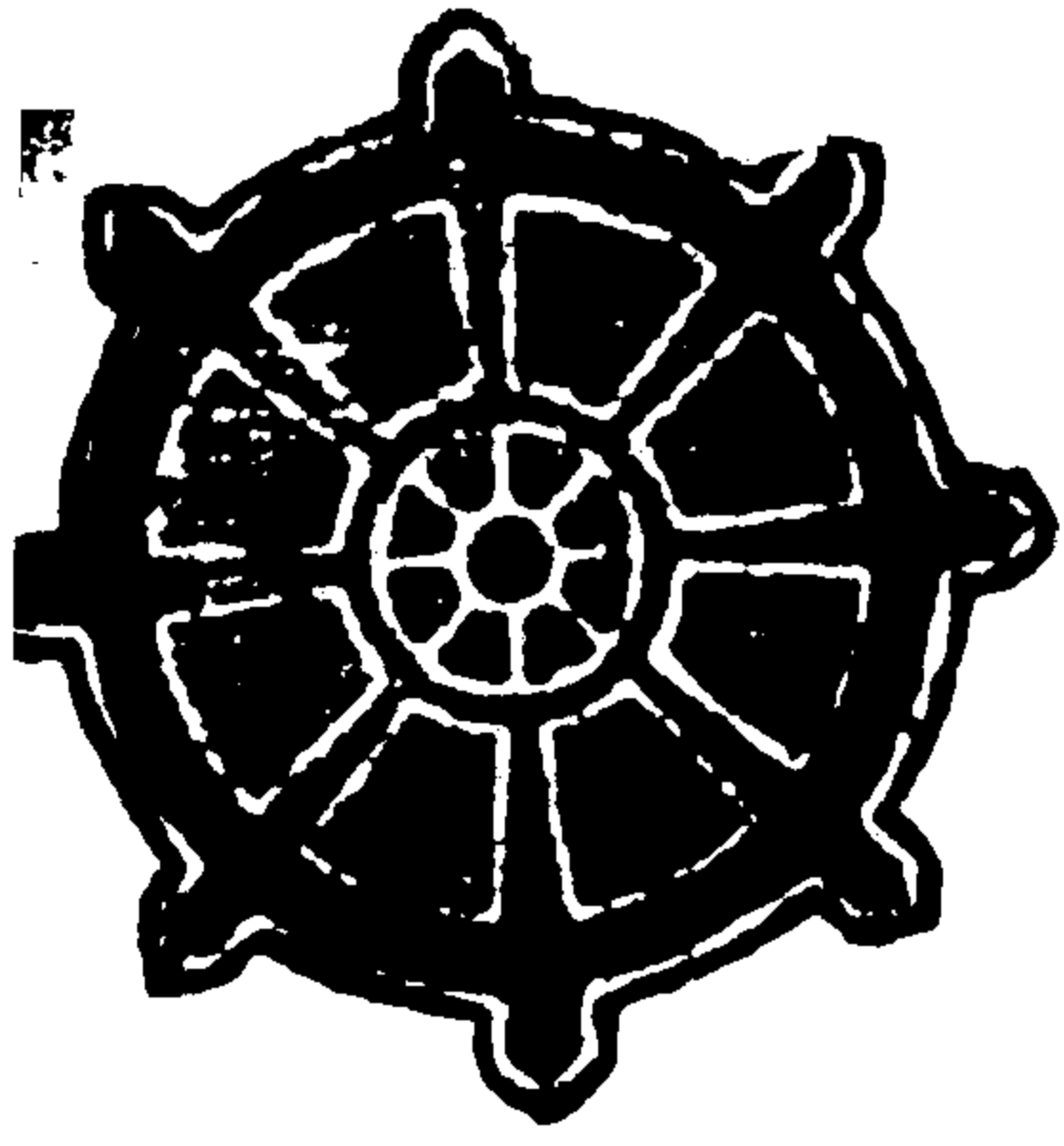
There is another occasion when a nun's discourse may be regarded as *Buddhavacana*. This was when the Buddha commended the unnamed nun of Kajangalā for her interpretations of the answers to the Ten Great Questions which begin with the question Sāriputta asked Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesin: "The one — what is it?" Though the nun says she had not learnt the answers she would give either from the Buddha or from any monks who were developing their minds, and though her answers to four of the questions do in fact differ from those found in the Khuddakapāṭha, the locus classicus for these Ten Great Questions and their answers, yet the Lord approved of all of them (A.v. 54ff.), again stating that he would have answered precisely as the nun had done. Again therefore we get *Buddhavacana*.

In conclusion, I hope to have presented you with some material for thinking that in the Buddha's times women were not despised and looked down on but, on the contrary, were respected and had a place of honour in the home. The difficulties they had to face and overcome were no more than normal for women in any time or country, even if their life was, at the worldly level, more restricted than it has come to be in the last decades as women go in more and more for public work and hold professional posts. At the higher, more spiritual level, however, they had the great advantage and great joy of entering the Order of Nuns either because they wanted to get free of worldly sufferings or, more positively, and above everything else, because they wanted to find the way to the peace and bliss of Nibbāna, all their former craving for sense-pleasures rooted out, tranquil and cool. Many of the women I have mentioned here whether they have been nuns or the lay-devotees, by their response to the majesty of the Buddha's Teaching, have made an imponderable contribution to its strength, vitality, expansion and longevity. It is as well to survey again from time to time the lives of these ardent contemporaries of the Buddha. Indeed the Buddhist world owes them a large debt of gratitude.

