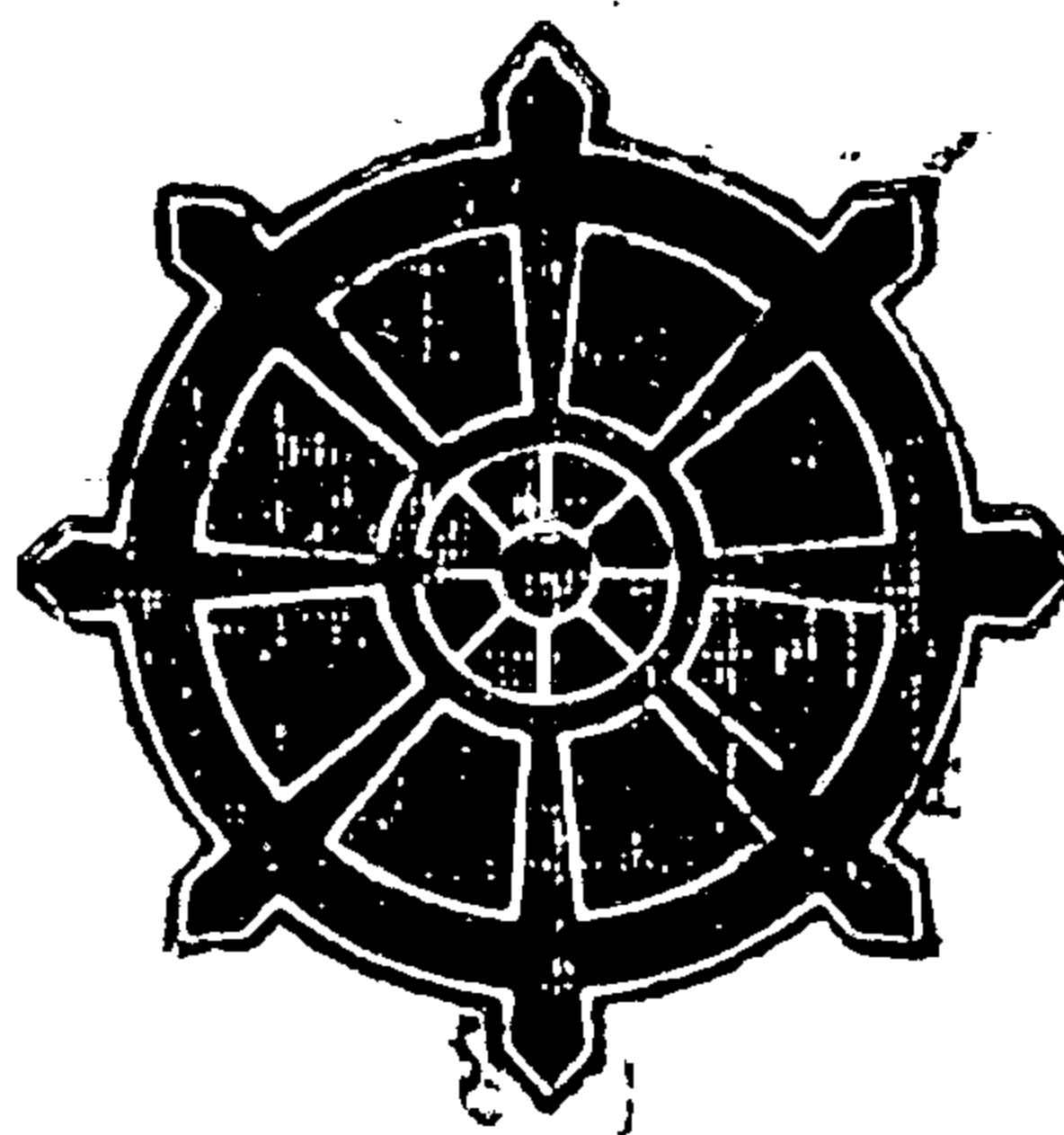


THE WHEEL Publication No. 8

KALAMA SUTTA

The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry



SOMA THERA

KĀLĀMA SUTTA

The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry

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Translated from the Pali

by ဂ.အုတ်

SOMA THERA

Vajirarama, Bambalapitiya, Colombo

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BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

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CEYLON

1959

PREFACE

The instruction to the Kālāmas (Kālāma Sutta) is justly famous for its encouragement of free inquiry; the spirit of the sutta signifies a teaching that is exempt from fanaticism, bigotry, dogmatism, and intolerance,

The reasonableness of the Dhamma, the Buddha's teaching, is chiefly evident in its welcoming careful examination at all stages of the path to enlightenment. Indeed the whole course of training for wisdom culminating in the purity of the consummate one (the arhat) is intimately bound up with examination and analysis of things internal and external: the eye and visible objects, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile impressions, the mind and ideas.

Thus since all phenomena have to be correctly understood in the field of the Dhamma, insight is operative throughout. In this sutta it is active in rejecting the bad and adopting the good way; in the extracts given below, in clarifying the basis of knowledge of conditionality and arhatship. Here it may be mentioned that the methods of examination found in the Kālāma Sutta and in the extracts cited here, have sprung from the knowledge of things as they are and that the tenor of these methods is implied in all straight thinking. Further as penetration and comprehension, the constituents of wisdom are the result of such thinking, the place of critical examination and analysis in the development of right vision is obvious. Where is the wisdom or vision that can descend, all, of a sudden, untouched and uninfluenced by critical thought?

The Kālāma Sutta, which sets forth the principles that should be followed by a seeker of truth, and which contains a standard things are judged by, belongs to the framework of the Dhamma; the four solaces taught in the sutta point out the extent to which the Buddha permits suspense of judgment in matters beyond normal cognition. The solaces show that the reason for a virtuous life does not necessarily depend on belief in rebirth or retribution, but on mental well-being acquired through the overcoming of greed, hate, and delusion.

More than fifty years ago. Moncure D. Conway, the author of 'My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East' visited Colombo. He was a friend of Ponnambalam Ramanathan (then Solicitor General of Ceylon), and together with him Conway went to the Vidyodaya Pirivena to learn something of the Buddha's teaching from Hikkaḍuve Siri Sumangala Nāyaka Thera, the founder of the institution. The Nāyaka Thera explained to them the principles contained in the Kālāma Sutta and at the end of the conversation Ramanathan whispered to Conway: 'Is it not strange that you and I, who come from far different religions and regions, should together listen to a sermon from the Buddha in favour of that free thought, that independence of traditional and fashionable doctrines, which is still the vital principle of human development?'— 'Conway: Yes, and we with the (Kālāma) princes pronounce his doctrines good'.

"Friend Savitṭha, apart from faith, apart from liking, apart from what has been acquired by repeated hearing, apart from specious reasoning, and from a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, I know this, I see this, 'Decay and death are due to birth'.

(Saṃyuttanikāya, Nidānavagga, Mahāvagga, Sutta No. 8)

"Here a bhikkhu, having seen an object with the eye, knows when greed, hate, and delusion, are within, 'Greed, hate, and delusion, are in me'; he knows when greed, hate, and delusion, are not within

'Greed, hate, and delusion, are not in me'. Bhikkhus, have these things to be experienced through faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over?—No, venerable sir.—Bhikkhus, this even is the way by which a bhikkhu, apart from faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, declares realisation of knowledge thus: I know that birth has been exhausted, the celibate life has been lived, what must be done, has been done, and there is nothing more to come from this state."

(Saṃyuttanikāya, Saḷāyatanavagga, Navapūraṇavagga, Sutta No. 8)

THE INSTRUCTION TO THE KALAMAS

The Kalamas of Kesaputta go to see the Buddha

1. I heard thus. Once the Blessed One, while wandering in the Kosala country with a large community of bhikkhus, entered a town of the Kālāma people called Kesaputta. The Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta heard: 'Reverend Gotama, the monk, the son of the Sākiyans, who went forth from the house of the Sākiyans, has, while wandering in the Kosala country, entered Kesaputta. The good repute of the Reverend Gotama has been spread in this way: Indeed, the Blessed One is thus consummate, fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and practice, sublime, knower of the worlds, peerless, guide of tamable men, teacher of divine and human beings, enlightened, blessed. He makes known this world with its divine beings, its māras, and its brahmas, and the group of creatures with its monks and brahmins, and its divine and human beings, which he by himself has through supernormal knowledge understood clearly. He sets forth the Dhamma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, possessed of meaning and the letter, and complete in everything; and he proclaims the purified life of celibacy. Seeing such consummate ones is good indeed'.

2. Then the Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta went to where the Blessed One was. On arriving there some paid homage to him and sat down on one side; some exchanged greetings with him and after the ending of cordial memorable talk, sat down on one side; some saluted him raising their joined palms and sat down on one side; some announced their name and family and sat down on one side; some, without speaking, sat down on one side.

The Kalamas of Kesaputta ask for guidance from Buddha

3. The Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta sitting on one side said to the Blessed One: There are some monks and brahmins, venerable sir, who visit Kesaputta. They illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Some other monks and brahmins too, venerable sir, come to Kesaputta. They also illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Venerable sir, there is doubt, there is uncertainty, in us concerning them, 'Which of these reverend monks and brahmins spoke the truth and which falsehood?'

The criterion for rejection

4.—It is proper for you, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill', abandon them.

Greed, hate and delusion

5. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does greed appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm?—For his harm, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being given to greed, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by greed, this

man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies ; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill ?—Yes, venerable sir.

6.—What do you think, Kālāmas ? Does hate appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm ?—For his harm, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being given to hate, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by hate, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies ; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill ?—Yes, venerable sir.

7.—What do you think, Kālāmas ? Does delusion appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm ?—For his harm, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being given to delusion, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by delusion, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies ; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill ?—Yes, venerable sir.

8.—What do you think, Kālāmas ? Are these things good or bad ?—Bad, venerable sir.—Blamable or not blamable ?—Blamable, venerable sir.—Censured or praised by the wise ?—Censured, venerable sir.—Undertaken and observed, do these things lead to harm and ill, or not ? Or how does it strike you here ?—Undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill. Thus it strikes us here.

9.—Therefore, did we say, Kālāmas, what was said thus, ‘Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing ; nor upon tradition ; nor upon rumour ; nor upon what is in a scripture ; nor upon surmise ; nor upon an axiom ; nor upon specious reasoning ; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over ;

nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, "The monk is our teacher". Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill", abandon them'.

The criterion for acceptance

10. Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, "The monk is our teacher" Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness', enter on and abide in them.

Absence of greed, hate, and delusion

11. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does absence of greed appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm?—For his benefit, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being not given to greed, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by greed, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness?—Yes, venerable sir.

12.—What do you think, Kālāmas? Does absence of hate appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm?—For his benefit, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being not given to hate, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished

mentally by hate, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery. and does not tell lies ; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness ?—Yes, venerable sir.

13.—What do you think, Kālāmas ? Does absence of delusion appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm ?—For his benefit, venerable sir.—Kālāmas, being not given to delusion, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by delusion, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies ; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness ?—Yes, venerable sir.

14.—What do you think, Kālāmas ? Are these things good or bad ?—Good, venerable sir.—Blamable or not blamable ?—Not blamable, venerable sir.—Censured or praised by the wise ?—Praised, venerable sir.—Undertaken and observed, do these things lead to benefit and happiness, or not ? Or how does it strike you here ?—Undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness. Thus it strikes us here.

15.—Therefore, indeed, did we say, Kālāmas, what was said thus, ‘Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing ; nor upon tradition ; nor upon rumour ; nor upon what is in a scripture ; nor upon surmise ; nor upon an axiom ; nor upon specious reasoning ; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over ; nor upon another’s seeming ability ; nor upon the consideration, “The monk is our teacher”. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know : “These things are good ; these things are not blamable ; these things are praised by the wise ; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness”, enter on and abide in them’.

The Four Exalted Dwellings

16. The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who in this way is devoid of coveting, devoid of ill will, undeluded, clearly comprehending and mindful, dwells, having considered, with the thought of amity, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of amity that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered, with the thought of compassion, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of compassion that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered, with the thought of gladness, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of gladness that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered with the thought of equanimity, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of equanimity that is free of hate or malice.

The Four Solaces

17. The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom four solaces are found here and now.

‘Suppose there is a hereafter and there is fruit, result, of deeds done well or ill. Then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall arise in the heavenly world, which is possessed of the state of bliss.’ This is the first solace found by him.

‘Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result, of deeds done well or ill. Yet in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound, and happy, I keep myself’. This is the second solace found by him.

‘Suppose evil befalls the evil-doer. I, however, think of doing evil to none. Then, how can ill affect me who do no evil deed?’ This is the third solace found by him.

‘Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then, I see myself purified in both ways.’ This is the fourth solace found by him.

The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, these four solaces are found.

—So it is, Blessed One. So it is, Sublime One. The disciple of the Noble Ones, venerable sir, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, four solaces are found.

‘Suppose there is a hereafter, and there is fruit, result, of deeds done well or ill. Then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall arise in the heavenly world, which is possessed of the state of bliss.’ This is the first solace found by him.

‘Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result, of deeds done well or ill. Yet in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound, and happy, I keep myself.’ This is the second solace found by him.

‘Suppose evil befalls the evil-doer. I, however, think of doing evil to none. Then, how can ill affect me who do no evil deed?’ This is the third solace found by him.

‘Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then, I see myself purified in both ways.’ This is the fourth solace found by him.

The disciple of the Noble Ones, venerable sir, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, these four solaces are found.

Marvellous, venerable sir! Marvellous, venerable sir! As if, venerable sir, a person were to turn face upwards what is upside down, or to uncover the concealed, or to point the way to one who is lost, or to carry a lamp in the darkness thinking, ‘Those who have eyes will see visible objects’, so has the Dhamma been set forth in many ways by the Blessed One. We, venerable sir, go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma for refuge, and to the Community of Bhikkhus for refuge. Venerable sir, may the Blessed One regard us as followers who have gone for refuge for life, from today.

Anguttara Nikaya, Tika Nipata, Sutta No. 56, Mahavagga.

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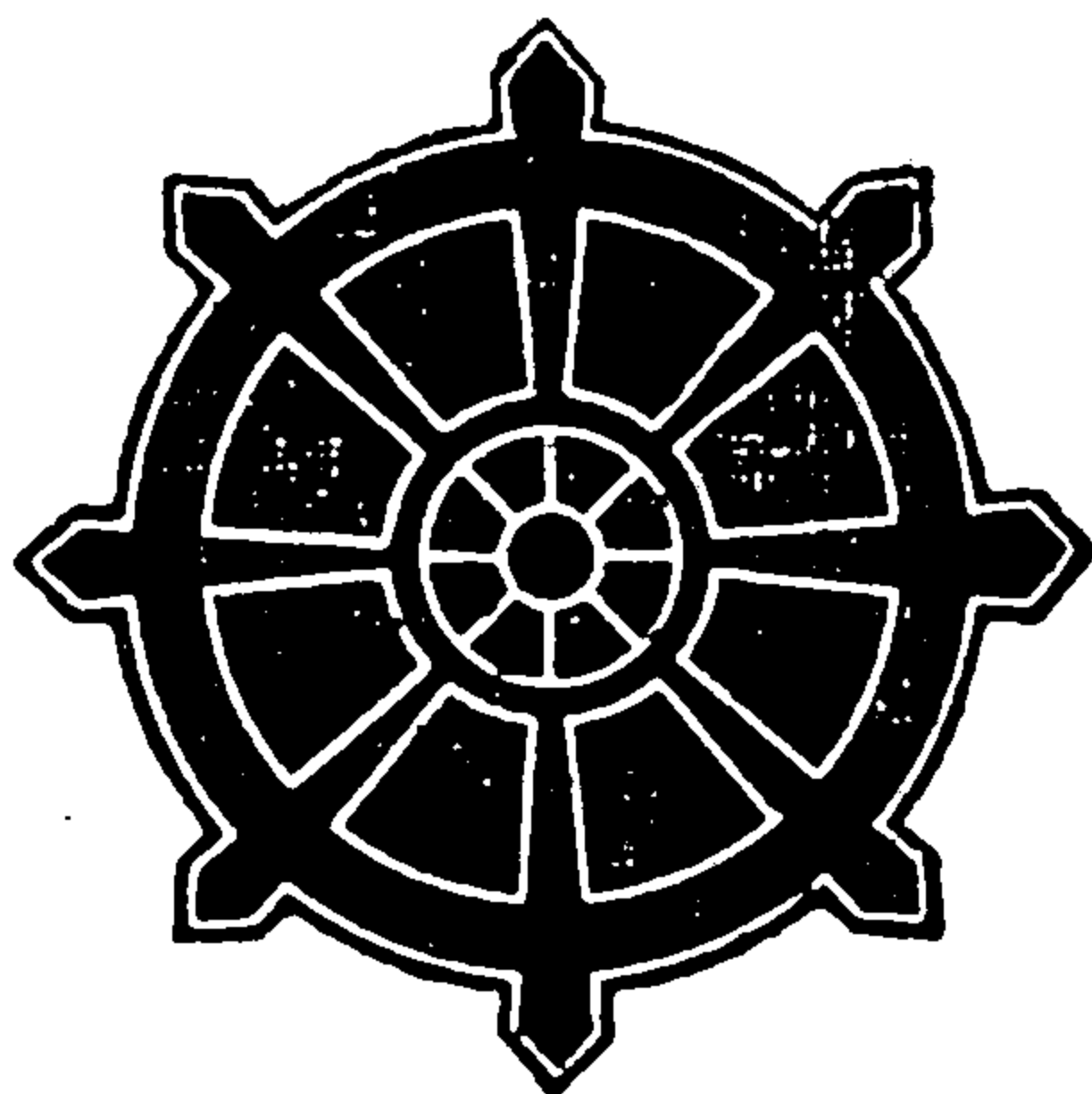
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NARADA THERA

EVERYMAN'S ETHICS

Four Discourses of the Buddha

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Adapted from the translations and notes in "The Light of the Dhamma" by the Venerable Narada Thera.