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*Printed for the Buddhist Publication Society, P.O. Box No. 61
Forest Hermitage, Kandy, Ceylon, at the Kandy Printers Ltd.
Dalada Vidiya, Kandy, Ceylon.*



THE LAMP OF THE LAW

Translated by

SOMA THERA
PIYADASSI THERA

THE WHEEL
PUBLICATION
No. 38

THE LAMP OF THE LAW

Being selected excerpts from

GURULUGOMI'S
DHARMAPRADĪPIKA

Translations by

SOMA THERA
PIYADASSI THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1961 Ceylon

14671

INTRODUCTION

In the early forties when the second world war was being waged in all its fury, two bhikkhus lived away from the haunts of men in the quiet solitude of a forest hermitage (*Samarasiṇhārāma*) at Telijjavila in South Ceylon, passing their days in quiet contemplation and study. A book that interested them much was a Sinhala treatise on the *Dhamma*, Gurulugomi's *Dharmapradīpikā*; and so great was their fascination for the lucid exposition that they decided to put into English selected excerpts from that celebrated work. One of them, the Venerable Soma Thera, is no more. Meeting ends in parting (*saṃyogā viyogaṇṭā*).

Dharmapradīpikā, which may aptly be translated as Lamp (*pradīpikā*) of the Law (*dharma*), is a sort of commentary on the *Mahā-bodhivaṃsa*, the 'Chronicle of the Tree of Enlightenment', written in Pāli by that erudite author Upatissa Mahā Thera.

Judging from the style of language it can be said that *Dharmapradīpikā* was written either toward the end of 12th century A. C., or beginning of 13th century. As our author himself says in his other work, *Amāvatura*, 'the Perennial Spring', *Dharmapradīpikā* is a work dealing with the doctrine (*dhamma*) of the Buddha while *Amāvatura* speaks of the life of the Buddha.

Gurulugomi explains with skill and taste 205 Pāli quotations, or rather terms, from the *Mahā-bodhivaṃsa*. Some of the explanations are terse, but many others are written at length. These elucidations are not written in unvarying tone, but have change and variety. While making clear the dhamma terms he introduces charming and informative stories from the Buddhist Canon, and adorns

his work with copious, suitable quotations, both verse and prose, from the Pāli and Sanskrit. Though it is easy to trace the origin of the Pali quotations, scholars have found it difficult to trace some of the Sanskrit verses to their original sources. Some are from the works of Āryasūra, Sāntideva, Harṣa and the logician Dharmakīrti.

Gurulugomi is renowned as one of the rare masters of Sinhala classical diction and style. His translations have the verve and freshness of something vitalisingly original. His elucidations are smooth, natural and convincing. His description, even of the most unlikely things, have vigour, and can hold the reader's attention. Though he is not known to have written any work of poetry, his *Amāvatura* is a prose-poem of deep feeling, lucid and dignified.

Dharmapradīpikā testifies to the range and quality of the author's knowledge of Pāli and Sanskrit wisdom, his dexterity of choice, and his grasp of the subtleties of the Buddha's teaching. Though it bears the title of a scholium to a book of religious history, it is also intended to be a handbook of instruction on practical points of doctrine.

It may be stated that this is a free translation to which a few quotations from other sources also have been added.

The Buddhist Publication Society merits a word of praise for making this translation available for the large number of their readers, at home and abroad.

Piyadassi

Vajirārāma,
Colombo 5,
Ceylon.

November 1961.

THE VISION OF SUFFERING

Vibrant with compassion for sorrowing humanity, the Wise Being working for perfection, thought: "Without a perceptible starting-point is the wandering on through birth and death (*saṃsāra*); fearful are the states of misery: hard to get at is human life, and in the other remaining kinds of existence good cannot be wrought out well. My forebears accumulated much wealth but flitted hence taking not a copper with them: nor did they ever return to enjoy their treasure. Alas! they have been destroyed; they have missed the luck of getting the best out of a good rebirth." In this manner great beings in search of enlightenment view existence, and making a gift of their possessions to the world depart for the homeless state of lone endeavour in self-mastery.

What is wandering on (*saṃsāra*)? Penetrating into the centuries and the millenniums with his unclouded knowledge, the Master knows the non-perceivable as such, he knows the limits of knowledge. Through the assured understanding of clear insight into the limits of the knowable, he has declared that a first beginning and a last end of beings faring on in the interminable sea of birth and death cannot be known, cannot be perceived. Wandering on (*saṃsāra*) is just the succession of the mental and bodily aggregates (*khandhānaṃ paṭipāṭi*) of birth-bound beings whirled between the imperceptibilities of the beginning and the end.

In this wandering on, this journeying in incalculable time, the suffering borne by beings is colossal. How can one reckon all one's sorrows life after life, through partings from the beloved, through union with the unloved, through death of dear ones, and through the loss of one's own health, and wealth, limbs and life?

In this sweeping on of life's stream, hard it is, says the Master, to find another who has not been one's own mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter. Ay, everyman might well have been bound to everywoman, and everywoman to everyman, in this long trail of woe!

Where in the whole wide earth could be found a spot unpolluted of the dead? Somewhen in beings' endless flux some one might well have lain dead anywhere on the earth's face. To the Brahmin Upasālhaka, who was searching for virgin ground, for ground where no corpse had been burnt, the Master said:

‘ Just on this spot have been burnt the very
Corpses of Upasālhakas as many
As fourteen thousand ; there isn't any
Place on earth that's not a cemetery.’