The introductory notes to the last three texts have been supplied by the editor of this series.

SIGĀLOVĀDA SUTTA

The Layman's Code of Discipline

Sigāla was the son of a Buddhist family residing at Rajagaha. His parents were devout followers of the Buddha, but the son was indifferent to religion. The pious father and mother could not by any means persuade their son to accompany them to visit the Buddha or his disciples and hear the good Doctrine. The son thought it practically useless to pay visits to the Sangha, as such visits may entail material loss. He was only concerned with material prosperity; to him spiritual progress was of no avail. Constantly he would say to his father: "I will have nothing to do with monks. Paying homage to them would make my back ache, and my knees stiff. I should have to sit on the ground and soil and wear out my clothes. And when at the conversations with them, after so sitting, one gets to know them, one has to invite them and give them offerings, and so one only loses by it."

Finally as the father was about to die, he called his son to his death-bed, and enquired whether he would at least listen to his parting advice. "Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me", he replied. "Well then, dear son, after your morning bath worship the six quarters". The father asked him to do so hoping that one day or other, while the son was so engaged, the Buddha or his disciples would see him, and make it an occasion to preach an appropriate discourse to him. And since death-bed wishes are to be remembered, Sigāla carried out his father's wish, not however knowing its true significance.

Now it was the custom of the Buddha to rise from his sleep at 4 o'clock and after enjoying Nibbanic Bliss for an

hour to pervade the whole world with His boundless thoughts of loving-kindness. It is at this hour that He surveys the world with his great compassion to find out to what fellow-being He could be of service on that day. One morning Sigāla was caught in the net of the Buddha's compassion; and with his vision the Buddha seeing that Sigāla could be shown a better channel for his acts of worship, decided: 'This day will I discourse to Sigāla on the layman's Vinaya (code of discipline). That discourse will be of benefit to many folk. There must I go.' The Buddha thereon came up to him on his way for alms to Rājagaha; and seeing him engaged in his worship of the four quarters, delivered this great discourse which contains in brief, the whole domestic and social duty of the layman.

Commenting on this Sutta, the Venerable Buddhaghosa says, "Nothing in the duties of a householder is left unmentioned. This Sutta is called the Vinaya of the householder. Hence in one who practises what he has been taught in it, growth is to be looked for, not decay." And Mrs. Rhys Davids adds: "The Buddha's doctrine of love and goodwill between man and man is here set forth in a domestic and social ethics with more comprehensive detail than elsewhere. And truly we may say even now of this Vinaya or code of discipline, so fundamental are the human interests involved, so sane and wide is the wisdom that envisages them, that the utterances are as fresh and practically as binding to-day and here as they were then at Rājagaha. 'Happy would have been the village or the clan on the banks of the Ganges where the people were full of the kindly spirit of fellow-feeling, the noble spirit of justice which breathes through these naive and simple sayings.' Not less happy would be the village, or the family on the banks of the Thames to-day, of which this could be said."

SIGALOVĀDA SUTTA

Thus have I heard:—

On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, near Rājagaha.

Now at that time, young Sigāla, a householder's son, rising early in the morning, departing from Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters, namely—the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith.

Then the Exalted One, having robed himself in the forenoon took bowl and robe, and entered Rājagaha for alms. Now He saw young Sigāla worshipping thus and spoke to him as follows:

“Wherefore do you, young householder, rising early in the morning, departing from Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands these various quarters—the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith?”

—“My father, Lord, while dying, said to me:—The six quarters, dear son, you shall worship. And I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honouring my father's word, rise early in the morning, and leaving Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands, these six quarters.”

—“’Tis not thus, young householder, the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble.”

—“How then, Lord, should the six quarters be worshipped in the discipline of the noble? ’Tis well, Lord, if the Exalted One would teach the doctrine to me showing how the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble!”

—“Well, young householder, listen and bear it well in mind; I shall speak.”—“Very good, Lord,” responded young Sigāla.

And the Exalted One spoke as follows:

“In as much, young householder, as the noble disciple (1) has eradicated the four vices in conduct¹, (2) in as much as he commits no evil action in four ways, (3) in as much as he pursues not the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters, and enters the path leading to victory in both worlds: he is favoured in this world and in the world beyond. Upon the dissolution of the body, after death, he is born in a happy heavenly realm.

(1) What are the four vices in conduct that he has eradicated? The destruction of life, householder, is a vice and so are stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying. These are the four vices that he has eradicated.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

“Killing, stealing, lying and adultery,
These four evils the wise ne’er praise.

1. *kamma-kilesa*, lit. ‘actions of defilement’.

(2) In which four ways does one commit no evil action? Led by desire does one commit evil. Led by anger does one commit evil. Led by ignorance does one commit evil. Led by fear does one commit evil.¹

But in as much as the noble disciple is not led by desire, anger, ignorance, and fear, he commits no evil."

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

“Whoso thro’ desire, hate or fear,
Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm,
All his glory fadeth away
E’en as the moon during the waning half.
Who ne’er thro’ desire, hate or fear,
Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm,
All his glory e’er increaseth
E’en as the moon during the waxing half.

(3) What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue?

- (a) Indulgence in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness,
- (b) Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours,
- (c) Frequenting theatrical shows,
- (d) Indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness,
- (e) Association with evil companions,
- (f) Habit of idleness.

(a) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness:—

1. These are the four *agati*, ‘evil courses of action’: *chanda*, *dosa*, *moha*, *bhaya*.

- i. loss of wealth,
- ii. increase of quarrels,
- iii. susceptibility to disease,
- iv. earning an evil reputation,
- v. shameless exposure of body,
- vi. weakening of intellect.

(b) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours:—

- i. he himself is unprotected and unguarded,
- ii. his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded;
- iii. his property is unprotected and unguarded,
- iv. he is suspected of evil deeds,¹
- v. he is subject to false rumours,
- vi. he meets with many troubles.

(c) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in frequenting theatrical shows:—

He is ever thinking:

- i. where is there dancing?
- ii. where is there singing?
- iii. where is there music?
- iv. where is there recitation?
- v. where is there playing with cymbals?
- vi. where is there pot-blowing?²

(d) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in gambling:—

1. Crimes committed by others.
2. A kind of amusement.

- i. the winner begets hate,
- ii. the loser grieves for lost wealth,
- iii. loss of wealth,
- iv. his word is not relied upon in a court of law,
- v. he is despised by his friends and associates,
- iv. he is not sought after for matrimony; for people would say that he is a gambler and is not fit to look after a wife.

(e) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in associating with evil companions, namely: any gambler, any libertine, any drunkard, any swindler, any cheat, any rowdy is his friend and companion.

(f) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in being addicted to idleness:—

He does no work, saying

- i. that it is extremely cold,
- ii. that it is extremely hot,
- iii. that it is too late in the evening,
- iv. that it is too early in the morning,
- v. that he is extremely hungry,
- vi. that he is too full.

Living in this way, he leaves many duties undone, new wealth he does not get, and wealth he has acquired dwindles away.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

“One is a bottle friend; one says, ‘friend, friend’ only to one’s face; one is a friend and an associate only when it is advantageous.

Sleeping till sunrise, adultery, irascibility, malevolence, evil companions, avarice—these six causes ruin a man.

The man who has evil comrades and friends is given to evil ways, to ruin doth he fall in both worlds—here and the next.

Dice, women, liquor, dancing, singing, sleeping by day, sauntering at unseemly hours, evil companions, avarice—these six causes ruin a man.

Who plays with dice and drinks intoxicants, goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives, associates with the mean and not with elders—he declines just as the moon during the waning half.

Who is drunk, poor, destitute, still thirsty whilst drinking, frequents the bar, sinks in debt as a stone in water, swiftly brings disrepute to his family.

Who by habit sleeps by day, and keeps late hours, is ever intoxicated, and is licentious, is not fit to lead a household life.

Who says it is too hot, too cold, too late, and leaves things undone, the opportunities for good go past such men.

But he who does not regard cold or heat any more than a blade of grass and who does his duties manfully, does not fall away from happiness.

* * *

These four, young householder, should be understood as foes in the guise of friends :

- (1) he who appropriates a friend's possessions,
- (2) he who renders lip-service,
- (3) he who flatters,
- (4) he who brings ruin.

(1) In four ways, young householder, should one who appropriates be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:—

- i. he appropriates his friend's wealth,
- ii. he gives little and asks much,
- iii. he does his duty out of fear,
- iv. he associates for his own advantage.

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who renders lip-service be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:—

- i. he makes friendly profession as regards the past,
- ii. he makes friendly profession as regards the future,
- iii. he tries to gain your favour by empty sayings,
- iv. when opportunity for service has arisen, he expresses his inability.

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who flatters be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend:—

- i. he approves of his friend's evil deeds,
- ii. he disapproves his friend's good deeds,
- iii. he praises him in his presence,
- iv. he speaks ill of him in his absence.

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who brings ruin be understood as a foe in the guise of friend :—

- i. he is a companion when you indulge in intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness,
- ii. he is a companion when you saunter in streets at unseemly hours,
- iii. he is a companion when you frequent theatrical shows,
- iv. he is a companion when you indulge in gambling which causes heedlessness.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again :

“The friend who appropriates,
the friend who renders lip-service,
the friend that flatters,
the friend who brings ruin to you—
these four as enemies the wise behold,
avoid them from afar as paths of peril.

These four, young householder, should be understood as warm-hearted friends :—

- (1) he who is a helpmate,
- (2) he who is the same in happiness and sorrow,
- (3) he who gives good counsel,
- (4) he who sympathises.

(1) In four ways, young householder, should a helpmate be understood as a warm-hearted friend :—

- i. he guards the heedless,
- ii. he protects the wealth of the heedless,
- iii. he becomes a refuge when you are in danger,
- iv. when there are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who is the same in happiness and sorrow be understood as a warm-hearted friend,

- i. his secrets he reveals to you,
- ii. he conceals your secrets,
- iii. in misfortune he does not forsake you,
- vi. his life even he sacrifices for your sake,

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who gives good counsel be understood as a warm-hearted friend:—

- i. he restrains you from doing evil,
- ii. he encourages you to do good,
- iii. he informs you of what is unknown to you,
- vi. he points out to you the path to heaven.

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who sympathises be understood as a warm-hearted friend:—

- i. he does not rejoice in your misfortune,
- ii. he rejoices in your prosperity,
- iii. he restrains others speaking ill of you,
- vi. he praises those who speak well of you.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:—

“The friend who is a helpmate,
 the friend in happiness and woe,
 the friend who gives good counsel,
 the friend who sympathises too—
 these four as friends the wise behold
 and cherish them devotedly
 as does a mother her own child.

The wise and virtuous shine like blazing fire.
 He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways
 like to a bee that honey gathers,¹
 riches mount up for him
 like ant hill's rapid growth.

With wealth acquired this way,
 a layman fit for household life,
 in portions four divides his wealth;
 thus will he friendship win.

One portion for his wants he uses,²
 two portions on his business spends,
 the fourth for times of need he keeps.

* * *

And how young householder, does a noble disciple
 cover the six quarters?

The following should be looked upon as the six quarters.
 The parents should be looked upon as the East, teachers as
 the South, wife and children as the West, friends and
 associates as the North, servants and employees as the
 Nadir, ascetics and Brahmans as the Zenith.³

In five ways, young householder, a child should
 minister to his parents as the *East* :—

1, Dhammapada V. 49: "As a bee, without harming the flower,
 its colour or scent, flies away, collecting only the honey ..."

2. This portion includes what is spent on good works: gifts to
 monks, charity, etc.

3. "The symbolism is deliberately chosen: as the day in the
East, so life begins with parents' care; teacher's fees and the South
 are the same word: *dakkhina*; domestic cares follow when the youth
 becomes man, as the West holds the later day-light; North is 'beyond'
 (*uttara*), so by help of friends, etc., he gets beyond troubles"
 (Rhys Davids).

- i. Having supported me I shall support them,
- ii. I shall do their duties,
- iii. I shall keep the family tradition,
- iv. I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance,
- v. furthermore I shall offer alms in honour of my departed relatives.¹

In five ways, young householder, the parents thus ministered to as the *East* by their children, show their compassion :—

- i. they restrain them from evil,
- ii. they encourage them to do good,
- iii. they train them for a profession,
- iv. they arrange a suitable marriage,
- v. at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them.

In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the East and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the East covered by them and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, a pupil should minister to a teacher as the *South* :—

- i. by rising from the seat in salutation,
- ii. by attending on him,

1. This is a sacred custom of the Aryans who never forgot the dead. This tradition is still faithfully observed by the Buddhists of Ceylon who make ceremonial offerings of alms to the monks on the 7th day, in the third month, and on each anniversary of the demise of the parents. Merit of these good actions is offered to the departed after such ceremony. Moreover after every *puñña-kamma* (good action), a Buddhist never fails to think of his parents and offer merit. Such is the loyalty and the gratitude shown to parents as advised by the Buddha.

- iii. by eagerness to learn,
- iv. by personal service,
- v. by respectful attention while receiving instructions.

In five ways, young householder, do teachers thus ministered to as the South by their pupils, show their compassion:—

- i. they train them in the best discipline,
- ii. they see that they grasp their lessons well,
- iii. they instruct them in the arts and sciences,
- iv. they introduce them to their friends and associates,
- v. they provide for their safety in every quarter.

The Teachers thus ministered to as the South by their pupils, show their compassion towards them in these five ways. Thus is the South covered by them and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, should a wife as the *West* be ministered to by a husband:—

- i. by being courteous to her,
- ii. by not despising her,
- iii. by being faithful to her,
- iv. by handing over authority to her,
- v. by providing her with adornments.

The wife thus ministered to as the *West* by her husband, shows her compassion to her husband in five ways:—

- i. she performs her duties well,
- ii. she is hospitable to relations and attendants,¹

1. Lit: 'the folk around' (*parījanā*).

- iii. she is faithful,
- iv. she protects what he brings,
- v. she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

In these five ways does the wife show her compassion to her husband who ministers to her as the West. Thus is the West covered by him and made secure and safe.

In five ways, young householder, should a clansman minister to his friends and associates as the *North* :—

- i. by liberality,
- ii. by courteous speech,
- iii. by being helpful,
- iv. by being impartial,
- v. by sincerity.

The friends and associates thus ministered to as the *North* by a clansman show compassion to him in five ways :—

- i. They protect him when he is heedless,
- ii. they protect his property when he is heedless,
- iii. they become a refuge when he is in danger,
- iv. they do not forsake him in his troubles,
- v. they show consideration for his family.

The friends and associates thus ministered to as the North by a clansman show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the North covered by him and made safe and secure.

In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the *Nadir* :—

- i. by assigning them work according to their ability,
- ii. by supplying them with food and wages,
- iii. by tending them in sickness,
- iv. by sharing with them any delicacies,
- v. by granting them leave at times.

The servants and employees thus ministered to as the *Nadir* by their master show their compassion to him in five ways :—

- i. they rise before him,
- ii. they go to sleep after him,
- iii. they take only what is given,
- iv. they perform their duties well,
- v. they uphold his good name and fame.

The servants and employees thus ministered to as the *Nadir* show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the *Nadir* covered by him and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, should a householder minister to ascetics and Brahmans as the *Zenith* :—

- i. by lovable deeds,
- ii. by lovable words,
- iii. by lovable thoughts,
- iv. by keeping open house to them,
- v. by supplying their material needs.

The ascetics and Brahmans thus ministered to as the *Zenith* by a householder show their compassion towards him in six ways:—

- i. they restrain him from evil,
- ii. they persuade him to do good,
- iii. they love him with a kind heart,
- iv. they make him hear what he has not heard,
- v. they clarify what he has already heard,
- vi. they point out the path to a heavenly state.

In these six ways do ascetics and Brahmans show their compassion towards a householder who minister to them as the Zenith. Thus is the Zenith covered by him and made safe and secure.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

“The mother and father are the East,
 The Teachers are the South,
 Wife and children are the West,
 The friends and associates are the North.
 Servants and employees are the Nadir,
 The ascetics and Brahmans are the Zenith;
 Who is fit to lead the household life,
 These six quarters he should salute.

Who is wise and virtuous,
 Gentle and keen-witted,
 Humble and amenable,
 Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is energetic and not indolent,
 In misfortune unshaken,
 Flawless in manner and intelligent,
 Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is hospitable, and friendly,
 Liberal and unselfish,
 A guide, an instructor, a leader,
 Such a one to honour may attain.

Generosity, sweet speech,
 Helpfulness to others,
 Impartiality to all,
 As the case demands.

These four winning ways make the world go
 round,
 As the lynchpin in a moving car.
 If these in the world exist not,
 Neither mother nor father will receive,
 Respect and honour from their children.

Since these four winning ways
 The wise appraise in every way ;
 To eminence they attain,
 And praise they rightly gain."