Every brand of suffering does one undergo through rebirth in the divers planes of becoming. And there is nothing in the world but suffering to one who sees life aright; for everything including the highest and most intense form of pleasant sensuous experience, is impermanent, fleeting, passing away. Therefore did the Foremost of mankind's truth-speakers declare: **ALL THAT IS EXPERIENCED IS SUFFERING.** (*Yaṃkiṃci vedayitaṃ sabbaṃtaṃ dukkhasmiṃti vadāmi*).

And in view of this absolute pain-laden nature of sentient existence the Master urges on his disciples the need for the complete renunciation of it, thus: “Beginningless is the wandering on through the round of rebirth; not to be known is the start of beings enmeshed by ignorance, gulled by craving, running on, speeding on through interminable births and deaths; and in this way, for long have ye felt

sorrow bitter and sharp, and made the graveyards bigger and bigger. Because of that should ye turn away from all karma formations (*saṃkhāra*), cut them off, and become free of them.”

Rare is Human Birth

During secular stretches of wayfaring in life, very, very rarely does one get human birth: “It is as if a man should cast into the wide ocean a yoke with a single hole in it, and that yoke should be carried hither and thither by the wind’s impetuosity — now westward, now eastward, now northward and now southward. And say that a turtle blind of one eye comes to the surface once in a century. ‘What think, ye, O monks, will that purblind turtle shoot its head through that yoke-hole?’”

“If Lord, after the passage of a long period of time it succeeded, then would it be a marvel.”

“Quicker, O monks, will be the passing through of the head of that turtle through that yoke-hole, than the getting back to the human state of a man fallen into an existence of misery (*apāya*).”

Fully hard it is to accumulate merit when experiencing great suffering in states of misery: as an animal trembling with fear of death, at the time of seizure, by net, fish-snare and the like: as a draught-animal prodded by pointed goad and so forth: as a ghost tearful of face, subject to insatiable hunger and unquenchable thirst, with a mere skin-and-bone body and exclaiming ever and anon, “Alas, what woe!”

Thus owing to extreme suffering in the states of misery, and owing to intense delight and self-indulgence in the happy

worlds of the shining ones, one does not accomplish well-doing in both those sorts of becoming, those being unfit for such accomplishment.

But in the human state, through the conjunction of a fair measure of pleasant living, and the fellowship of the good, the door to merit is open. If one suffers as a human, there is every chance of that very suffering becoming a supportive condition for growth in insight, for the gaining of confidence in the truth.

In the fashioning of the sword of wisdom which destroys ignorance and the passions, suffering and pleasant living are like the water and the fire to which the smith resorts in forging a weapon and bringing it to efficiency and the right firmness. Human birth with its tolerableness becomes a suitable ground for producing skill. Yet if beings bear human form and have the nature of denizens, of states of misery, that is, of those tormented in hell, in the ghost plane or in the animal plane, then such beings do not accumulate skill. Three are the kinds of unfortunate beings in human guise and they may be known thus: The first by their readiness to kill and to commit all kinds of violence; the second by their lack of energy and consequent depression and misery; the third by their extreme sensuality, lack of independence of character, and by their transgression of the limits of decency.

Then, to which kind of human is it possible to get skill? Only to that kind which has established itself firm in human righteousness. And what is that righteousness? The state of being endowed with shame and fear to do evil; the settled reliance on the fact of moral causation, that is, that good action produces good consequences, and evil, bane; the knowing of what is, and what is not, conducive to one's own weal; compassion toward other beings; plenitude of

the heart's upsurge to realize the good and the true according to actuality; the shunning of the action-course of un-skill (*akusala*); the practice of the action-course of skill (*kusala*).

One established in this manner enters the place of merit; for him the way to the acquisition of worth is open; he grows in good. He becomes pure.

II

ON LIBERALITY AND VIRTUE

Liberality is the first among the ten perfections (*pārami*),¹ the four beneficent actions (*saṃgaha vatthu*),² and the three great kinds of merit (*puñña kiriya*)³ it is a quality that all Bodhisattas possess in abundance, and a treasure of the Buddhas.

Givers are of three kinds: those who give away the coarse, and keep for themselves what is fine, those who

1. *Pārami* are ten essential qualities of extremely high standard, initiated by compassion, and ever tinged with understanding, free from craving, pride and false views, — that qualify an aspirant for Buddhahood. They are: *dāna* - charitable giving, *sīla* - virtue or purity of conduct, *nekkhamma* - renunciation, *paññā* - wisdom, *virīya* - unflinching energy, *khanti* - forbearance, *sacca* - truthfulness, *aditṭhāna* - resolution, *mettā* - lovingkindness, *upekkhā* - equanimity.

2. *dāna* - generosity, *piya vacana* - pleasant speech, *atthacariyā* - selfless service, *samānattathā* - equality.

3. *dāna* - liberality, *sīla* - morality, *bhāvanā* - meditation.

share what they have, be it coarse or fine, with others ; those who give away what is fine and keep for themselves what is coarse. The first kind are those who give as to a servant, the second as to a friend, and the third who give as a master in a lordly way.

Wealthy folk who stint in giving are like rainclouds that do not empty themselves on the thirsty earth. Like clouds that burst over some particular area, in some folk-tract are they who give of their abundance to some particular person, sect or denomination. And those who give to all without distinction of caste, creed, colour, race or any other restricting consideration, are like those clouds which pour down their fertilizing contents on all parts of a country and nourish all vegetal life.