When the Exalted One had spoken thus, Sigāla, the young householder, said as follows :—

"Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if, Lord, a man were to set upright that which was overturned, or were to reveal that which was hidden, or were to point out the way to one who had gone astray, or were to hold a lamp amidst the darkness, so that those who have eyes may see. Even so, has the doctrine been explained in various ways by the Exalted One.

I take refuge, Lord, in the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. May the Exalted One receive me as a follower; as one who has taken refuge from this very day to life's end."

MAHĀ-MANGALA SUTTA

*Blessings*¹

This famous text, cherished highly in all Buddhist lands, is a terse but comprehensive summary of Buddhist ethics, individual and social. The 38 Blessings enumerated in it, are an unfailing guide on life's journey. Rightly starting with 'avoidance of bad company' which is basic to all moral and spiritual progress, the Blessings culminate in the achievement of a passion-free mind, unshakable in its serenity. To follow the ideals set forth in these verses, is the sure way to harmony and progress for the individual as well as for society, nation and mankind.

"The Mahā-Mangala Sutta shows that the Buddha's instructions do not always take negative forms, that they are not always a series of classifications and analysis, or concerned exclusively with monastic morality. Here in this Sutta we find family morality expressed in most elegant verses. We can imagine the happy blissful state of household life attained as a result of following these injunctions" (From *The Ethics of Buddhism* by S. Tachibana. Colombo 1943, Bauddha Sahitya Sabha).

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in Jeta's Grove², near Sāvattihī³. Now when the night was far spent, a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse:—

"Many deities and men, yearning after good, have pondered on Blessings⁴. Pray, tell me the greatest blessing!"—

Not to associate with the foolish⁵, but to associate with the wise; and to honour those who are worthy of honour — this is the greatest blessing.

To reside in a suitable locality⁶, to have done meritorious actions in the past and to set oneself in the right course,⁷ — this is the greatest blessing.

To have much learning, to be skilful in handicrafts,⁸ well-trained in discipline⁹, and to be of good speech¹⁰ — this is the greatest blessing.

To support father and mother, to cherish wife and children, and to be engaged in peaceful occupation — this is the greatest blessing.

To be generous in giving, to be righteous in conduct¹¹, to help one's relatives, and to be blameless in action — this is the greatest blessing.

To loathe evil and abstain from it, to refrain from intoxicants¹², and to be steadfast in virtue — this is the greatest blessing.

To be respectful¹³, humble, contented and grateful; and to listen to the Dhamma on due occasions¹⁴ — this is the greatest blessing.

To be patient and obedient, to associate with monks and to have religious discussions on due occasions — this is the greatest blessing.

Self-restraint¹⁵, a holy and chaste life, the perception of the Noble Truths and the realisation of Nibbana — this is the greatest blessing.

A mind unruffled by the vagaries of fortune¹⁶, from sorrow freed, from defilements cleansed, from fear liberated¹⁷ — this is the greatest blessing.

Those who thus abide, ever remain invincible, in happiness established. These are the greatest blessings.¹⁸

NOTES

(Derived mainly from the Commentaries)

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1. This Sutta appears in the Sutta-Nipāta (v.258ff) and in the Khuddakapāṭha. See Mahā-Mangala Jātaka (No. 453). For a detailed explanation see *Life's Highest Blessing* by Dr. R. L. Soni (146 pp.) Published by The World Institute of Buddhist Culture, Mandalay (Burma).
2. Anāthapiṇḍika, lit. 'He who gives alms to the helpless'; his former name was Sudatta. After his conversion to Buddhism, he bought the grove belonging to the Prince Jeta, and established a monastery which was subsequently named Jetavanārāma. It was in this monastery that the Buddha observed most of his *vassāna* periods (rainy seasons — the three months' retreat beginning with the full-moon of July). Many are the discourses delivered and many are the incidents connected with the Buddha's life that happened at Jetavana. It was here that the Buddha ministered to the sick monk neglected by his companions, advising them: "Whoever, monks, that would wait upon me, let him wait upon the sick." It was here that the Buddha so poignantly taught the law of impermanence, by asking the bereaved young woman Kisagotami who brought her dead child, to fetch a grain of mustard seed from a home where there has been no bereavement.

3. Identified with modern Sahet-Mahet, near Balrampur.
4. According to the Commentary, *mangala* means that which is conducive to happiness and prosperity.
5. This refers not only to the stupid and uncultured, but also includes the wicked in thought, word and deed.
6. Any place where monks, nuns and lay devotees continually reside ; where pious folk are bent on the performance of the ten meritorious deeds, and where the Dhamma exists as a living principle.
7. Making the right resolve for abandoning immorality for morality, faithlessness for faith, and selfishness for generosity.
8. The harmless crafts of the householder by which no living being is injured and nothing unrighteous done ; and the crafts of the homeless monk, such as stitching the robes, etc.
9. *Vinaya* means discipline in thought, word and deed. The commentary speaks of two kinds of discipline — that of the householder, which is abstinence from the ten immoral actions (*akusala-kammapatha*), and that of the monk which is the non-transgression of the offences enumerated in the *Pāṭimokkha* (the code of the monk's rules) or the 'fourfold moral purity' (*caturpārisuddhi-sīla*).
10. *Good speech* that is opportune, truthful, friendly, profitable and spoken with thoughts of lovingkindness.
11. *Righteous conduct* is the observance of the ten good actions (*kusala-kammapatha*) in thought, words and deed:

freeing the mind of greed, ill-will and wrong views ; avoiding speech that is untruthful, slanderous, abusive and frivolous ; and the non-committal of acts of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

12. Total abstinence from alcohol and intoxicating drugs.
13. Towards monks (and of course also to the clergy of other religions), teachers, parents, elders, superiors. etc.
14. For instance, when one is harrassed by evil thoughts.
15. Self-restraint (*tapo*) : the suppression of lusts and hates by the control of the senses ; and the suppression of indolence by the rousing of energy.
16. *Loka-dhamma*, i.e. conditions which are necessarily connected with life in this world ; there are primarily eight of them : gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, pain and joy.
17. Each of these three expressions refers to the mind of the Saint (Arahant). *Asoka* : sorrowless ; *viraja* : stainless, i.e. free from lust, hatred and ignorance ; *khema* : security from the bonds of sense desires (*kāma*), repeated existence (*bhava*), false views (*diṭṭhi*) and ignorance (*avijjā*).
18. The above-mentiond 38 Blessings.

PARABHAVA - SUTTA

Downfall

While the Mangala Sutta deals with the way of life conducive to progress and happiness, the Parābhava Sutta supplements it by pointing out the causes of downfall. He who allows himself to become tarnished by these blemishes of conduct, blocks his own road to worldly, moral and spiritual progress and lowers all that is truly noble and human in man. But he who is heedful of these dangers keeps open the road to all those 38 Blessings of which human nature is capable.

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in the Jeta Grove, near Sāvattthī.

Now when the night was far spent a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse :—

The Deity :

Having come here with our questions to the Exalted One, we ask thee, O Gotama, about man's decline. Pray, tell us the cause of downfall !

The Buddha :

Easily known is the progressive one, easily known he who declines. He who loves Dhamma, progresses ; he who is averse to it, declines.

The Deity :

Thus much do we see: this is the first cause of one's downfall. Pray, tell us the second cause.¹

The Buddha :

The wicked are dear to him, with the virtuous he finds no delight, he prefers the creed of the wicked — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Being fond of sleep, fond of company, indolent, lazy and irritable — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Though being well-to-do, not to support father and mother who are old and past their youth — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To deceive by falsehood a Brahmana or ascetic or any other mendicant — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one's luxuries alone — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and to despise one's own kinsmen — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be a rake, a drunkard, a gambler, and to squander all one earns — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Not to be contented with one's own wife, and to be seen with harlots and the wives of others — this is a cause of one's downfall.

1. These lines are repeated after each stanza, with the due enumeration.

Being past one's youth, to take a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To place in authority a woman given to drink and squandering, or a man of a like behaviour — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be of warrior birth, with vast ambition and of slender means, and to crave for rulership — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the noble sage endowed with insight shares a happy realm.

Sutta-nipāta, vv. 91—115.

VYAGGHAPAJJA SUTTA

Conditions of Welfare

In this Sutta, the Buddha instructs rich householders how to preserve and increase their prosperity and how to avoid loss of wealth. Wealth alone, however, does not make a complete man nor a harmonious society. Possession of wealth all too often multiplies man's desires, and he is ever in the pursuit of amassing more wealth and power. This unrestrained craving, however, leaves him dissatisfied and stifles his inner growth. It creates conflict and disharmony in society through the resentment of the underprivileged who feel themselves exploited by the effects of unrestrained craving.

Therefore the Buddha follows up his advice on material welfare with four basic conditions for spiritual welfare: confidence (in the Master's enlightenment), virtue, liberality and wisdom. These four will instil in man a sense of higher values. He will, then, not only pursue his own material concern, but also be aware of his duty towards society. To mention only one of the implications: a wisely and generously employed liberality will reduce tensions and conflicts in society. Thus the observing of these conditions of material and spiritual welfare will make for an ideal citizen in an ideal society.

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling amongst the Koliyans¹ in their market town named Kakkara-patta. Then Dīghajānu,² a Koliyan, approached the Exalted One, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. Thus seated, he addressed the Exalted One as follows :—

“We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy worldly pleasure. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of Kāsi. We deck ourselves with garlands, perfume and unguents. We use gold and silver. To those like us, O Lord, let the Exalted One preach the Doctrine, teach those things that lead to weal and happiness in this life and to weal and happiness in future life.”

Conditions of Worldly Progress

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja,³ conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life. Which four?

The accomplishment of persistent effort (*utṭhāna-sampadā*), the accomplishment of watchfulness (*āraṅkha-sampadā*), good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) and balanced livelihood (*sama-jīvikatā*).

What is the accomplishment of persistent effort?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, by whatsoever activity a householder earns his living, whether by farming, by trading, by rearing cattle, by archery, by service under the king, or by

1. The Koliyans were the rivals of the Sākyans. Queen Mahā Māyā belonged to the Koliyan clan and King Suddhodana to the Sākyan clan.

2. Literally, 'long-kneed'.

3. 'Tigers' Path'; he was so called because his ancestors were born on a forest path infested with tigers. Vyagghapajja was Dīghajānu's family name.

any other kind of craft — at that he becomes skilful and is not lazy. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means; he is able to carry out and allocate (duties). This is called the accomplishment of persistent effort.

What is the accomplishment of watchfulness?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, whatsoever wealth a householder is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means — such he husbands well by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal, fire would not burn, water would not carry away, nor ill-disposed heirs remove. This is the accomplishment of watchfulness.

What is good friendship?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, in whatsoever village or market town a householder dwells, he associates, converses, engages in discussions with householders or householders' sons, whether young and highly cultured or old and highly cultured, full of faith (*saddhā*)¹ full of virtue (*sīla*), full of charity (*cāga*), full of wisdom (*paññā*). He acts in accordance with the faith of the faithful, with the virtue of the virtuous, with the charity of the charitable, with the wisdom of the wise. This is called good friendship.

What is balanced livelihood?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, a householder knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither

1. *Saddhā* is not blind faith, It is confidence based on knowledge.

extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

Just as the goldsmith¹, or an apprentice of his, knows, on holding up a balance, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up; even so a householder, knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with little income were to lead an extravagant life, there would be those who say — ‘This person enjoys his property like one who eats wood-apple.² If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with a large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say — ‘This person will die like a starveling’.

The wealth thus amassed, Vyagghapajja, has four sources of destruction:—

(i) Debauchery, (ii) drunkennes, (iii) gambling, (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and outlets, if a man should close the inlets and open the outlets and there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease of water is to be expected in that tank, and not an increase; even so there are four sources for the destruction of

1. *Tulādhara*, lit. ‘carrier of the scales’.

2. *Udumbarakhādaka*, The Commentary explains that one who wishes to eat wood-apple shakes the tree, with the result that many fruits fall but only a few are eaten, whilst a large number is wasted.

amassed wealth — debauchery, drunkenness, gambling, and friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

There are four sources for the increase of amassed wealth:— (i) abstinence from debauchery, (ii) abstinence from drunkenness, (iii) non-indulgence in gambling, (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a person were to open the inlets and close the outlets, and there should also be adequate rainfall, an increase of water is certainly to be expected in that tank and not a decrease, even so these four conditions are the sources of increase of amassed wealth.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, are conducive to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life.

Conditions of Spiritual Progress

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. Which four?

The accomplishment of Faith (*saddhā-sampadā*), the accomplishment of virtue (*sīla-sampadā*), the accomplishment of Charity (*cāga-sampadā*) and the accomplishment of Wisdom (*paññā-sampadā*).

What is the accomplishment of Faith?

Herein a householder is possessed of faith, he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One (*Tathāgata*):— Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One: he is the Holy One (*arahā*), 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. This is called the accomplishment of Faith.

What is the accomplishment of virtue ?

Herein a householder abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and from intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness. This is called the accomplishment of Virtue.

What is the accomplishment of Charity ?

Herein a householder dwells at home with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in generosity, attending to the needy, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called the accomplishment of Charity.

What is the accomplishment of wisdom ?

Herein a householder is wise: he is endowed with wisdom that understands the arising and cessation (of the five aggregates of existence); he is possessed of the noble penetrating insight that leads to the destruction of suffering. This is called the accomplishment of Wisdom.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life.

“Energetic and heedful in his tasks,
Wisely administering his wealth,
He lives a balanced life,
Protecting what he has amassed.

“Endowed with faith and virtue too,
Generous he is and free from avarice;
He ever works to clear the path
That leads to weal in future life.

“Thus to the layman full of faith,
By him, so truly named ‘Enlightened’,
These eight conditions have been told
Which now and after lead to bliss.”

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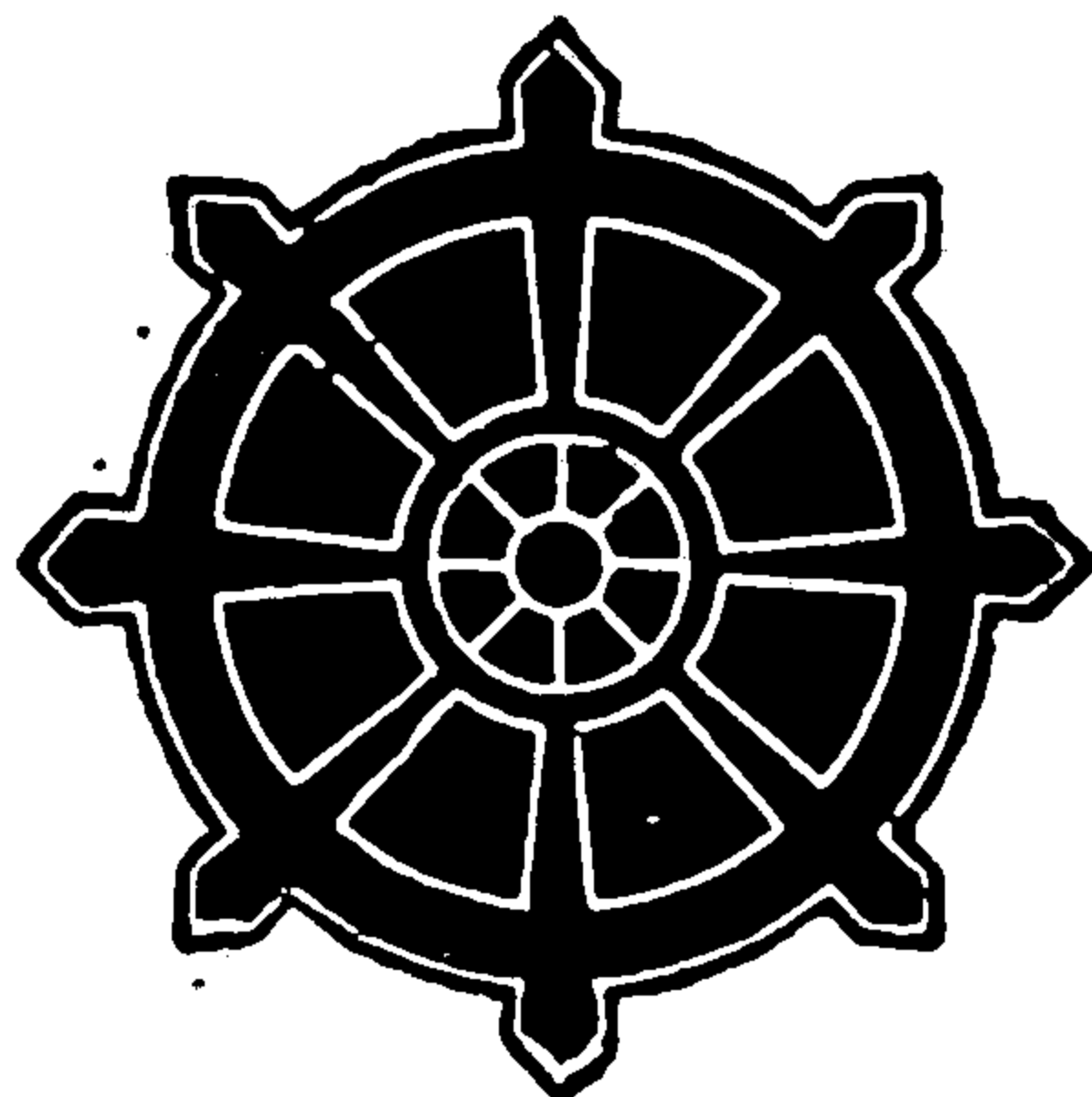
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Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha

1. The First Sermon
2. The Sermon on Not-Self
3. The Fire Sermon

With Introduction and Notes

Translated by

ÑĀNAMOLI THERA

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INTRODUCTION

*'No doing any kind of evil,
Perfecting profitable skill,
And purifying one's own heart :
This is the Buddhas' dispensation'.*

The message of the Awakened Ones, so stated as it is in the *Dhammapada* in the plain terms of good and evil, upholds the same value that every great compassionate religion shares. But the seed of good has to grow in the soil of truth; and how the tree grows depends upon the nature of the soil in which it is planted and whence it draws its nourishment. With men as the custodians of the true, the fulfilment of the good depends upon how truth is conceived by men to be. By their acts they verify it.