A giver should be happy and satisfied at every stage of giving. Pleased and contented should his heart be while going to make a gift, while actually making the gift and after. Only in such circumstances does the full benefit or giving accrue to the giver. Fivefold is the advantage of such giving: one becomes dear to many, wins the company of the good, one's fame spreads, one fulfils a duty of the household-life, and lastly one fares well after death.

Timely giving is of five kinds : the giving to guests, to those on the point of making a journey, to the sick, to the famine-stricken, and to the virtuous.

Gifts are properly given when they are handed over with respect, with dignity, not casually, and when they are given with belief in the effect of the gift, i. e. its moral efficacy.

Liberality should be practised not only with regard to human beings. Our dumb and forlorn fellows of the animal kingdom too must experience our liberality. All who are capable of benefiting by our gifts should be made partakers of our liberality.

Virtue

The giving of material gifts and alms, however, blesses only a few. But he who cultivates virtue blesses all sentient beings. He makes to all beings the gift of fearlessness by his stainless conduct.

Therefore, the Master taught thus: “Here, O monks, a disciple of the Pure Ones giving up killing is restrained as regards killing . . . giving up theft is restrained as regards theft . . . giving up sexual wrong is restrained as regards sexual wrong . . . giving up untrue speech is restrained as regards untrue speech . . . giving up drink is restrained as regards drink, and thereby blesses all sentient beings with the gift of security, non-hate, and harmlessness.”

That kind of conduct which brings happiness and ease of mind, which never gives room for remorse and repentance to come up, which leads to a good destiny and is the basis of the good life here and now is called virtue.

Killing

One abstains from killing other beings because one knows how dear life is to oneself and so infers that it must be the same for others. All happiness of men in this world depends on their lives. So to deprive them of that which contains all good for them is cruel and heartless in the extreme. Is it, therefore, a wonder that those who destroy others' lives bring on themselves the hate and illwill of those they slay ?

Further, it is said in the books that those who kill will be struck by deadly weapons often in this life, and come to a terrible end generally. After this life the kamma of their ruthless deeds will for long push them to states of woe. Should such destroyers of life be born in prosperous families with beauty and strength and other happy bodily attributes, still their kamma will dog them to an early grave. Therefore it is said :

Tho' born to treasure, grain and pleasure all,
 Tho' dowered with the love-god's grace of cast,
 Who take away the lives of others fall
 To early death unwilling ; sure's such blast.

Neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in a cleft in the mountains is that place to be found on earth, abiding wherein one may escape from (the consequences of) one's ill-deed.

But those who refrain from the slaughter of beings, who are as it were protectors of all living sentient things, who give all other beings, the gift of security are like mighty trees that shelter and shade man, bird and beast, with their myriad foliage.

Even though their lives be in grave peril, and death with all its terrors confronts them, they stand firm in their determination to save from harm all other forms that pulse with sentience.

In Aryasura's Jātakamālā, the Garland of Birth Stories, we read that once when the Bodhisattva was hard pressed by enemies in hot pursuit, rather than get beyond reach of his pursuers by crushing an eagle's nest full of

eaglets, he turned back and went towards his enemies in order to save the small unfledged birds, saying to his charioteer :

“So turn back the car; better for me to die
Struck down by dreadful titan-clubs that loom,
Than live in blame, ashamed, as sure I must,
If I those timid fledglings send to doom.”

And he who thus abstains from slaughter of all kinds becomes himself fearless, calm and serene, pleasant of presence, beloved of all beings human, divine, and ghostly. Such a one truly approximates to the sage in character, for “Ever doth the sage guard the things that breathe,”
niccam muni rakkhati pāṇine.

Theft

Things which belong to another, things of which another is the master, are never wrongly taken by him who walks according to the Dhamma. To take things wrongly from others, violently or by compulsion or by deceit, is against all standards of decency and gentlemanly conduct. Says an olden book: ‘*paradravyaharanaṃ ātmadravyasya vināśahetuḥ*,’ the wrongful taking of others’ substance becomes the cause of one’s own loss of goods. And again: ‘*Na cauryātparam mṛtyuypāśaḥ*.’ worse deathtrap there is none than robbery. For who robs and spoils others becomes subject to the king’s punishment and the people’s indignation, to endless suffering and tribulation. Therefore should one avoid this evil action of wrongly taking others’ property as one would avoid poison, fire, and fearful, deadly snakes. Who keeps the rule of abstaining from theft gains much in inner and outer well-being. He lives a happy life and fares well after death.

Free from the gyve, the lash, the stick, the knife,
 Free from the wrath of king, men's ire and blame,
 Free from the loss of wealth, of limb, and life,
 Full free from theft, the good gain, bliss and fame.

Misconduct

He who abstains from sexual wrong is blessed with a heart that is ever at peace and serene, and a body possessed of strength and energy at all times. He is moving on towards higher ways of life, and nobler states of thought.

Who chastely lives wins beauty, strength,
 And good men's praise and boon of health;
 His mind is clear and fit to tread
 The Path to Truth; and he is wed
 To noble thought, to kindly deed,
 And speech that's pure; he sows the seed
 Of virtues rare; makes all to sprout,
 And blossom. Then rich fruit brings out.

But sad is the fate of him who goes wrong sexually. He soils his own mind-flux and others'. Therefore it is written by the poet:

'The matrix sure of every bane,
 The bringer to states of dreadful pain,
 Free love is. Dākini's the name
 Of wife not thine. Think not on such dame.'

False Speech

Who abstains from false speech wins the trust and confidence of many, and is honoured by those who know him. It is an abstention pre-eminently practised by the Bodhisattvas, the beings who are in search of perfect enlightenment. Of them it is said that they never utter

untruth, in any circumstances whatsoever. The speaker of truth is free from fear and trembling in the midst of assemblies. He is ever courageous and firm, and unshakable even when confronted with the greatest hostility. He is strong with the strength of a mighty host in full panoply, because his heart is crystal-clear, pure and speckless. He is always pleasant and gentle, courteous and helpful, restrained and patient, a speaker who delights and calms others with the effortless eloquence of truth. Such a one may truly say of himself:

Pure is my heart for all that's true I think,
 Clear, my mind; there no dark lies slink.
 Clean my speech, rid of things that soil,
 A smooth soft kindly flow of limpid oil.

The liar is everywhere discredited. Who is shameless enough to speak untruth, he has no virtue in his heart. There is no wrong that a deliberate liar cannot perpetrate. So say the books.

If one who has taken on life of the homeless monk utters untruth, then by that very utterance one makes one's monkhood empty. "Empty, O Rahula, is the life of that monk who shamelessly utters untruth," says the Master urging on his beloved son the importance of true speech in the holy life.

Further, it is said that the liar comes to get a bad destiny hereafter. He becomes dull, stupid, hideous of presence, repellent to others, and passes on to states of becoming where he loses the power of speech.

Intoxicants

One abstains from intoxicants in order to keep the mind free from confusion. Drink and drugs are destructive of right thinking, that is, thinking based on non-hate, non-violence, and renunciation. He who takes intoxicants becomes angry, cruel, infatuated. Therefore, the follower of the Buddha, knowing well the disadvantages of wrong thinking which follows intoxication, does not taint his mind with the poison of drink which burns out the germinal power of the seeds of good in his mind. Speaking of the evils of drink, Āryas'ūra in his Jātakamāla says :

‘O lord of men, how canst thou e’er partake
Of that drink by which good qualities fully break,
Which stuns all worth, doth violence to good name,
Blurs mind’s vision and drives out all shame.’

Such is the treasure of virtue which men wishing for happiness should increase and protect. It is the right expedient for winning all good things here and hereafter.

All inner wealth has virtue for source. Like a rich mine which yields countless jewels virtue gives endless delight to the good man.

Virtue is the ground from which one takes off to the high place of perfect holiness.

Virtue is the charmed weapon to slay the passions, and the coat of mail that wards off all the blows of Māra.

Virtue makes life pleasant, imbues it with power and vitalises and refreshes it.

Virtue is like the cool, cleansing, }fertilizing rain.

The virtuous attain to the splendour of great renown, wealth and honour.

The man of virtue is always mindful and completely aware. At the moment of death he is free from all confused thinking and is calm and composed.

Because of these things that go along with virtue one fosters it, guards it, and protects it with the single-minded devotion of a mother protecting her only child, the apple of her eye.

III

RENUNCIATION

Now a man endowed with the treasure of virtue begotten of his confidence in the Blessed One, sees the disadvantages of sensul pleasures, remembers how the Teacher impressed on his disciples the need for giving up sensuality—the low, common, worldly thing—by comparing it to a bare bone, a piece of flesh that produces strife, a flaming torch, a pit of fiery coals, a dream, borrowed goods, a fruit-tree laid low when one is on it eating the fruits, and turns away from the world's way. That man is like a mighty elephant speeding out of a burning wood. Stirred by the world's ill, he hastens out of the confined life of the house to the life of homelessness free and open as the spreading sky, with just one aim in view : Perfection.

Then away from all disturbing worldly influences the giver up of home lives the lonely life of the recluse according to the enfranchising precepts of restraint (*pātimokkasaṃvara sīla*).

He observes the precepts meticulously, seeing danger even in the smallest fault.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, perceiving an odour, tasting a flavour, feeling some tangible thing, or cognising an idea, he is not moved either towards or away from any object of consciousness. He maintains perfect equipoise putting afar all likes and dislikes. He subdues his heart. This control, this guarding of the doors of sense (*Indriyaguttadvāra*), he practises with zest.

He is moderate in eating (*bhojane mattaññu*). He takes his food right carefully, reflecting all the while he eats according to the Dhamma. He knows that he does not eat for sport, self-indulgence, improvement of the body or for making it appear comely but merely for keeping the body unharmed for living out the holy life.

He is devoted to wakefulness (*Jāgariyaṃ anuyutto*). Night and day he cleans his mind of all dross that may gather there.

Such a man is satisfied covering his body with a patchwork ascetic robe and stilling his hunger with what he gets into his bowl begging from house to house. He is compared to a bird. Like the wings of a bird are his bowl and robes and he goes whithersoever he lists, unhindered by the weight of many belongings, and without thought of leaving behind anything.

In all his conduct he is mindful and completely aware (*satisampajañña*). There is nothing done by him which is bereft of consciousness of purpose (*sāttakasampajañña*), of advantage (*sappāyasampajañña*) of fitness (*gocarasampajañña*) of actuality seen steadily in the clear light of transiency, suffering and soullessness (*asammohasampajañña*). Doing all things, rightly and well, he grows in holiness. Of that recluse it is said:

Who is freed in mind of all that is vain ;
 Not fickle ; wise, with senses under rein ;
 He verily shines in his robe of rags,
 Like lion in its cave midst the mountain crags.