'A monk called Gotama, it seems, a son of the Sakyans who went forth into homelessness from a Sakyan clan has come. . . . Now a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: "That Blessed One is such since he is accomplished and fully awakened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, awakened and blessed. . . . He teaches a True Idea that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with its own special meaning and phrasing, he exhibits a divine life that is utterly perfect and pure." Now it is good to see such Accomplished Ones'. So it was said of him at the time. But what,

then, was the fundamental ground of that teaching? Of the many ways that such a question might be answered, perhaps the simplest and best is this : 'He expounded the teaching that is peculiar to Buddhas : Suffering, Origin, Cessation, and a Path'. These four are known otherwise as the *Four Noble Truths*. This, with the cognate teaching of Not-Self, may be said to constitute the fundamental ground of the teaching of Buddhas, this is what marks them, sets them apart and entitles them to the unique epithet 'Buddha'.

The three discourses here presented display precisely in all its incomparably serene simplicity, without assumptions, that special fundamental teaching, from which all Buddhism branches and to which it all points back. The first discourse displays this fourfold Truth as something to be realized and verified for oneself here and now ; the second discloses the contradictions which infect all self-conceits ; the third echoes the second from another angle.

The circumstances that led up to the discovery of these four Truths and to the delivery of these three discourses were briefly as follows. The Bodhisatta — as he then was, before his awakening — was twenty-nine when he left the house life, where he enjoyed the extreme of luxury. He went into 'exile' in order to find not a palliative but the true and incontrovertible way out from suffering ('This world has surely happened upon woe since it is born and ages and dies but to fall from one kind of existence and reappear in another. Yet it knows no escape from this suffering, from ageing and death : surely there is an escape from this suffering, from ageing and death?'). He studied and practised under two of the foremost teachers of *samādhi* (Concentration or Quiet) and reached the highest meditative attainments possible thereby. But that was not enough ('I was not satisfied with that as a True Idea ; I left it

and went away'). He then spent the best part of the next six years in the practice of asceticism, trying every sort of extreme self-mortification. During this time he was waited on by five ascetics, who hoped that if he discovered the Deathless State he would be able to communicate his discovery to them. This too failed ('By this gruelling penance I have attained no distinction higher than the human ideal worthy of a noble one's knowing and seeing. Might there be another way to awakening?'). He decided to try once more the path of concentration, attained through mindfulness of breathing, though this time not pushed to the extremity of quiet but guided instead by ordered consideration ('I thought: "While my Sakyan father was busy and I (as a child) was sitting in the shade of a rose-apple tree, then quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas, I had direct acquaintance of entering upon and abiding in the first *jhāna*-meditation, which is accompanied by thinking and exploring, with happiness and pleasure born of seclusion. Might that be the way to enlightenment?". And following upon that memory came the recognition: "That is the only way to enlightenment"). He now gave up self-mortification and took normal food again in order to restore to his emaciated body strength sufficient for his purpose. Then the five ascetics left him in disgust, judging that he had failed and was merely reverting to what he had forsaken. But now in solitude, his new balanced effort, in the harmony of virtue, unified in concentration, and guided by the ordered consideration of insight with mindfulness, at length brought success in discovery of the way to the goal he had sought for so long ('So I too found the ancient path, the ancient trail, travelled by the Awakened Ones of old'). Five faculties in perfect balance had brought him to the goal: they were the four, namely energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding, with faith in the efficacy of the other four

— the five that 'merge into the Deathless'. According to tradition, the Awakening took place on the night of the Vesākha full moon in the fruitful month of May.

It was upon invitation that he resolved to communicate his discovery to others. For his first audience to whom to divulge it he chose the five ascetics who had shared his self-mortification but had later left him. They were now at Benares — India's 'Eternal City'— and so in due course he went there to rejoin them. Just two months after his awakening he preached his first sermon — the 'Setting Rolling of the Wheel of Truth' or 'Bringing into Existence the Blessing of the True Ideal'— with the five ascetics for his hearers. The tradition says it was the evening of the Āsāḷha full moon in July, the day before the Rainy Season begins, and he began to speak at the moment when the sun was dipping and the full moon simultaneously rising.

This, his first sermon, made one of his listeners, the ascetic Kondañña, a Stream-Enterer with his attainment of the first of the four progressive stages of realization. The other four soon followed in his footsteps. The second sermon, on the Characteristic of Not-Self, was preached to the same five, and it brought them to the fourth and final stage, that of Arahantship: 'and then' as it is said 'there were six Arahants in the world'.

These are the first two discourses presented here, and they were the first two sermons ever uttered by the Buddha. The third, the 'Fire Sermon', was delivered some months later to an audience of a thousand ascetics converted from the heaven-bent practice of fire-worship.

All three discourses deal only with understanding (*paññā*) among the faculties mentioned above as required to be

balanced. But understanding, in order to reach perfection, has indeed to be aided by the others, or in other words to be founded upon Virtue ('habit without conflict') and to be fortified by concentration (though not necessarily developed to the fulness of quietism). Thus and no otherwise it can reach its goal of unshakable liberation. Virtue and concentration alone without the guidance of Understanding can do no more than suppress, but they cannot of themselves alone give unshakable liberation. Now the hearers of all these three discourses were, like the Buddha himself, all ascetics already expert in the techniques and refinements of both virtue (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*). So the Buddha had thus no need to tell them about what they already knew very well. Similarly he had no need to expound the doctrine of Action (*kamma*) and its Ripening (*vipāka*) with which they were already thoroughly acquainted through the ancient teachings. What he had to do was first to show how it is possible to go astray towards the opposite extremes of sensual indulgence and self-torment, and second to describe the facts, to show how things are, clearly and succinctly enough to stir his hearers to the additional spontaneous movement of understanding essential and indispensable for the final discovery of deliverance, each for himself ('A Perfect One is one who shows the way').

Now let the discourses speak for themselves. Their incalculable strength lies in their simplicity and in their actuality. The profound truth is there, discoverable even through the misty medium of translation.

SETTING ROLLING THE WHEEL OF TRUTH

(Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana-sutta)

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the Bhikkhus of the group of five :—

Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by one gone forth from the house-life. What are the two? There is devotion to indulgence of pleasure in the objects of sensual desire, which is inferior, low, vulgar, ignoble, and leads to no good; and there is devotion to self-torment, which is painful, ignoble, and leads to no good.

The middle way discovered by a Perfect One avoids both these extremes: it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana. And what is that middle way? It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. That is the middle way discovered by a Perfect One, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana.

Suffering, as a noble truth, is this: Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, association with the loathed is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering—in short, suffering is the five categories of clinging's objects.

The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is the craving that produces renewal of being, accompanied by enjoyment and lust, and enjoying this and that; in other words, craving for sensual desires, craving for being, craving for non-being.

Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving.

The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

'Suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, can be diagnosed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, has been diagnosed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, can be abandoned': such was the vision,... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, has been abandoned': such was the vision,... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,... 'This cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be verified': such was the vision,... 'This cessation of suffer-

ing, as a noble truth, has been verified': such was the vision,... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,... 'This way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be developed': such was the vision,... 'This way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been developed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

As long as my knowing and seeing how things are was not quite purified in these twelve aspects — in these three phases of each of the four noble truths — I did not claim to have discovered the full awakening that is supreme in the world with its gods, its angels of death and high divinity, in this generation with its monks and divines, with its princes and men. But as soon as my knowing and seeing how things are was quite purified in these twelve aspects — in these three phases of each of the four noble truths — then I claimed to have discovered the full awakening that is supreme in the world with its gods, its angels of death and high divinity, in this generation with its monks and divines, with its princes and men. Knowing and seeing arose in me thus: My heart's deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no renewal of being.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus of the group of five were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, there arose in the venerable Kondañña the spotless, immaculate vision of the True Idea: Whatever is inseparable from the idea of arising is all inseparable from the idea of cessation.

When the Wheel of Truth had thus been set rolling by the Blessed One the earth-gods raised the cry : 'At Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of Truth has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by monk or divine or god or death-angel or high divinity or anyone in the world'.

On hearing the earth-gods' cry, [all the gods in turn in the six paradises of the sensual sphere took up the cry till it reached beyond to the Retinue of High Divinity in the sphere of pure form]. And so indeed in that hour, at the moment, the cry soared up to the World of High Divinity, and this ten-thousand-fold world-element shook and rocked and quaked, and a great measureless radiance surpassing the very nature of the gods was displayed in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered the exclamation : 'Kodañña knows! Kondañña knows!', and that is how that venerable one acquired the name, Aññā-Kondañña — Kondañña who knows. (Saṃyutta-Nikāya LVI, 11).

THE NOT-SELF CHARACTERISTIC

Anatta-lakkhaṇa-sutta

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the Bhikkhus of the group of five:—‘Bhikkhus’,—‘Venerable sir’ they replied. The Blessed One said this :

Bhikkhus, form is not-self. Were form self, then this form would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of form ‘Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus’. And since form is not-self so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of form ‘Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus’.

Bhikkhus, feeling is not-self...

Bhikkhus, perception is not-self...

Bhikkhus, determinations are not-self...

Bhikkhus, consciousness is not-self. Were consciousness self, then this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of consciousness ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus’. And since consciousness is not-self so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of consciousness ‘Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus’.

Bhikkhus, how do you conceive it: is form permanent or impermanent? — Impermanent, venerable sir.— Now is what is impermanent painful or pleasant? — Painful, venerable sir.— Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since inseparable from the idea of change, fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this is I, this is my self’? — No, venerable sir.

Is feeling permanent or impermanent?—...

Is perception permanent or impermanent?—...

Are determinations permanent or impermanent?—...

Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?—Impermanent, venerable sir.—Now is what is impermanent pleasant or painful?—Painful, venerable sir.—Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since inseparable from the idea of change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this is I, this is my self'?—No, venerable sir.

So, bhikkhus, any kind of form whatever, whether past, future, or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must, with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not my self'.

Any kind of feeling whatever,...

Any kind of perception whatever,...

Any kind of determination whatever,...

Any kind of consciousness whatever, whether past, future, or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must, with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not my self'.

Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds estrangement in form, he finds estrangement in feeling, he finds estrangement in perception, he finds estrangement in determinations, he finds estrangement in consciousness.

When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of passion he is liberated. When liberated, there is

knowledge that he is liberated: he understands 'Birth is exhausted, the divine life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond'.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, the hearts of the bhikkus of the group of five were liberated from taints through clinging no more. (Saṃyutta-Nikāya XXII, 59).

THE FIRE SERMON

Āditta-pariyāya-sutta

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Gayā, at Gayāsisā together with a thousand bhikkhus. There he addressed the bhikkhus :

Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what is the All that is burning ?

The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, ageing and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

The ear is burning, sounds are burning,...

The nose is burning, odours are burning,...

The tongue is burning, flavours are burning,...

The body is burning, tangibles are burning,...

The mind is burning, ideas are burning, mind-consciousness is burning, mind-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with mind-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, ageing and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds estrangement in the eye, finds estrangement in forms, finds estrangement in eye-consciousness, finds estrangement in eye-contact, and whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, in that too he finds estrangement.

He finds estrangement in the ear,... in sounds,...

He finds estrangement in the nose,... in odours,...

He finds estrangement in the tongue,... in flavours,...

He finds estrangement in the body,... in tangibles,...

He finds estrangement in the mind, finds estrangement in ideas, finds estrangement in mind-consciousness, finds estrangement in mind-contact, and whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, in that too he finds estrangement.

When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of passion he is liberated. When liberated there is knowledge that he is liberated: he understands 'Birth is exhausted, the divine life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond'.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, the hearts of those thousand bhikkhus were liberated from taints through clinging no more. (Samyutta-Nikāya XXXV, 28).

NOTES

FIRST SUTTA

THUS I HEARD: Words spoken by Ānanda Thera at the First Council when all the Discourses were recited three months after the Buddha's *Parinibbāna*.

PERFECT ONE: The Pali word *Tathāgata* has several alternative explanations including *tathā āgato* ('thus come', i.e., by the way followed by all Buddhas), *tathā gato* ('thus gone', i.e., to the discovery of the Four Truths), and *tathalakkhaṇam āgato* ('come to the characteristic of the real or the 'such', namely the undeceptive truth).

NIBBANA: Pali *nibbāna*, Sanskrit *nirvāna*. The meaning is 'extinction', that is, of the 'fires' of lust, hate and delusion, or more briefly of craving and ignorance, and so nibbana is a name for the third Truth as liberation. The word is made up of the prefix *nir* (not) and *vāna* ('effort of blowing', figuratively 'craving'); probably the origin was a smith's fire, which 'goes out' or 'becomes extinguished' (*nibbāyati*) if no longer blown on by the bellows, but the simile most used is that of a lamp's extinguishment (*nibbāna*) through exhaustion of wick and oil.

NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH: The members of the Path are defined in the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and elsewhere as follows: *Right View* of the Four Truths. *Right Intention* governed by renunciation (non-sensuality), non-ill-will, and non-cruelty (harmlessness). *Right Speech* in abstention from lying, slander, abuse, and gossip. *Right Action* in abstention from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. *Right Livelihood* for bhikkhus as that allowed by the Rules of the Discipline, and for laymen as avoidance of trading in weapons, living

beings, meat, intoxicants, and poisons (Anguttara, Fives). *Right Effort* to avoid unarisen and to abandon arisen evil, and to arouse unarisen and to develop arisen good. *Right Mindfulness* of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as given in the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, that is contemplation of the body as a body, of feelings as feelings, of states of consciousness as states of consciousness, and of ideas as ideas. *Right Concentration* as (any of) the four *jhāna*-meditations. Collectively the first two members are called Understanding (*paññā*), the next three Virtue (*sīla*), and the last three Concentration (*samādhi*). The Noble Eightfold Path is developed in four progressive stages, namely those of Stream-Entry (where wrong view, ritualism and doubt are ended), Once-Return (where sensuality and ill will are weakened), Non-Return (where these two are ended) and Arahantship (where lust for form, lust for the formless, conceit, agitation and ignorance are ended), this being the end of craving which causes suffering.

SUFFERING: the Pali word *dukkha*, made up of *dur* ('bad, 'unsatisfactory') and *kha* ('state', '-ness') extends its meaning from the actual suffering present in physical pain or mental grief to any unwelcome state of insecurity, no matter how vague.

TRUTH: Pali *sacca* (compare Sanskrit *satya*); from the root *as* 'to be there', 'to be existent', 'to have reality', etc., and so literally a 'there-is-ness' in the sense of a state that, unlike a mirage, does not deceive or disappoint. The common sense use of truth is by no means always consistent, and the word and the notion must therefore be handled with some care, taking it here only as treated by the Buddha. 'As to individual philosophers' and divines' individual factional truths — that is to say "The world is eternal" or "The world is not eternal",

"The world is finite" or "The world is infinite", "The soul is what the body is" or "The soul is one, the body is another", "After death a Perfect One is" or "After death a Perfect One is not" or "After death a Perfect One both is and is not" or "After death a Perfect One neither is nor is not"—when a bhikkhu has cast off all these, has renounced and rejected, banished, abandoned and relinquished them all, he thus becomes one who has cast off factional truths (Anguttara-Nikāya IV, 38). But how is truth to be found which is not factional? There are five ideas that ripen here and now in two ways. What five? Faith, preference, hearsay-learning, arguing upon evidence, and liking through pondering a view. Now something may have faith well placed in it and yet be hollow, empty and false; and again something may have no faith placed in it and yet be factual, true and no other than it seems; and so with preference and the rest. If a man has faith, then he guards truth when he says "My faith is thus", but on that account draws no unreserved conclusion "Only this is true, the other is wrong". In this way he guards truth; but there is as yet no discovery of truth. And so with preference and the rest. How is truth discovered? Here a bhikkhu lives near some village or town. Then a householder or his son goes to him in order to test him in three kinds of ideas, in ideas provocative of greed, of hate, and of delusion, wondering "Are there in this venerable one any such ideas, whereby his mind being obsessed he might, unknowing, say 'I know', unseeing, say 'I see', or get others to do likewise, which would be long for their harm and suffering?". While thus testing him he comes to find that there are no such ideas in him, and he finds that "The bodily and verbal behaviour of that venerable are not those of one affected by lust or hate or delusion. But the True Idea that this venerable one teaches is profound, hard to see and discover; yet it is the most peaceful and superior of

all, out of reach of logical ratiocination, subtle, for the wise to experience; such a True Idea cannot be taught by one affected by lust or hate or delusion". It is as soon as, by testing him, he comes to see that he is purified from ideas provocative of lust, hate and delusion, that he then plants his faith in him. When he visits him he respects him, when he respects him he gives ear, one who gives ear hears the True Idea with attentiveness. Having heard the True Idea, he remembers it, he investigates the meaning of ideas remembered. When he does that he acquires a preference by pondering the ideas. That produces interest. One interested is actively committed. So committed, he makes a judgment. According to his judgment he exerts himself. When he exerts himself he comes to realize with the body the ultimate truth and he sees it by the penetrating of it with understanding. That is how there is discovery of truth. But there is as yet no final arrival at truth. How is truth finally arrived at? Final arrival at truth is the repetition, the keeping in being, the development, of those same ideas. That is how there is final arrival at truth' (Majjhima-Nikāya 95 abbreviated). This undeceptive truth so arrived at is the Four Noble Truths, of which it is said 'These four Noble Truths are what is real, not unreal, not other (than they seem), that is why they are called Noble Truths' (Sacca-Saṃyutta). Besides this essential static unity of the Four Truths as undeceptiveness, the dynamic structure of the transfiguration which they operate in combination is expressed as follows: 'Who sees suffering sees also the origin of suffering and the cessation of suffering and the way leading to cessation of suffering' (and whichever of the Four Truths he sees, he sees the other three therewith: Sacca-Saṃyutta), and 'Of these four Noble Truths, there is noble truth to be diagnosed, there is noble truth to be abandoned, there is noble truth to be

verified, and there is noble truth to be developed (kept in being)' (Sacca-Sam̐yutta).