This searcher of the highest weal practises the burning out of the passions, the true tapas. He thinks : Others may harm, but I will become harmless ; others may slay living beings, but I will become a non-slayer ; others may wrongly take things, but I will not ; others may live unchaste, but I will live pure ; others may utter falsehood, I, however, will speak the truth ; others may slander, talk harshly, indulge in gossip, but I will talk only words that promote concord, harmless words, agreeable to the ear, full of love, heart-pleasing, courteous, worthy of being borne in mind, timely, fit, and to the point ; others may be covetous, I will not covet ; others may mentally lay hold of things awry, but I will lay mental hold of things fully aright. Energetic, steeped in lowliness of heart, unswerving as regards truth and rectitude, peaceful, honest, contented, generous and truthful in all things will I be. I will cherish mindfulness and wise penetration that is fully aware of the truth at all times, and will not be moved by the evanescent or grasp at it. Thus, he never acts slavishly like the unthinking herd.

Progressing in this way, shedding all dust by the intensity of practice that becomes keener and keener, he develops the Path of Mental Absorption (*jhānamagga*) by casting out the hindrances.

Seated in cloister cell, at the foot of a tree, under the open sky, or in some other suitable place, he fixes his mind on a subject of meditation (*kammattṭhāna*) and by struggle and unceasing effort washes out the impurities of his mind-flux and gradually reaches the first, the second, the

third and the fourth absorption, and enjoys the benefit of his high attainment. Lastly with the power of concentration he has won, he turns his mind to the understanding of actuality in the highest sense, and when he knows that, clears himself of all defilements by the roots.

With that final cleaning out he reaches the state where dawns for him the Light of Nibbāna, the calm beyond words, the unshakability beyond all thought, the freedom that is beyond all deeds, the sure and secure ground, the splendour that is imperishable, the happiness of stillness, of relief and perfect peace immeasurably deep and pure which can be overturned by nothing and by none, the highest truth.

That is the very crown of the homeless life; its greatest fruit. That is the thing for the sake of which young men of good family leave home for the homeless life. By that fruit all birth, old age and death are brought to an end, the pure life of holiness is lived out, all that must be done is done, and the world holds nothing more for one.

IV

THE HEART OF THE HOLY LIFE

He who wishes to put out the fire of anger holds fast to restraint and control and never separates from the genial company of love. *Mettā*, that super-solvent among virtues which causes all disharmony and luridity of mind to disappear.

Love

Ever is the loving one—*Mettavādi*—one who draws in the claws of retaliation, and revenge in him. For him

all that irritates and makes for anger is as it were non-existent. He holds himself well in, under the greatest provocation.

“ Seeing well, he seems to be one blind ;
Hearing well, he seems not ware of sound ;
Knowing he seems a fool of some kind ;
Powerful, he seems to weakness bound ”

Effacing himself, expunging his propensities and tendencies to anger, he cools his heart with the water of love's unfailing spring and sprinkles all whom he contacts with the self-same soothing potency.

Intact is the strength of one who keeps his heart in obedience to reason and strays not to ways of ill-will aversion and hate. He hurts not himself; he hurts not others. He is a blessing to himself and to all else. He becomes beloved of all. His paths are made smooth. None envy him. Nobody is against him. Nobody grows jealous of him. He wings through life like a swan through the blue sky unhindered, an object of delight to all eyes.

Where such a loving one dwells, there all is at peace; for the loving one never interferes with others' rights, with others' freedom, with others' lives, in any way. He helps others in pleasant, kindly acts, endearing, encouraging, energizing and vitalizing all with his benign nature.

If in a woodland haunt such a loving one stays ;

“ The tigress seeing the lean young deer
Gives it suck as tho' it were its cub ;
And serpents sun-struck for shelter steer
To the shade of pea-fowls' wings : mice do rub
Against the sides of deadly snakes for play
And through the fearful coils make their way, ”

says the poet, and continues thus :

“ In forest glade anywhere does one such stay
Who spreads forth love grown great night and day
And by his thought all hatred does allay
In brute breast, homage to him I pay.”

Through love does the Blessed One tame all beings. It is with love that he overcame the hosts of Mara in the terrace of enlightenment. All violence and ferocity can be overcome with love, it is the magic wand to quell the waves in men's unruly hearts.

Other kinds of spiritual emancipation are not equal to the sixteenth part of the emancipation of the heart through love. Through love one adds to the fund of human happiness, one makes the world brighter, nobler and purer and prepares it for the good life better than in any other way. There is no ill-luck worse than hatred, it is said, and no safety from others' hostility greater than the heart of love, the heart in which hate is dead.

Therefore, says the lovable S'āntideva :

“How may I slay my foes as welkin vast !
Aye, if hate in my heart is slain my foes don't last.”

And again showing a way to overcome the thought of hate he in his own inimitable way says :

“Overlooking the missiles that hurt if I rate
At him who hurled them moved by force of hate,
Right better would it be to hate hate which wove
The thought which him to act of hurling drove.”

If one has developed love truly great, rid of the desire to hold and to possess, that strong clean love which is untarnished with lust of any kind, that love which does not expect material advantage and profit from the act of loving, that love which is firm but not grasping, unshakable but not tied down, gentle and settled, hard and penetrating as diamond but unhurting, helpful but not interfering, cool, invigorating, giving more than taking, not proud but dignified, not sloppy yet soft, the love which leads one to the heights of clean achievement, then, in such a one can there be no ill-will at all. So our books say that if one should say that he has developed mental emancipation through love, and has still hate in his heart he should be told: Not so ! Speak not thus Do not misrepresent the Blessed One Surely he would not say this was so !