CATEGORIES: this represents the Pali word *khandha* (Sanskrit *skandha*), which is often rendered by 'aggregate'. The five are as given in the second Discourse. They are headings that comprise all that can be said to arise and that forms the object of clinging. 'The clinging is neither the same as these five categories which are its objects, nor is it something apart from them; it is will and lust in regard to these five categories of clinging's objects that is the clinging there' (Majjhima, Sutta 109). The five are respectively compared to a lump of froth, a bubble, a mirage, a coreless plantain-stem, and a conjuring-trick.

CLINGING: as unsatisfactory and inadequate but accepted rendering for the Pali *upāḍāna*. The word means literally 'taking up' (*upa* plus *āḍāna*; compare the Latin *assumere* from *ad* plus *sumere*). By first metaphor it means a fire's 'fuel', i.e., what a fire 'takes upon itself' and 'consumes'. By second metaphor it is used for the assumption and consumption that satisfies craving and produces existence. As such it is the condition *sine qua non* for being. What is consumed (or assumed) is the categories (q.v.). The word 'clinging' has to represent this meaning, Clinging's ending is nibbana.

CRAVING: Though the word *taṇhā* doubtless once meant 'thirst' (compare Sanskrit *tr̥ṣṇā*) it is never used in Pali in that sense. With ignorance it is regarded as a basic factor in the continuity of existence. Craving draws creatures on through greed and drives them on through hate, while ignorance prevents their seeing the truth of how things are or where they are going. Denial is as much an activity of craving as assertion is. Denial maintains the denied.

CESSATION: *nirodha*, meaning the cessation of suffering through the cessation of craving, is regardable as the removal of a poison, the curing of a disease, not as the mere denial of it opposed to the assertion of it or the obstruction (*paṭivirodha*) of it in conflict with the favouring (*anurodha*) of it (see under *Craving*), since both assertion and denial confirm and maintain alike the basic idea or state that is required to be cured. Cessation, therefore, is not to be confounded with mere negativism or nihilism. 'Any pleasure and joy that arise in dependence on the world is *gratification*; that the world is impermanent, pain-haunted and inseparable from the idea of change is the *disappointment* in the world; the removal of desire and lust is the *cure* (the *escape*) in the world' (Anguttara, Threes). The 'cure' or 'escape' is Cessation: the Buddha would not claim awakening till he had diagnosed how these three things came to be.

KNOWING AND SEEING HOW THINGS ARE: the force of the Pali word *yathābhūta*, literally 'how (it has) come to be', 'how (it) is', 'how (things) exist', lies in the direct allusion to the absolutely relative conditionedness of all being. It is given specially thus: 'Seeing "such is form, such its origin, such its going out"', and so with the other four categories.

THE VENERABLE KONDAÑÑA: one of the five bhikkhus. See Introduction.

SECOND SUTTA

FORM: Pali *rūpa* ('what appears', 'appearance'). As the first of the five Categories (q.v.) it is defined in terms of the 'four Great Entities', namely earth (hardness), water (cohesion), fire (temperature), and air (distension and motion), along with the negative aspect of space (what does not appear), from all of which are derived the secondary phenomena such as

'persons', 'features', 'shapes', etc.; these are regarded as 'secondary' because while form can appear without them they cannot appear without form. It is also defined as 'that which is being worn away' (*ruppati*), thus underlining its general characteristic of instability.

NOT-SELF: Together with the four Truths, this is taught only by Buddhas. *Anattā* ('not-self') is shown as a general characteristic without exception. 'The characteristic of impermanence does not become apparent because, when rise and fall are not given attention, it is concealed by continuity; the characteristic of pain does not become apparent because, when continuous oppression is not given attention, it is concealed by the postures (changing from one posture to another, waking and sleeping); the characteristic of not-self does not become apparent because, when resolution into the various elements (that compose whatever is) is not given attention, it is concealed by compactness' (*Visuddhimagga*, Ch. XXI). Self-identification and hunger for permanence and bliss form the principal manifestations of craving guided by view that is wrong because it is not in conformity with undeceptive truth. When confronted with the contradictions and the impossibility of self-identification with any of the five Categories of Clinging's objects (q.v.) craving seeks to satisfy this need by imagining a soul (individual or universal); but since no such soul, however conceived, can escape falling within the five Categories of Clinging's objects, this solution is always doomed to failure. Similarly any attempt to identify self with nibbāna must always fail for the same reason. Nibbāna conceived as identical (with self) or (self) as apart from it (emanence) or inside it (immanence) or nibbāna conceived as 'mine' is misconceived (*Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta* 1). This does not prevent a Perfect One from using the speech that is current in the

world in order to communicate, though he does so without misapprehending it, as is shown in the *Dhammapada*: 'Self is saviour of self; what other saviour could there be? For only with (one-) self well tamed one finds the saviour hard to find. Only by self is evil done, self-born and given being by self, oppressing him who knowledge lacks as grinding diamond does the stone' (Verses 160-1). Similarly with the expression 'in one-self' (*ajjhataṃ*) in the Second Discourse, this is simply a convenient convention for the focus of the individual viewpoint, not to be misapprehended. A bhikkhu heard the Buddha saying, as in the Second Discourse here, that the five Categories are 'not mine', etc., and he wondered 'So it seems form is not-self, feeling, perception, determinations, and consciousness are not-self: what self, then, will the action done by the not-self affect?' He was severely rebuked by the Buddha for forgetting the conditionedness of all arisen things (*Majjhima-Nikāya* 109). 'It is impossible that anyone with right view should see any idea as self' (*Majjhima-Nikāya* 115), and 'Whatever philosophers and divines see self in its various forms, they see only the five Categories, or one or other of them' (*Saṃyutta-Nikāya* XXII, 47).

FEELING (*vedanā*): this is always confined strictly to the affective feelings of (bodily or mental) pleasure and pain with the normally ignored neutral feeling of 'neither-pain-nor-pleasure'. These can be subdivided in various ways.

PERCEPTION (*saññā*) means simply recognition.

DETERMINATIONS: a great many different renderings of this term are current, the next best of which is certainly 'formations'. The Pali word *sankhārā* (Sanskrit *saṃskārā*) means literally 'a construction' and is derived from the prefix *saṃ* (= 'con') plus the verb *karoti* ('to do', 'to make': compare the Latin *conficere* from *con-* plus *facere* ('to do')), which

gives the French 'confection' = 'a construction'). The Sanskrit meant ritual acts with the purpose of bringing about a good rebirth. As used in Pali by the Buddha it covers any aspects having to do with action, willing, making, planning, using, choice, etc. (anything teleological); and contact (q.v.) is often placed at the head of lists defining it. Otherwise defined as bodily, verbal and mental action.

CONSCIOUSNESS: (*viññāṇa*) is here the bare being-conscious left for consideration when the other four Categories have been dealt with. It is only describable in individual plurality in terms of the other four Categories, as fire is individualized only by the fuel it burns (see *Majjhima-Nikāya Suttas* 38, 109). Otherwise it is regardable as an infiniteness (*Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta* 111) dependent upon the contemplation of it as such. It is impermanent, etc., because however it arises, it can only do so in dependence on the other Categories, that is, on conditions themselves impermanent, painful and not-self. It never arises unless accompanied by conascent *perception* (q.v.) and *feeling* (q.v.). It has six 'doors' (see under 'eye' and 'mind') for cognizing its objective fields, but no more.

ESTRANGEMENT: the Pali noun *nibbidā* and its verb *nibbindati* are made up from the prefix *nir* in its negative sense of 'out' and the root *vid* 'to find', 'to feel', 'to know intimately'. *Nibbidā* is thus a 'finding out'. What is thus 'found out' is the intimate hidden contradictoriness in any kind of self-identification based in any way on these things (and there is no way of determining self-identification apart from them—see under 'Not-self'). Elsewhere the Buddha says: 'Whatever there is there of form, feeling, perception, determinations, or consciousness, such ideas he sees as impermanent, as subject to pain, as a sickness, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as an alienation, as a disintegration, as void, as not self. He averts his heart from those ideas, and for the most

peaceful, the supreme goal, he turns his heart to the deathless element, that is to say, the stilling of all determinations, the relinquishment of all substance, the exhaustion of craving, the fading of passion, cessation, extinction' (Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta 64). The 'stuff' of life can *also* be seen thus. Normally the discovery of a contradiction is for the unliberated mind a disagreeable one. Several courses are then open, It can refuse to face it, pretending to itself to the point of full persuasion and belief that no contradiction is there; or one side of the contradiction may be unilaterally affirmed and the other repressed and forgotten; or a temporary compromise may be found (all of which expedients are haunted by insecurity); or else the contradiction may be faced in its truth and made the basis for a movement towards liberation. So too, on finding estrangement thus, two main courses are open: either the search, leaving craving for self-identification intact, can be continued for sops to allay the symptoms of the sickness, or else a movement can be started in the direction of a cure for the underlying sickness of craving and liberation from the everlasting hunt for palliatives, whether for oneself or others. In this sense alone 'Self protection is the protection of others and protection of others self protection' (*Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta*).

THIRD SUTTA

THE EYE, ETC: the six beginning with the *eye* and ending with the *mind* (q.v.) are called the six 'Bases for Contact (see Contact) in oneself' and are also known as the six 'Doors' for perception. Their corresponding objects are called the 'external Bases'. ('Sense-organ' is both too material and too objective, since the emphasis here is on the subjective faculty of seeing, etc., not the associated piece of flesh *seen* in someone else or in the looking-glass, which, in so far as it is visible, is not 'seeing' but 'form' as the 'external' object of the seeing 'eye in

oneself", and in so far as it is tangible is the object of the body-base in oneself, and in so far as it is apprehended as a 'bodily feature' is the object of the mind-base in oneself. Here the *eye* be taken simply as the *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* in the otherwise uncoordinated visual field consisting of colours, which makes them cognizable by eye-consciousness, and which is misconceivable as "I". The six Bases in Oneself are compared to an empty village and the six External Bases to village-raiding robbers.

FORMS: the first of the six 'External Bases', respective objective fields or objects of the six 'Bases in Oneself' (see 'eye'). The same Pali word *rūpa* is used for the eye's object as for the first of the five Categories, but here in the plural. Colours, the basis for the visual perspective of the eye (q.v.) are intended, primarily (see also under *Form* above).

CONTACT: the Pali word *phassa* comes from the verb *phusati* 'to touch' (sometimes used in the sense of 'to arrive at' or 'to realize'), from which also comes the word *photṭhabba* ('tangible', the object of the Fifth Base in oneself, namely body-sensitivity). But here it is generalized to mean 'contact' in the sense of 'presence of object to subject' or 'presence of cognized to consciousness' in all forms of consciousness. It is defined as follows: 'Eye-consciousness arises dependent on eye and on forms; the coincidence of the three is contact (presence)', and likewise in the cases of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Failing it, no knowledge, no consciousness of any sort whatever, can arise at all. This fundamental idea is sometimes placed at the head of lists of things defining Determinations (q.v.).

BODY: the Pali word *kāya* is used both for the physical body and for any group, as the English word 'body' is. In Pali it is also used in this sense (a) for the physical frame, namely

'this body with its consciousness' in a general sense, sometimes called 'old action', and then it forms the subject of Body Contemplation as set forth in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the aim of which is to 'analyse this 'conglomeration' into its motley constituents. Or else it is used in a strict sense, as here, namely (b) that 'door' of the subjective body-sensitivity or 'tactile sense', the *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* in the otherwise uncoordinated tactile field of tangibles consisting of the hard, the hot-or-cold, and the distended-and-movable (see also under "Eye").

MIND: the Pali word *mano* belongs to a root meaning 'to measure, compare, coordinate'. Here it is intended as that special 'door' in which the five kinds of consciousness arising in the other five 'doors' (see under "Eye"), themselves with objective fields having nothing in common, are combined with their objective fields into a unitive *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* together with certain objects apprehendable in this mind-door such as infiniteness of space, etc. (and names, fictions, etc.). Whatever is cognized in this door (see under "consciousness") is cognized as an *idea* (q.v.; as opposed to the bare objects of the eye uncognized by it as well). Here it makes this otherwise uncoordinated field of ideas cognizable by mind-consciousness (q.v.). And in the presence (with the 'contact') of ignorance (of the four Truths) it is misconceived as 'I'. It is thus the fusing of this heterogeneous 'stuff' of experience into a coherent pattern, where it also has the function of giving temporal succession and flow to that pattern by its presenting all ideas for cognition as 'preceded'. In the *Abhidhamma*, but not in the *Suttas*, 'the (material) form which is the support for mind' is mentioned (implying perhaps the whole 'body with its consciousness') but not further specified. This would place 'mind' on a somewhat similar basis to the 'eye-seeing' as meant here in its relation to

the objective piece of flesh (see under 'eye'). Later notions coupled it with the heart. Now fashion identifies it with the brain; but such identifications are not easy to justify unilaterally; and if they in any way depend upon a prior and always philosophically questionable assumption of a separate body-substance and a mind-substance, they will find no footing in the Buddha's teaching where substances are not assumed.

MIND-CONSCIOUSNESS: if it is remembered that each of the six pairs of Bases, the five consisting of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, being coordinated by mind, are open to any one's self-inspection, and that consciousness is considered here as arising dependently upon each of these six pairs of Bases and in no other way whatsoever (since no other description rejecting all six is possible without self-contradiction), then this notion of mind-consciousness should present no special difficulty.

IDEAS: The word *dhamma* is a gerundive from the verb *dharati* 'to carry', 'to remember', thus it means literally a 'carryable', a 'rememberable'. In this context of the six pairs of Bases it means the 'rememberables' which form the mind's special object; as distinct from the forms seen only with the eye, the sounds heard with the ear, the odours smelt with the nose, the flavours tasted with the tongue, and the tangibles touched with the body, ideas are what are apprehended through the 'mind-door' (see under 'eye', 'forms', and 'mind', and also 'contact'). These six cover all that can be known. But while the first five (see 'forms') are uncoordinated *between themselves* and have no direct access to each other, in the mind 'door' the five find a common denominator and are given a coordinating perspective together with the mind's own special objects. So the *idea* as a 'rememberable', is the aspect of the known apprehended by the mind, whether coordinating

the five kinds of consciousness or apprehending the ideas peculiar to it (see 'mind') or whether apprehending its own special objects. This must include all the many other meanings of the word *dhamma* (Sanskrit *dharma*). Nibbana, in so far as it is knowable—describable—, is an object of the mind, and is thus an idea. 'All ideas are not-self'. What is inherently unknowable has no place in the Teaching.

THE THREE SUTTAS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

The first of these three discourses sets out the vision of Truth peculiar to Buddhas, with its foundation of suffering' ('I teach only suffering, and the liberation from suffering'). The second then takes the 'five Categories' given in the definition of Suffering in the first, and it shows how, in this comprehensive analysis, every component can be 'diagnosed' rightly, that is to say in conformity with truth. It is this treatment that elicits the characteristic of Not-Self. The two characteristics of Impermanence and Suffering in the world were well recognised in ancient Indian philosophies and have never been peculiar to Buddhism. This exposure of the inherent contradiction in the very nature of the idea self-identity, to which craving cleaves with the would-be self-preserving stranglehold of a drowning man upon his rescuer, is here made the very basis for the movement to liberation. Craving is cured through coming to understand how things are while truth is being 'guarded' (see under 'Truth' above). The consequent 'fading of lust' is brought about by the 'discovery of truth' and the 'understanding that there is no more of this beyond' is the result of the 'final arrival at Truth by keeping it in being through development. In the third discourse the very same ground is gone over but described in different terms, The comprehensive analysis in terms of the five Categories with

their general rather than individual emphasis is replaced by the equally comprehensive and complementary analysis in terms of the six pairs of Bases, which analyse the individual viewpoint, without which no consciousness can arise. And instead of the dispassionate term not-self, everything that could possibly be identified as self is, without mentioning the term, presented to the same effect in the colours of a conflagration of passion behind a mirage of deception. Only a Buddha 'whose heart is cooled by compassion' can have the courage to venture so far in the search for Truth and discover thereby the true State of Peace.

QUESTIONS

Is not seeking one's own salvation a selfish aim?—If the aim prescribed were a heavenly personal existence for ever with self-preservation (whether through selfishness as such or disguised as altruism), then the answer could hardly but be Yes. But with the aim as the removal of self-insistence in every form (not excluding ultimately 'self-denial', which, like negation, is just another affirmation of the basic idea so strenuously denied), the cure of the infectious sickness that leads to untold suffering, does the question arise at all? But even granting that it did, would not the Arahant disciple display, after the Buddha, the highest altruism by showing how the aspiration to health is not a deception, since by his success he bears witness that it can be achieved and that no one is for ever excluded from following his example?

But this description in terms of suffering, is it not pessimistic?—Is it not rather the very reverse? For true optimism is surely shown by having the courage and energy to see how things are, and where liberation lies, and would it not be true pessimism to be satisfied to try and make existence out to be pleasanter or safer, and liberation easier, than is in conformity

with truth? Must not true liberation lie beyond the dialectic of pessimism and optimism, beyond alternatives of selfishness and altruism, as Truth (not factional truths) lies beyond that of being and non-being?

Does not the teaching of Not-Self imply that there is in fact no action, that, for instance, there are no living beings to kill?— The answer is certainly No. The reasons would be too lengthy to go into here in detail. But it is said by the Buddha: 'The Buddhas in the past, accomplished and fully awakened, those Blessed Ones maintained the efficacy of action and of certain action to be done, and so will those do in the future, and so do I now' (Anguttara-Nikāya, Threes, 136).

QUOTATIONS IN THE INTRODUCTION

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1.	'A monk called Gotama,..'	Majjh-nikāya Sutta 41
2.	'He expounded a teaching...'	Majjh. 56
2.	'This world has surely happened upon woe...'	Sam-nikāya XII 65
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2.	'By this gruelling penance...'	„ „
3.	'I thought...'	„ „
3.	'So I too found...'	Sam. XII 65
4.	'Merge into the deathless...'	„ XLVIII 57
4.	'And then there were six Arahants...'	Vinaya Mahāvagga 1
5.	'A Perfect One shows the way...'	Majjh. 107

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9

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addressed to his son

Translated from the Pali

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INTRODUCTION

“A son has been born to thee, O prince!” this was the message that reached Prince Siddhattha when returning from a drive through the city of Kapilavatthu and a day spent at a park near-by.

“A fetter (Rāhula) has been born, a bondage has been born!” said the prince upon hearing the news. And *Rāhula* was the name given later to the babe by Siddhattha’s father, the Rājā Suddhodana.

These were indeed unusual words with which to welcome a first-born; but we shall understand them better when we set them against the back-ground of another experience encountered by Siddhattha on that memorable day. We are told that it was on this very day that Siddhattha met on his way the serene figure of an ascetic — or, as some would have it, saw a vision of it. This encounter shewed him a way of life that could help him to find, for himself and mankind, the deliverance from the inflictions of old age, sickness and death which had made such a strong impact on him when he had grasped their full significance not long before during earlier outings. Now the sight of a monk was to him as if a door had opened in the golden cage, for a bird that longed for freedom. But the birth of his child threatened to close that door for him again, and Siddhattha knew that he had to come to a decision this very day. At the end of those fateful hours which Siddhattha spent in the palace after his return, his mind was firmly set on his quest for the Deathless. The time of the Great Renunciation had come. It was towards midnight that he went to the chambers of his wife, the Princess Yasodarā, to have a last silent

glance at her and his son. But the mother's arm and hand enclosed protectively Rāhula's little head, and without having seen his child's face, Siddhattha went into the night and started on a road that, after six years, led him to his goal, to full enlightenment — Buddhahood.

It was not yet a full year after His enlightenment that the Buddha visited his paternal home, Kapilavatthu. During his stay there, while one day he was seated in the palace, Princess Yasodarā spoke to Rāhula: "This is thy father, Rāhula! Go and ask him for thy heritage!" Little Rāhula went and stood before the Enlightened One who was still seated, and exclaimed: "How pleasant is thy shadow, o ascetic!" The Master rose from His seat and when He had left the palace, Rāhula followed and, as told by his mother, spoke to Him: "Give me my heritage, o ascetic!" Thereupon the Master turned to His disciple Sāriputta and said: "Ordain him, Sāriputta!" Thus little Rāhula became a novice monk (Sāmaṇera) at the age of seven. But henceforth, at the request of Rājā Suddhodana, no further ordinations were given without the parents' consent.

The Master took constant interest in Rāhula's development and wisely guided him throughout the years, until Rāhula, in his 21st year, had attained to Sainthood (*arahatta*) and needed guidance no longer. The exhortations collected in these pages, are the greater and the most important part of those handed down to us in the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pāli Canon. About those not included here, some information will be given in the following.

The *first* of the texts translated here, the Exhortation to Rāhula given at Ambalaṭṭhikā (*Ambalaṭṭhika-Rāhulovāda Sutta*), was spoken by the Buddha when Rāhula was seven

years old. The discourse has two main subjects, truthfulness and mindfulness, which are indeed the corner stones for building a character and for developing the faculties of mind. An education based on the fostering of these two qualities, will indeed have secure foundations. It is a counsel, however, which, in general, adults are as much in need of, as the young child. For impressing these teachings deeply on Rāhula's mind, the Buddha made ample use of similes in that discourse.

According to the commentators, in the same early period of Rāhula's novitiate the Master taught and explained to him the ten "Boy's Questions" (*kumāra-pañhā*) which begin with "What is One? All beings subsist by nutriment." They are also called the "Novice's Questions" (*sāmaṇera-pañhā*) and were originally devised for the seven-year-old Arahant, Sopaka Sāmaṇera. The text of these Questions can be found in the *Khuddakapāṭha* ("Minor Readings") of the Sutta-Piṭaka.

Our second text, the Great Discourse of exhortation to Rāhula (*Mahā-Rāhulovāda-Sutta*), was spoken to him when he was 18 years, and chiefly contains instructions on meditation. Those given by the Buddha Himself pertain foremost to Insight-meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*), namely to the not-self nature (*anattatā*) of the five Categories of Clinging (*pañcupādāna-kkhandha*), and of the four material elements. Later the Buddha elaborated on the Venerable Sāriputta's suggestion to Rāhula, to practise Mindfulness of Breathing. The Master also stressed here the importance of equanimity by giving five similes of which the first four refer again to the four material elements, thus linking up with the earlier instruction. In this same discourse, the

Master also hands to Rāhula a little armoury of meditational weapons against various unwholesome states of mind.

In his 21st year, before he had completed a full year after his Higher Ordination, the Venerable Rāhula attained to the highest goal of a recluse's life, to Sainthood (*arahatta*). This occurred after the enunciation of the *third* text in our collection, the Shorter Discourse of exhortation (*Cūḷa-Rāhulovāda-Sutta*). This discourse applies the three characteristics of all conditioned existence (impermanency, suffering, and not-self) to the entire realm of six-fold sense perception and all mental processes relating to it.

It was at this moment of Sainthood attained, that the Enlightened One, the incomparable teacher of men, the master of the skilful means of guiding them, gave to His son the full paternal heritage for which Rāhula had asked. The most precious legacy, indeed, that a father can bestow! When the Buddha preached the "Discourse on the Heirs of the Dhamma" (*Dhamma-dāyāda-Sutta*, Majjh. 3), in which he distinguished between the heirs to worldliness and the heirs to truth, this may well have evoked in Him the memories of little Rāhula's request for his heritage.

Our *fourth* text, the verses from the *Sutta-Nipāta*, called "Rāhula-Sutta", circumscribes in brief the life of a monk, and the thoughts and the ideals that should be foremost in a monk's mind. These verses are, as it were, the monk's version of the Mahā-Mangala-Sutta ("Blessings"). The concluding sentence expressly states that these were frequently repeated by the Master for Rāhula's benefit. Since they contain terse references to meditation they may have originated in the period when our second text, the

Mahā-Rāhulovāda-Sutta, was spoken, that is at Rāhula's 18th year or after.

The same may hold good for the texts in the *Rāhula-Samyutta* of the *Samyutta-Nikāya*. Those 22 short discourses are all instructions for Insight-meditation, and are more or less variants of our third text. They are, as the commentary says, meant to promote those "qualities that bring deliverance to maturity" (*vimutti-pācanīya-dhamma*) spoken of at the beginning of the *Cūla-Rāhulovāda-Sutta* (Majjh. 147). To the same category belongs the *Rāhula-Sutta* of the *Anguttara-Nikāya* (The Fours, No. 177) which deals with the four material elements in a similar way as our second text (Majjh. 62).

In the *Theragāthā*, the Verses of the Elders, there are stanzas spoken by the Venerable Rāhula himself (vv 295-298); and in the "Questions of Milinda", there are ascribed to him some more verses which are not found elsewhere. These verses are the only utterances recorded of the Venerable Rāhula. There is also no other account in Pali literature indicating that he was active as a teacher or preacher or in any other way. It is possible that this reticence on the part of the venerable Rāhula was intentional because, being the Master's son, he did not wish to come into any prominence.

The venerable Rāhula passed away before the Master and also before the venerable Sāriputta ; but we have no information as to the time and circumstances of his death.

Though the venerable Rāhula himself always kept modestly to the background, the Master placed him among those disciples who had gained excellence in specific ways of conduct or knowledge (*etadagga-sāvaka* ; *Anguttara-*

Nikāya, I), praising him as one who was “foremost among those who are keen to learn, eager in following the Training” (*sikkha-kāma*) The venerable Rāhula was always amenable to advice, and to this virtue of his, practised also in former lives, refer two Jātakas (Birth Stories): No. 16: Tipa atthamiga-Jātaka, and No. 319: Tittira-Jātaka.

As one of the early Chinese pilgrims to India, Hiuen Tsiang, relates (Beal, *Records*, p. 180), King Asoka erected Stūpas in memory of many of the great Disciples, and one of these Stūpas was dedicated to the venerable Rāhula, as the particular object of pilgrimage and veneration for novices, so that they may remember and emulate his devotion to the Training.

Since our age lacks an Asoka, may the texts presented here serve as a Stūpa, an object of recollection, homage and inspiration, for all those who are “keen to learn and eager in following the Training” — because “it is they who shall reach the topmost height”, as the Master gave assurance in the last period of his life.

“*Tamatagge me te Ānanda bhikkhū bhavissanti ye keci sikkha-kāmā'ti.*

Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta

Nyanaponika Thera

Forest Hermitage,
Kandy, Ceylon
June 1961.

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The third text, the Shorter Exhortation (Majjh. 147), has been translated by Nyanaponika Thera.

The fourth text, the verses from the Sutta-Nipāta, is reproduced from *Woven Cadences of the Early Buddhist (Sutta-Nipāta)*, translated by E. M. Hare (Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. XV), London 1925, Pali Text Society. The explanatory notes have been supplied by the editor.

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Introduction to the Ambalatthikā-Rāhulovāda Suttanta

IT is the supreme characteristic of the great World Teachers — and, indeed, of all profound thinkers — that they invariably express themselves in the most natural, simple, and direct way; similarly, the hair-splitting, and quibbling over words, is the mark of puny minds.

The greater the genius of the teacher, the more we become conscious of his desire to be understood by humanity, and of his effort to make his teaching comprehensible even to the dullest intellect. Thus it is that we perceive the genius of the Buddha strikingly revealed in the lucidity of His language, and in the homely incidents and every-day occurrences with which He illustrates and emphasizes His teaching.

At all times, He adapts His exposition to the capacity of His audience: to children, His words and illustrations are such as to appeal to, and impress, the child mind; to an audience more mature, we find a mode of expression again calculated to appeal to its comprehension. To the wise, He elaborates His teaching in such a way that they become conscious of its profound and sublime nature, and dimly perceive, as it deeper grows, that finally it leads to those unfathomed depths to be attained only by personal realization — never by mere reasoning.

In the following Suttanta the Buddha is exhorting His son Rāhula, a Sāmaṇera aged seven. The Blessed One

delivers a short, but nevertheless profound, homily on the necessity of that elementary principle of moral conduct — truthfulness.

Continuing, He establishes the moral criterion, by which to determine a good (*kusala*, lit. skilful) action, and a bad (*akusala*, unskilful) one. It is from the beneficial or harmful effects of an action upon both the doer and others, that we are to distinguish between good and bad. In other words, Buddhism judges by results; therefore its moral standpoint may be said to be utilitarian.

Throughout the Suttanta, the supreme importance of reflection is the constant theme of the Buddha. The three stages He emphasizes being — prior to action, during action, and subsequent to action.

Students of philosophy should find this Suttanta of particular interest, as it deals with one of the basic questions of Ethics: the criterion of good and evil.

Ambalatthikā-Rāhulovāda Suttanta

The Ambalatthikā Exhortation to Rāhula.¹

THUS have I heard:—

On one occasion the Blessed One was staying at the Bamboo Grove, in the Squirrels' Sanctuary, near Rajagaha. Now at that time the venerable Rāhula was residing at Ambalatthikā;² and in the evening the Blessed One, having risen from meditation, proceeded thither to the venerable Rāhula who—seeing Him coming from afar—got ready a seat, and water for washing the feet. And the Blessed One sat on the seat prepared and, being seated, washed His feet. Then the venerable Rāhula, having saluted the Blessed One respectfully, sat at one side.

Thereupon the Blessed One, having left a small quantity of water in the vessel, addressed³ the venerable Rāhula :

“Do you see, Rāhula, this small quantity of water left in the vessel?”

“Yes, Lord”.

“Similarly, Rāhula, insignificant indeed is the samāṇa-ship⁴ of those who are not ashamed of uttering deliberate lies”.

Whereupon the Blessed One threw away that small quantity of water, and addressed the venerable Rāhula :

“Do you observe, Rāhula, that small quantity of water, thrown away?”

“Yes, Lord”.

“ Similarly, Rāhula, discarded⁵ indeed is the samaṇa-ship of those who are not ashamed of deliberate lying ”.

Then the Blessed One turned the water-vessel upside down, and addressed the venerable Rāhula :

“ Do you notice, Rāhula, this water-vessel turned upside down ? ”⁶

“ Yes, Lord ”.

“ Similarly, Rāhula, overturned⁶ indeed is the samaṇa-ship of those who are not ashamed of uttering deliberate lies ”.

Finally, the Blessed One set the water-vessel upright and addressed the venerable Rāhula :

“ Do you see, Rāhula, this water-vessel, empty and void ” ?

“ Yes, Lord ”.

“ Similarly, Rāhula, empty and void indeed is the samaṇaship of those who are not ashamed of deliberate lies ”.

“ Suppose, Rāhula, the king’s elephant — with tusks like plough-poles, mature, well-bred, whose place is the battle-field—having gone into the strife, performs doughty deeds⁷ with his fore-legs, with his hind-legs, with the fore-part of his body, with the hind-part of his body, and also with his head, ears, tusks and tail,—protecting only his trunk ; and the mahout thinks that — despite this elephant’s prowess and the various feats he has performed — as he has protected his trunk, the life of the royal elephant has not really been risked. But, Rāhula, from such time as the king’s elephant, having gone into battle and performed

feats with various parts of his body, also performs feats with his trunk, — then the mahout thinks that the life of the king's elephant has really been risked. For now there is nothing that the royal elephant has not risked.⁸

“ Similarly, Rāhula, I say, of anyone who is not ashamed of uttering deliberate lies, that there is no evil that could not be done by him. Accordingly, Rāhula, thus, indeed, should you train yourself: ‘Not even in play will I tell a lie’.

“ What do you think, Rāhula ; for what purpose is a mirror ?”

“ For the purpose of reflecting,⁹ Lord ”.

“ Similarly, Rāhula, having reflected, having reflected¹⁰ should bodily action be done ; having reflected, having reflected should verbal action be done ; having reflected, having reflected, should mental action be done.

“ Whatever action you desire to do with the body, Rāhula, of that particular bodily action you should reflect: ‘ Now, this action that I desire to do with the body—would this, my bodily action, be conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both (myself and others) ?—Then, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and productive of pain ’.

“ If, Rāhula, when reflecting you should realize : ‘ Now, this bodily action of mine, that I am desirous of doing, would be conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both (myself and others),—hence, unskilful is this bodily action,—entailing suffering and productive of pain ’—such an action with the body, Rāhula, you must on no account perform.

“If, on the other hand, Rāhula, when reflecting you realize; ‘Now, this bodily action that I am desirous of doing, would conduce neither to the harm of myself, nor to that of others, nor to that of both (myself and others),—hence, skilful is this bodily action, entailing pleasure and productive of happiness’—such bodily action, Rāhula, you should perform.

“Whilst you are doing an action with the body, Rāhula, of that particular bodily action should you reflect: ‘Now, is this action that I am doing with my body, conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both?—Then, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and productive of pain’.

“If, Rāhula, when reflecting you realise: ‘Now, this action that I am doing with my body is conducive to my own harm, to the harm of others, and to that of both,—hence, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and productive of pain,’—from such a bodily action, Rāhula, you must desist.

“If, on the other hand, Rāhula, when reflecting should you realize: ‘Now, this action of mine that I am doing with the body is neither conducive to my own harm, nor to the harm of others, nor to that of both—hence, skilful is this bodily action, entailing pleasure and productive of happiness’—such a bodily action, Rāhula, you should do again and again.