The power of love as illustrated by the life of the Buddha can be seen in many a story told of him. Among the best is that of Roja, the Mallian, who in order to escape a fine imposed on persons of his clan who did not visit the Buddha, undertook a visit to the place where the Buddha was living once, and then was drawn to the Master as a cow to its calf even before he saw him. That was an instance of the psychic power of love (*Mettā-iddhi*). The taming of the drunken elephant Nālāgiri, of the demon Ālavaka, the saving of Patācārā, Kisāgotami and many another, of helping the greatly worried and dejected Culla Panthaka, Nakulapitā and so forth are all examples of our Teacher's love.

Love is an active force. Every act of the loving one, is done with the stainless mind to help, to succour, to cheer, to make the paths of others easier, smoother, and more adapted to the conquest of sorrow, the winning of highest bliss.

The way to develop love is through thinking out the evils of hate, and the advantages of non-hate; through thinking out according to actuality (*kamma*) that really there is none to hate, that hate is a foolish way of feeling which breeds more and more of darkness that obstructs right understanding. Hate restricts; love releases. Hatred strangles; love enfranchises. Hatred brings remorse; love brings peace. Hatred agitates; love quietens, stills, calms. Hatred divides; love unites. Hatred hardens; love softens. Hatred hinders; love helps. And thus through a correct study and appreciation of the effects of hatred and the benefits of love, should one develop love.

Patience

A Perfect One is a patient one. Patience is of the essence of all holy living. Without this quality one cannot persevere in good, one cannot maintain oneself in harmlessness, in non-anger, in kindness; one cannot help others; one cannot become fit for full enlightenment.

Therefore, does the Bodhisattva cultivate this virtue of patience at all times, in all circumstances, whatever befalls.

In the past birth stories of the Master we read that he bore up with unsullied heart dreadful punishment inflicted on him and with his dying breath blessed his torturer (*khantivādi-jātaka*, 313). So deep set was this quality in him that even when re-born as an animal he displayed tremendous endurance and forbearance when put to severe pain.

The patient one becomes dear to all, beloved of all; he becomes freed of many faults. At death he is well-composed,

Patience and forbearance, says the Master, comprise the aim of a recluse.

“ Bearing up is the best ascetic way,
Forbearing, the ceasing best, Buddhas say.”

And further, it is said :

“ Who bears with a heart that’s from anger free
The gyve, the scourge, the rack, the stake, that one,
For whom his patience can an army be,
That one’s a man who unto worth has won.”

It is because folk are impatient of others that discord is rife in the world. Violence, spoliation, bloodshed, all these, source from hatred, the child of impatience. The patient one is ever forgiving, ever restrained, ever ready to overlook others’ shortcomings, and to forget injuries done to him. He cannot cherish revenge. He knows :

“Time-honoured is this law which says : ‘Never ended
Is hate by hatred here : but by non-hatred.’ ”

Therefore is it said :

“Just as the fragrant sandal-wood tree
Perfumes the axe which lays it low,
So the good man, willer of world’s weal,
Angers not though struck by cruel blow.”

V

THE BUDDHA

Four incalculable aeons ago, our Buddha, as an ascetic full of knowledge and compassion, meeting the Perfectly Enlightened One, Dīpankara, turned away from the Nirvāna that lay-within his grasp as though it were Saṃsāra. Thereupon entering the difficult track of suffering he completed the Perfections and was reborn in the Tusita realm. At the entreaty of the devās and brahmās of tens of thousands of world-systems he thereafter took human form at Kapilavatthu and in the maturity of manhood left home-life for the homeless state. Then setting great energy afoot, seated in the pose of meditation under the Tree of Enlightenment, conquering Death, he attained omniscience.

His Virtues

The Perfectly Enlightened One who is called omniscient is endowed with boundless virtues. Inconveivable, incomparable, incomprehensible is the Perfect One's beauty of form ; so also the charm of his speech and the splendour of his wisdom. Therefore, he is beyond the measure of thought, the reach of words, the range of similitude, the grasp of knowledge. Though a Perfect One laud his peer's virtues a whole aeon long, still would those virtues be unexhausted. Though put into the vast ocean, the capsule of a mustard seed, a crock, a pot, can take in only so much water as each can hold. In the same way those who enter into the ocean of Buddha-virtue can know only so much as the ability of each one of them allows. They cannot know that virtue in all its fulness.

Some of the virtues of a Perfect One are common to worldings and to his pure disciples. Others are peculiar to

him. Grass is the common food of herbivorous animals but when it is eaten and digested by the *Gandhahatthi*, 'the fragrant elephant,' it produces a four-fold aroma. So also the grace of form and the mental qualities of absorption, supernormal powers and the like passing into the Buddha-flux become unique.

As the precious fat of lions does not keep in vessels not golden, so the ten powers, the four confidences and the like which are exceptional, abide not in a flux other than a Buddha's.

The beauty of form of an Omniscient One comprises the thirty-two marks of the superman and the eighty lesser characteristics that go along with them.

The charm of the speech of an Omniscient One is the instruction given with the voice endowed with the eight factors: clarity, intelligibility, agreeableness, worthiness of being listened to, smoothness of flow, the state of being confined to the intended audience, depth, resonance.

His Wisdom

And in the pointing out and the laying down of the disciplinary rules, the distinguishing of the mundane and the ultramundane planes, of relatedness, and the refutation of the views of alien sects, the Buddha's powers of speech spread strong as the lion's roar.

The splendour of the wisdom of an Omniscient One is that it penetrates to the very end of all that is worthy of being known in a thing. It resembles a red-hot iron which burns through to the bottom of a heap of dried leaves on which it is applied.