“Having done an action with your body, Rāhula, of that particular bodily action you should reflect: ‘Now, is this action that I have done with my body conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both?—Then, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and productive of pain’.

“If, Rāhula, when reflecting you should realize : ‘Now, this action that I have done with my body is conducive to my own harm, to the harm of others, and that of both,—hence, unskilful is this bodily action, entailing suffering and productive of pain’—such a bodily action of yours, Rāhula, should be confessed, revealed, and made manifest to the Teacher, or to the learned, or to your brethren of the Holy Life. Having confessed, revealed, and made it manifest, you should acquire restraint in the future.

“If, on the other hand, Rāhula, when reflecting you realize : ‘Now, this action that I have done with my body is neither conducive to my own harm, nor to the harm of others, nor to that of both,—hence, skilful is this bodily action, entailing pleasure and productive of happiness’—for that very reason, Rāhula, should you abide in joy and happiness, training yourself, day and night, in meritorious states.

“Whatever action you desire to do by word, Rāhula, of that particular verbal action you should reflect : ‘Now, this action that I desire to do by word—would this, my verbal action, be conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both?—Then, unskilful is this verbal action, entailing suffering and productive of pain’.

And he should reflect similarly before, during, and after, verbal action.¹¹

“If, on the other hand, Rāhula, when reflecting you realize : ‘Now, this action that I have done by word is neither conducive to my own harm, nor to the harm of others, nor to that of both,—hence, skilful is this verbal action, entailing pleasure and productive of happiness’—for that very reason, Rāhula, should you abide in joy and

happiness, training yourself, day and night, in meritorious states.

“ Whatever action you desire to do by mind, Rāhula, of that particular mental action you should reflect : ‘ Now, this action that I desire to do by mind—would this, my mental action, be conducive to my own harm, or to the harm of others, or to that of both?—Then, unskilful is this mental action, entailing suffering and productive of pain ’.

And he should reflect similarly before, during, and after, mental action.¹²

“ If, Rāhula, when reflecting you realize : ‘ Now this action that I have done by mind is conducive to my own harm, to the harm of others, and to that of both,—hence, unskilful is this mental action, entailing suffering and productive of pain,’—such mental actions of yours, Rāhula, should be loathed, abhorred and despised.¹³ Thus loathing, abhorring and despising, you should acquire restraint in the future.

“ If, on the other hand, Rāhula, when reflecting you should realize : ‘ Now, this action that I have done by mind is neither conducive to my own harm, nor to the harm of others, nor to that of both,—hence, skilful is this mental action, entailing pleasure and productive of happiness ’—for this very reason, Rāhula, should you abide in joy and happiness, training¹⁴ yourself, day and night, in the meritorious states.

“ For whosoever, Rāhula, in the distant past—Samaṇas or Brāhmaṇas—purified their bodily, verbal, and mental actions,—they all did so in exactly the same way—by constantly reflecting. Further, whosoever, Rāhula, in the

distant future—Samaṇas or Brāhmaṇas—shall purify their bodily, verbal and mental actions,—they too will all do so in exactly the same way—by constantly reflecting. And further, whosoever, Rāhula, at the present time—Samaṇas or Brāhmaṇas—purify their bodily, verbal and mental actions’—they all do so in exactly the same way—by constantly reflecting.

“Accordingly, Rāhula, thus must you train yourselves: ‘By constantly reflecting shall we purify our bodily actions; by constantly reflecting shall we purify our verbal actions; by constantly reflecting shall we purify our mental actions’”.

Thus spoke the Blessed One. Delighted, the venerable Rāhula rejoiced at His words.



Notes to the Ambalaṭṭhikā-Rāhulovāda Suttanta

1. This Suttanta is referred to in the Bhābrā Edict of King Asoka.

2. *Ambalaṭṭhikā*, “The mango sapling”. The so-called ‘palace’ was a retreat for meditation, and for those desiring solitude, erected in the Bamboo Grove. —Comy.

In the Brahmajāla Suttanta, it is said that the Blessed One took shelter for one night in the royal rest-house at Ambalaṭṭhikā, together with the company of Bhikkhus. Commenting on this Buddhaghosa says: “Here *Ambalaṭṭhikā* is the king’s park. At the entrance stood a young mango-tree, called by the people ‘*Ambalaṭṭhikā*’. Consequently, the park itself came to be known as ‘*Ambalaṭṭhikā*’. It was

well watered, shady, surrounded by a rampart, securely fastened with gates, and protected like a casket. Within the park was a house ornamented with magnificent paintings, for the king's relaxation. This was known as the royal rest-house''.

It would appear from the above that there were two buildings in this park: one, for the king's own use; the other for the use of the religious orders.

3. The Commentator states that the Buddha delivered this discourse to Rābula, whose age was only seven, knowing that boys of tender years, thoughtlessly, often speak falsely.

4. *Sāmaññaṃ*, the state of a Samana. Generally rendered "asceticism" or "monasticism", but neither word is a suitable designation for the status of Bhikkhus.

5. In both places the same word is used—*chaḍḍita* thrown away; abandoned, left, etc.

6. *Nikkujjita*, overturned, upset.

7. i.e., he destroys everything that comes in his way. Comy.

8. i.e., he has fearlessly exposed every part of his body to the risks of battle, not protecting even his trunk.

9. *Paccavekkhanattho* ; Comy : for the purpose of looking at, for seeing any blemishes in the face. (Ed.)

10. *Paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā*. This expresses in simple language what is implied in the doctrinal terms *sati*, 'mindfulness', and *yoniso manasikāra*, wise consideration or thorough attention. (Ed.)

11. The detailed exposition of "verbal action" is identical with that of bodily action.

12. The detailed exposition of "mental action" is likewise identical with that of bodily action, with the exception of the penultimate paragraph. The last two paragraphs are accordingly given in full.

15. Being a mental offence, Rāhula is not exhorted (as in the case of bodily, and verbal, action) to confess it to anyone.

14. This refers to self-examination. The Commentator says that one should reflect whether any evil has been done through word or deed. If so, it should be confessed; if not, one should abide rejoicing in that knowledge. If, whilst reflecting, one finds that an evil thought has been harboured, then it should be loathed and a firm resolution made not to entertain it again. If no such thought has arisen, one should abide rejoicing in the fact.

Introduction

to the

Mahā-Rāhulovāda Suttanta

IN the following Suttanta the Buddha deals with a profound subject—meditation, or culture of the mind. Not by servile supplication to any Heavenly Father is the craving and hatred by which the world is rent and torn to be assuaged; but only by the cultivation of that sublime equanimity which, having comprehended the true nature of life, amidst delight or misery—

“.....like to a rock,
Unmoved stands, and shaketh not”.

According to the commentaries, this exhortation was delivered when the venerable Rāhula was in his eighteenth year—an early age, surely, at which to appreciate the ultimate possibilities of mind-culture.

The four great essentials to which the Buddha first directs the attention of Rāhula are: *paṭhavī*, *āpo*, *tejo*, and *vāyo*, known as “*dhātus*” in Pāli. “*Dhātu*” is defined as “that which bears its own intrinsic nature;” its most appropriate English equivalent being “element”. But it must not be hastily assumed from this that we are here dealing with the four “elements” of the ancient Greek philosophers, namely: earth, water, fire, and air; since, in the Abhidhamma sense, the four “*dhātus*” imply extension or solidity (*paṭhavī*), cohesion (*āpo*), heat (*tejo*), and motion or vibration (*vāyo*).

In the Sutta-Piṭaka, however, we find compounds designated by the generic name of the “*dhātu*” which predominates in their composition. “*Kesa*,” hair, for instance, although a compound consisting of the four essentials and the four derived material qualities, is classified under “*paṭhavī-dhātu*”, owing to the predominance in its composition of the element of solidity.

Having explained to Rāhula the nature of the “*dhātus*” (including space), the Buddha further exhorts him to be constantly mindful of them, and to cultivate that perfect equanimity of mind which remains undisturbed by likes and dislikes—comparable to the absolute passivity of earth, water, fire, air, and space.

In conclusion, the Buddha—after briefly enumerating certain subjects of meditation with the specific qualities inhibited by each—gives a profound statement as to how the meditation on breathing is to be practised. And practising, according to these instructions, it is said that, in no long time, Rāhula becoming Arahant, achieved Emancipation.



Mahā Rāhulovāda Suttanta

The Great Exhortation to Rāhula

THUS have I heard:—

Once the Blessed One was staying at the monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika, in the Jeta Grove, near Sāvatthī. Then the Blessed One, having robed Himself in the forenoon, took bowl and robe, and entered Sāvatthī for alms; and the venerable Rāhula also, having robed in the forenoon, took bowl and robe, and followed close behind the Blessed One.

Thereupon the Blessed One looked back and addressed the venerable Rāhula :

“Whatsoever form² there be, O Rāhula, whether past, future, or present, personal³ or external,⁴ coarse or fine, mean or noble, far or near,— all form, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge⁵ should be regarded thus : ‘ This is not mine ; this am I not ; this is soulless’.”

“Verily, form alone,⁶ Blessed One ; form alone, Exalted One ?”

“Form, Rāhula, and sensation, Rāhula, and perception, Rāhula, and the mental concomitants, Rāhula, and consciousness,⁷ Rāhula”.

Then the venerable Rāhula (reflected): ‘What individual, having been edified to-day with an exhortation from the Blessed One Himself, would enter the village for alms⁸?’ Thereupon he turned back and sat down at the foot of a certain tree, with legs crossed, the body held erect, intent on mindfulness.

Now the venerable Sāriputta⁹ saw him seated thus, and addressed him :

“Cultivate, Rāhula, the meditation of mindfulness on inhaling and exhaling ! ¹⁰ Inhaling and exhaling with mindfulness, Rāhula, cultivated, and frequently practised, is productive of much fruit and manifold advantages”.

And, at eventide, the venerable Rāhula rose from solitary meditation and proceeded to the presence of the Blessed One.¹¹ Saluting Him respectfully, he sat on one side. Seated thus, the venerable Rāhula said to the Blessed One :

“How, Lord, is mindfulness on inhaling and exhaling cultivated ; how frequently practised, to produce much fruit and manifold advantages ? ”

“Whatever,¹² Rāhula, pertains to oneself as an individual, is hard, of a solid nature, and a product of grasping—as for example ; hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, stomach, intestines, mesentery, excrement, or anything else whatsoever pertaining to oneself as an individual, that is hard, of a solid nature, and a product of grasping : this, Rāhula, is called the personal ‘element of earth’.¹³ But even this personal earthy element, as well as the external earthy element, is merely the element of solidity. This, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge, should be regarded thus : ‘This is not mine ; this am I not ; this is soulless’ Having seen with perfect knowledge that such is the case, one becomes disgusted with the element of earth, and one’s mind is detached from the element of solidity.

“What now, Rāhula, is the element of water ? The element of water may be internal, may be external.

“And what, Rāhula, is the internal watery element ? Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is liquid, of a fluid nature, and a product of grasping—as for example : bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, lymph, tears, serum, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine, or anything else whatsoever pertaining to oneself as an individual, that is liquid, of a fluid nature, and a product of grasping : this, Rāhula, is called ‘the internal element of water’. But even this internal watery element, as well as the external watery element, is merely the element of fluidity. This, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge, should be

regarded thus: 'This is not mine; this am I not; this is soulless'. Having seen with perfect knowledge that such is the case, one becomes disgusted with the element of water, and one's mind is detached from the element of fluidity.

"What now, Rāhula, is the element of fire? The element of fire may be internal, may be external.

"And what, Rāhula, is the internal fiery element? Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is hot, of a fiery nature, and a product of grasping—as for example: that whereby there is deterioration,¹⁴ whereby there is intense burning,¹⁵ whereby what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted, is well digested, or anything else whatsoever pertaining to oneself as an individual, that is hot, of a fiery nature, and a product of grasping: this, Rāhula, is called 'the internal element of fire'. But even this internal fiery element, as well as the external fiery element, is merely the element of heat. This, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge, should be regarded thus: 'This is not mine; this am I not; this is soulless'. Having seen with perfect knowledge that such is the case, one becomes disgusted with the element of fire, and one's mind is detached from the element of heat.

"What now, Rāhula, is the element of air? The element of air may be internal, may be external.

"And what, Rāhula, is the internal gaseous element? Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is gaseous, of an airy nature, and a product of grasping—as for example: ascending and descending flatus, the vapours in the abdomen and bowels, the air passing through the various parts of the body, such as inhalation and exhalation, or anything else whatsoever pertaining to oneself as an individual, that is

gaseous, of an airy nature, and a product of grasping : this, Rāhula, is called ‘ the internal element of air ’. But even this internal gaseous element, as well as the external gaseous element, is merely the element of air. This, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge, should be regarded thus : ‘ This is not mine ; this am I not ; this is soulless ’. Having seen with perfect knowledge that such is the case, one becomes disgusted with the gaseous element, and one’s mind is detached from the element of air.

“ What now, Rāhula, is the element of space ? The element of space may be internal, may be external.

“ And what, Rāhula, is the internal element of space ? Whatever pertains to oneself as an individual, is void, of an empty nature, and a product of grasping—as for example: the cavities of the ear and nose, the mouth aperture, that whereby one swallows what is eaten, drunk, chewed and tasted ; where such nourishment accumulates, that whereby such nourishment passes from the lower part (of the body), or anything else whatsoever pertaining to oneself as an individual, that is void, of an empty nature, and a product of grasping : this, Rāhula, is called ‘ the internal element of space ’. But even this internal void element, as well as the external void element, is merely the element of space. This, in accordance with fact and with perfect knowledge, should be regarded thus : ‘ This is not mine ; this am I not ; this is soulless ’. Having seen with perfect knowledge that such is the case, one becomes disgusted with the void element, and one’s mind is detached from the element of space.

‘ Like unto earth,¹⁶ Rāhula, practise meditation. For, O Rāhula, by practising meditation like the earth, the contacts that have arisen—agreeable and disagreeable—will

not continue to obsess your mind. Just as pure and impure things, Rāhula,—excrement, urine, saliva, pus and blood—are cast upon the earth, and yet the earth neither abhors, nor loathes, nor dislikes such things; even so yourself, Rāhula, earth-wise, practise meditation. For, Rāhula, by practising meditation like the earth, the contacts that have arisen — agreeable and disagreeable — will not continue to obsess your mind.

“Like unto water, Rāhula, practise meditation. For, O Rāhula, by practising meditation water-wise, the contacts that have arisen—agreeable and disagreeable—will not continue to obsess your mind. Just as pure and impure things, Rāhula,—excrement, urine, saliva, pus and blood—are washed (away) in water, and yet water neither abhors, nor loathes, nor dislikes such things; even so yourself, Rāhula, like water, practise meditation, and the contacts that have arisen will not continue to obsess your mind.

“Like unto fire, Rāhula, practise meditation. For, O Rāhula, by practising meditation fire-wise, the contacts that have arisen — agreeable and disagreeable — will not continue to obsess your mind. Just as fire, Rāhula, burns pure and impure things—excrement, urine, saliva, pus and blood—and yet fire neither abhors, nor loathes, nor dislikes such things; even so yourself, Rāhula, like fire, practise meditation, and the contacts that have arisen will not continue to obsess your mind.

“Like unto air, Rāhula, practise meditation. For, O Rāhula, by practising meditation air-wise, the contacts that have arisen — agreeable and disagreeable — will not continue to obsess your mind. Just as air, Rāhula, blows upon pure and impure things—excrement, urine, saliva, pus and blood—and yet air neither abhors, nor loathes,

nor dislikes such things ; even so yourself, Rāhula, like air, practise meditation, and the contacts that have arisen will not continue to obsess your mind.

“ Like unto space, Rāhula, practise meditation. For, O Rāhula, by practising meditation space-wise, the contacts that have arisen — agreeable and disagreeable — will not continue to obsess your mind. Just as the vault of heaven, Rāhula, is not attached to any place ; even so yourself, Rāhula, like the vault of heaven, practise meditation. For, Rāhula, by practising meditation like space, the contacts that have arisen — agreeable and disagreeable — will not continue to obsess your mind.

“ Develop the meditation on *Mettā*,¹⁷ Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by developing *Mettā*, ill-will is abandoned.

“ Develop the meditation on compassion, Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by developing compassion, cruelty is abandoned.

“ Develop the meditation on sympathy, Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by developing sympathy, aversion is abandoned.

“ Develop the meditation on equanimity, Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by developing equanimity, hatred is abandoned.

“ Develop the meditation on impurity,¹⁸ Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by meditating on impurity, lust is abandoned.

“ Develop the meditation on the concept of transiency, Rāhula. For, Rāhula, by meditating on the concept of transiency, pride of self is abandoned.

“ Cultivate the concentration of mindfulness on inhaling and exhaling, Rāhula. Inhaling and exhaling with mindfulness, Rāhula, cultivated and frequently practised, is productive of much fruit and manifold advantages. And

how, Rāhula, is inhaling and exhaling with mindfulness cultivated; how frequently practised, to produce much fruit and manifold advantages?

“Here, Rāhula, a Bhikkhu having retired to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a lonely place, sits with legs crossed, the body held erect, intent on mindfulness. Consciously he inhales; consciously he exhales. When taking a long inspiration, he knows ‘I am taking a long inspiration’; when making a long expiration, he knows ‘I am making a long expiration’. When taking a short inspiration, he knows ‘I am taking a short inspiration’; when making a short expiration, he knows ‘I am making a short expiration’.