In the words of Venerable Sāriputta, the Elder: Greatly wise, indeed, is the Blessed One, broadly wise, pleasantly wise, expeditiously wise, keenly wise, penetratively wise; he is wise in skilful analysis, a realizer of the fourfold analytical knowledge, an arriver at the four confidences, a possessor of the ten powers, a man-steer, a man-lion, a man-elephant, a man-steed, a human burden-bearer, infinitely wise, infinitely majestic, infinitely glorious, rich, opulent, a leader and a tamer of men willing to be tamed, who makes others think aright, who makes others see Truth, who makes others glad.

Indeed that Blessed One is the creator of the uncreated path, the producer of the unproduced path, the revealer of the unrevealed path, the perceiver of the path, the knower of the path, the expert on the path. Knowing, he knows; seeing he sees. He is as it were the eye incarnate; wisdom incarnate; the Dhamma incarnate; purity incarnate. He is the speaker, the best speaker; the giver of deep sense; the donor of the deathless; the lord of the Dhamma. And naught there is that the Tathāgata knows not, perceives not, realizes not, experiences not by his wisdom.

To the extent of things worth knowing stretches the wisdom of the Enlightened One. All things become objects to him when he adverts, when he wills, when he attends, when he thinks. Open to him are all beings' inclinations, tendencies, behaviour, and dispositions. He knows beings who are slight of passion and those heavy of passion; also known by him are those possessed of controlling faculties that are keen or soft, fine or coarse.

Blessed, worthy, fully-wake, endowed with wisdom and virtue, is the Tathāgata. Rich with the ten powers, the four confidences and innumerable such attributes is the Body of the Dhamma, which the Master realized.

Rid of greed, hate, and ignorance, he is blessed; endowed with many lucky qualities, he is blessed; seeing deep into the nature of things through penetrative analysis, he is blessed; spewing forth all passion, all wayfaring in saṃsāra, he is blessed.

Worthy is the Blessed One because he is free from defilement, because he has destroyed the foes of the passions and broken the spokes of Samsara's Wheel of Becoming. Suited is he for the receiving of offerings because he does not do evil even in secret.

Realizer of the Truth without the aid of a teacher is the Enlightened One who has understood the Dhamma unheard of before. One who reached the very peak of the ten powers is he; one who has made others to attain to the Truth. Through omniscience, through seeing everything with the eye of knowledge, through radiating measureless worth, through being numbered among the eradicators of evil, through separation from all soil, through assured freedom from the triple fire of lust, ill-will, and ignorance, through treading the Sole Way to emancipation, through attainment of Uttermost Perfection, he is the Enlightened One.

The Ten Powers

The Master is the possessor of the ten powers, to wit: The knowledge of what is and what is not a particular cause; the knowledge of the effects of action in the three divisions of time, past, present, and future; the knowledge of the exact nature of wayfaring in the future to which every volition leads; the knowledge of the world comprising aggregates, elements and sense-bases; the knowledge of every being's dispositions; the knowledge of the hearts of others in regard to the controlling faculties of

confidence, mindfulness, energy, and so forth ; the knowledge as regards the falling away from and development of the different kinds of absorption, emancipation, concentration, and attainment, and the emergence from them ; the knowledge of past births ; the knowledge of beings passing away and re-appearing life after life ; the knowledge of the final extinction of the cankers.

The Four Confidences

The four confidences of the Master are: The calm, courage, and certainty consequent on the absolute impossibility for any recluse, brahmin, god, Mara, or Brahma to disprove that the Tathagata is supremely enlightened as regards those things mental about which he says that he is supremely enlightened (*Sammā sambuddho*) ; the calm, courage, and certainty consequent upon the absolute impossibility for any recluse, brahmin, god, Mara, or Brahma to disprove that the Tathagata has eradicated those cankers which he says he has destroyed utterly (*khīnāsavo*) ; the calm, courage, and certainty consequent on the absolute impossibility, for any recluse, brahmin, god, Mara, or Brahma to disprove what the Tathagata says are obstacles on the Path to Deliverance ; the calm, courage, and certainty consequent on the impossibility for any recluse, brahmin, god, Mara, or Brahma to disprove what the Tathagata says are things leading out of the swamp of Samsara to the firm ground of Nirvana.

The Possessor of Vision

The Enlightened One is the possessor not only of the fleshly, the physical, organ of sight, but of the divine eye by which the death and rebirth of beings, their faring on according to kamma is seen, the eye of wisdom by which all things in the three divisions of time are sensed aright,

the enlightened eye by which the character and faculties of beings are understood and the all-seeing eye of omniscience.

Nothing at all in the world is unseen
 By the Tathagata ; unknowable by him is naught ;
 In all the wide world is there aught
 Knowable ? sensed by him has all that been.

Amongst all the jewels of the world the Enlightened One is the most excellent. The brilliance and glow of all worldly gems fade before the effulgence of the Buddha-sun which dispels the darkness of men's abysmal ignorance. Therefore do gods and men hail him as the Teacher par excellence the illuminator of the clouded heart and the mist-veiled mind. Further is he called Teacher because he taught the way out of the world's ills, and pointed the path across the floods of passion to the haven of Uttermost Safety.



THE WHEEL

A selection from the 38 issues :

- 1 The Seven Factors of Enlightenment. *Piyadassi Thera*.
- 3 Buddhism and Science. *K. N. Jayatilleke*.
- 4 The Greatest Adventure (A youth booklet). *David Maurice*.
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