“‘Conscious of the entire process¹⁹ I will inhale’, thus he trains himself; ‘Conscious of the entire process will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Calming the respiration I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Calming the respiration will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Experiencing pleasure I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Experiencing pleasure will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Experiencing happiness I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Experiencing happiness will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Conscious of the mental flux I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Conscious of the mental flux will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Calming the mental flux I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Calming the mental flux will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Perfectly conscious I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Perfectly conscious will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘With enraptured mind I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘With enraptured mind will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Thoroughly composing the mind I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Thoroughly composing the mind will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself.

‘Emancipating the mind I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Emancipating the mind will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Reflecting on transiency I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Reflecting on transiency will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Reflecting on freedom from lust I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Reflecting on freedom from lust will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Reflecting on Cessation I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Reflecting on Cessation will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself. ‘Reflecting on complete emancipation I will inhale,’ thus he trains himself; ‘Reflecting on complete emancipation will I exhale,’ thus he trains himself.

“Mindfulness on inhaling and exhaling, Rāhula, thus cultivated and frequently practised, is productive of much fruit and manifold advantage. When, Rāhula, inhaling and exhaling with mindfulness, is thus cultivated and frequently practised, even the last inspiration and expiration ceases consciously, not unconsciously”.

This was spoken by the Blessed One. The venerable Rāhula, delighted, rejoiced at His words.



Notes to the Mahā Rāhulovāda Suttanta

1. The Commentator states that the Venerable Rāhula, whilst following the Blessed One, noted with admiration, the physical perfection of the Buddha, and reflected with satisfaction that he himself was of similar appearance. Rāhula was very handsome. The books say that as the Buddha went along, followed by Rāhula, the pair was comparable to an auspicious royal elephant and his noble

offspring, a royal swan with its beauteous cygnet, a regal lion with its stately cub, etc. Both were golden in complexion, almost equal in beauty, both were of the warrior caste, both had renounced a throne. So Rāhula, admiring the teacher, thought,—“I too am handsome, like my parent the Blessed One. Beautiful is the Buddha’s form, and mine is similar”.

“What is the lad, Rāhula, considering,” thought the Buddha, “as he follows me?” And the Master read Rāhula’s train of thought. Thereupon the Buddha decided to reprove Rāhula at once. A small leak may sink a ship, if neglected by the captain. Rāhula’s foolish, vain thoughts could lead the lad to states of ill, and such leaks brook no delay.

2. *Rūpaṃ* : According to Abhidhamma *rūpa* is that which changes owing to physical conditions, such as heat, moisture, etc. Twenty-eight of these material qualities, or *rūpas*, are enumerated in the *Abhidhammattha-Sangaha*. (See Compendium, p. 154). “*Rūpa* in its generic sense, means ‘matter,’ and in its specific sense, ‘quality’. But, in popular language, it means ‘form.’” (Shwe Zan. Aung) We believe that Abhidhamma scholars would unanimously agree that ‘matter’ is the best possible rendering for *rūpa*. ‘Body’ would likewise be a suitable equivalent for *rūpa*, denoting, as in this Suttanta, the physical form of an individual. We have, however, retained the general term ‘form,’ despite one great objection to the use of the word ‘form’ for *rūpa* — namely, the contrast in Western philosophy between the impermanency of ‘form’ and the permanency of ‘matter’.

3. *Ajjhattaṃ* : belonging to one’s own life-flux ; relating to the individual.

4. *Bahiddhā* : outside, without.

5. *Sammappaññā* is *vipassanā paññā* : intuitive knowledge. — Comy.

6. Why did he ask this question? In order to learn what his attitude should be with regard to sensations, etc.—Comy.

7. These are the five component parts (*khandha*) that together constitute an individual. As matter or *rūpa* comprises twenty-eight material qualities, so mind or consciousness comprises fifty-two mental properties. (Compendium, pp. 94. ff). Of these, two—*vedanā*, sensation and *saññā*, perception—are usually treated as separate groups. The remaining fifty are collectively designated *sankhāras*, "because, as concomitants, they perform their respective functions in combination as one whole, of act, speech, or thought". See note on *sankhāra*, Compendium of Philosophy, p. 273.

8. Rāhula is said to have felt like a thief who has been caught with the stolen goods. He was very wise and understood, in detail, anything concisely stated (a fact that handicaps one who reads this exhortation to him, without the elucidation of the Commentaries). The Master, having reproved Rāhula, proceeded on his begging-round, but the latter decided to forego food that day.

9. If the two chief disciples happen to be residing in the same monastery as the Buddha, not until He has departed on the alms round do they set forth.— Comy.

10. The Venerable Sāriputta, noting the cross-legged posture of his youthful pupil,—which was the one always adopted for the Meditation on Breathing,—advised this practice, not being aware that Rāhula was practising another, on the Buddha's own instruction.

11. Rāhula's meditation bore no fruit. He was perplexed. The Buddha had instructed him to meditate on "Form," whereas the Venerable Sāriputta, his teacher, advised "Breathing". The Buddha had inculcated the importance of obedience to one's immediate teacher. So Rāhula decided to meditate on "Breathing," and to obtain the Buddha's instruction on the subject. But the Blessed One did not immediately satisfy this wish. Before the ship can be steered safely to the haven, its dangerous leaks must be stopped. The Master proceeded to do this—by expanding on His first brief instruction of meditation on "Form," and its constituents. Thus does a wise physician dispense the needed medicine, ignoring the patient's desires. This done, the Buddha gave Rāhula instruction on "Breathing".

12. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, the Buddha explains to Rāhula the nature of the four essentials (*mahābhūta*) to which all bodies may be reduced, in order to dissipate his illusion regarding 'self'.

13. According to Buddhism there are four essentials or primaries which are inter-related, viz : *paṭhavī*, solidity; *āpo*, cohesion; *tejo*, temperature; and *vāyo*, motion.

14. *Jiriyati* : to be old, worn out, decrepit. Also "oxidation".

15. *Paridayhati* : to be scorched. As, for instance, if a person were to say, 'I am burning! I am burning!' and were to long for something cool. Cf. *Sammoha Vinodani*, p. 69.

16. Why did he commence thus? In order to show the reasons for acquiring balance of mind (*tādi - bhāva*, imperturbability).—Comy.

17. The Buddhist technical term *Mettā* (Sanskrit: *Maitriya*) is here rendered "Benevolence"—(*bene*, well, and *volens*,

wishing or willing) which is exactly what *Mettā* signifies. The only drawback is that 'benevolence' is, as generally understood today, too flaccid a word to convey the rapture of Buddhist *Mettā*. We ourselves were driven to the use of 'Lovingkindness' for *Mettā*. 'Love,' alone, is corrupted with the idea of the sexual. 'Kindness,' alone, is too tame. In the combination 'Lovingkindness,'—'loving' intensifies 'kindness,'—and 'kindness' modifies the possible taint of 'loving'. The reader will now appreciate something of the import of the Pāli word *Mettā*, which we intend to retain in future, in view of its deep significance, and the difficulty of offering a graceful English equivalent.

18. *Asubhaṃ*. The ten 'asubhas' are the ten stages of increasing putrefaction of corpses, viz.: 1. Bloated. 2. Discoloured. 3. Festering. 4. Fissured. 6. Dismembered. 7. Cut and dismembered. 8. Bloody. 9. Wormy. 10. Bony. (See Expositor, Pt. I, p. 264).

19. *Sabba-kāya*. Literally — "the whole body". According to the Visuddhi-Magga (Transl. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli; p. 294), *kāya* used in this connection, does not mean the physical body, but the whole mass of inhalation and exhalation.

20. *Kāya-saṅkhāra*, literally "body-process". This Prof. Rhys Davids renders as "bodily organism" (Dialogues Pt. II, p. 328). According to the Visuddhi-Magga it means "inhalation and exhalation". We find this word used in a similar sense in the Cūla-Vedalla Suttanta (M. N. 44, p. 301) "*Assāsa-passāsā kho āvuso Visākha kāyikā ete dhammā kāya paṭibaddhā, tasmā assāsa-passāsā kāya-saṅkhāro*".—Inhalation and exhalation, friend Visākha, are indeed physical. These conditions are dependent on the body; therefore inhalation and exhalation are (called) *kāya-saṅkhāra*. (See Visuddhi-Magga. p. 296).

21. This description of the meditation on Breathing is, we fear, too condensed for the general reader, to whom we are unable to offer a detailed exposition here. But it must be stated that each injunction of the Blessed One, in this connection, has a specific meaning and the practice proceeds, up and up, starting with merely noting the breaths, through the 'Ecstasies,' and ending with Nibbāna attainment. The student is referred to the Visuddhi-Magga, pp. 285-317-292, for further particulars.



Cūla-Rāhulovāda Suttanta

The Shorter Exhortation to Rāhula

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was staying in the monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika, in the Jeta Grove, near Sāvatthī. There the following thought arose in the mind of the Blessed One whilst meditating in solitude:

“Mature are in Rāhula those qualities that bring deliverance to maturity.¹ Should I not now give further guidance to Rāhula, for the extinction of the corruptions?”²

Having robed himself in the forenoon, the Blessed One took bowl and robe, and entered Sāvatthī for alms. Having gone His round for alms in Sāvatthī, he returned; and after the meal he addressed the venerable Rāhula thus: “Take your mat, Rāhula. We shall go to the Andha Grove, and spend the day there”.— “Yes, Lord,” replied the venerable Rāhula, took his mat and followed close behind the Blessed One.

On that occasion, many thousands of deities followed the Blessed One, thinking: “Today the Blessed One will

give further guidance to the venerable Rāhula, for the extinction of the corruptions”.

And the Blessed One, having entered the Andha Grove, sat down at the foot of a certain tree on a seat prepared for him. Then also the venerable Rāhula, having saluted the Blessed One respectfully, sat at one side. Thereupon the Blessed One addressed him as follows :

“ What do you think, Rāhula, is the eye permanent or impermanent ? ”

— “ Impermanent, Lord ”.

— “ Is that which is impermanent, painful or pleasant ? ”

— “ It is painful, Lord ”.

— “ Is it justifiable, then, to think, of that which is impermanent, pain-laden and subject to change — ‘ This is mine ;³ this I am ;⁴ this is my self ? ’ ”.⁵

— “ Certainly not, Lord ”.

— “ What do you think, Rahula, are forms (visual objects) permanent or impermanent ? ”

— “ Impermanent, Lord ”.

— “ Is that which is impermanent, painful or pleasant ? ”

— “ It is painful, Lord ”.

— “ Is it justifiable, then, to think, of that which is impermanent, pain-laden and subject to change — ‘ This is mine ; this I am ; this is my self ? ’ ”.

— “ Certainly not, Lord ”.

— “What do you think, Rāhula, are eye-consciousness⁶
... visual contact⁷ permanent or impermanent?”

— “Impermanent, Lord”.

— “Is that which is impermanent, painful or pleasant?”

— “It is painful, Lord”.

— “Is it justifiable, then, to think, of that which is
impermanent, pain-laden and subject to change — ‘This is
mine ; this I am ; this is my self’ ”

— “Certainly not, Lord”.

— “What do you think, Rāhula : that which arises
conditioned by visual contact, namely all that belongs to
feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness,⁸
is that permanent or impermanent?”

— “Impermanent, Lord”.

— ‘Is that which is impermanent, painful or pleasant?’

— “It is painful, Lord”.

— “Is it justifiable, then, to think, of that which is
impermanent, pain-laden and subject to change — ‘This is
mine ; this I am ; this is my self’ ”.

— “Certainly not, Lord”.

— “What do you think, Rāhula : ear and sounds, nose
and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and
ideas : the (corresponding types of) consciousness and
contact ; and the feelings, perceptions, mental formations
and consciousness which arise conditioned by that contact—
are all these permanent or impermanent?”

— “Impermanent, Lord”.

— “Is that which is impermanent, painful or pleasant?”

— “It is painful, Lord”.

— “Is it justifiable, then, to think, of that which is impermanent, pain-laden and subject to change — ‘This is mine ; this I am ; this is my self?’”.

— “Certainly not, Lord”.

— “The learned noble disciple, Rāhula, who sees thus, gets a disgust⁹ for the eye, gets a disgust for forms, for visual consciousness, visual contact, and for that which arises conditioned by visual contact, namely all feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness.

“He gets a disgust for ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and ideas, gets a disgust for the (corresponding types of) consciousness and contact, and for that which arises conditioned by that contact, namely all that belongs to feeling, perception mental formations and consciousness”.

“In him who gets disgusted, passion fades out.¹⁰ With the fading out of passion¹¹ he is liberated. Thus liberated, the knowledge arises in him: ‘Liberated am I, birth is exhausted, fulfilled is the Holy Life, done what should be done, and nothing further remains after this’. Thus he knows”.

Thus spoke the Blessed One. Glad at heart, the venerable Rāhula rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One.

Now during that utterance the mind of the venerable Rāhula was freed from the corruptions through clinging no more. And also in those many thousand deities, there arose the stainless, immaculate Eye of Truth :¹² “Whatever is subject to origination is subject to cessation”.

NOTES

1. *Vimutti-paripācanīyā dhammā*. The Commentary mentions two sets of fifteen 'things conducive to the ripening of deliverance (i.e., of Arahatta or Saintship)'.

I. Three purifying factors for each of the five Controlling Faculties (*indriya*), Faith, Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration and Wisdom. Briefly stated, these three purifying factors are: avoiding the company of those possessing qualities opposed to the respective Faculty; associating with those who possess these Faculties to a high degree; reflection on those parts of the Teaching that are helpful to a development of the respective Faculty.

II. The five Controlling Faculties; five contemplations: of impermanence, of the suffering, in the impermanent, of not-self in suffering of giving up, of dispassion; noble friendship, moral restraint, talk on the austere life, application of energy and penetrative wisdom.

2. *Āsavānaṃ khayē*. — *Āsava*, 'corruption', elsewhere rendered by 'taints' or 'cankers', means literally 'flux' or 'outflow'. There are three kinds of 'corruptions': by sense-desire (*kāma'sava*), by (desire for continued) existence (*bhava'sava*) and by ignorance (*avijjā'sava*); often a fourth kind is added: the corruption by wrong views (*diṭṭhā'sava*). — The Arahant, or Saint, is often called 'one in whom the corruptions have become exhausted' or 'the extirpator of corruptions' (*khīṇāsavo*): and Arahatta, Saintship, is the extinction, or exhaustion, of the Corruptions (*āsava-kkhaya*).

3. 'This is mine'—as motivated by craving (*taṇhā*) or possessiveness.

4. 'This I am'—as motivated by pride (*māna*).

5. 'This my self (or soul)' — as motivated by wrong views (*ditṭhi*).

6. *Cakkhu-viññāna*.

7. *Cakkhu-samphāso*.

8. *Vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ sankhāragataṃ viññānagataṃ*. This refers to the last four of the five Aggregates (*khandha*), comprising the mental part (*nāma*) of the individual.

9. "Gets a disgust for": *nibbindati* ("disgust": *nibbidā*).—Here where a high stage of penetrative Insight (*vipassanā*) is reached, 'disgust' should not be understood to mean a strong emotional revulsion, or loathing (which generally is linked with feelings of resentment or antagonism); it is rather an estrangement, a spontaneous recoiling or turning away.

10. *Virajjati*.

11. *Virāgā*, 'through dispassion'.

12. *Dhārmā-cakkhū*, the Vision of Dhārmā, refers here (according to Oḅṁy.) to the attainment of Arahatta, Saintsship; while elsewhere it applies only to Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*).

The Rāhula Sutta

(*Sutta-Nipāta*; Verses 335-342)

The Prologue

The Master : "From living constant, say,
Dost thou the wise man scorn?
The torch-bearer to men
Is he revered by thee?"

Rāhula : “From living constant, nay,
The wise man scorn I not;
The torch-bearer to men
Is aye revered by me.”

The Teaching

The Master : “Loosed from the pleasure-strands,
Dear forms that charm the mind,
In faith renounce thy home,
Ender of ill become!

Seek thou for lovely friends!
Seek bed and seat remote,
Lone and of little noise,
Frugal in fare become!

Robes, alms and requisites,
Thy bed and seat: for these
Beget no craving, nor
Turn the world again!

Curbed by observance-rule,
Curbed in the senses five,
Mark thou thy body's ways ¹
And be awearied o't!

Shun thou the things of sign, ²
Attractive and passion—fraught:
On foul things ³ quicken mind,
One-pointed and intent!

Quicken what has no sign, ⁴
Be rid of warping pride, ⁵
Then mastering the pride, ⁶
Thou shalt wayfare in calm.” ⁷

In this wise the Master constantly instructs the venerable Rāhula.

Notes to the Rāhula Sutta of the Sutta-Nipāta

1. Literally: Have 'mindfulness directed to the body.
(*sati kāyagatāty-atthu*).

2. "Sign" (*nimittam*), that is the sign or notion of greed. But *nimittam* is here better to be linked with *subham* in the next line, and rendered by "attractive object" or "the idea of attractiveness".

3. "On foul things" (*asubhāya*), i. e., the unattractive or repulsive aspect of the inanimate body as considered in the Cemetery Meditations; and of the animate body, in the meditation of the 32 parts of the body.

4. "No sign" (*animittam*), i. e., without a sign of greed, hatred or delusion, nor any notion of permanency. Comy.: Cultivate insight (*vipassanā*)!"

5. Literally: "of any proclivity to pride" (*mānānu-sayam*)

6. *Māna*, pride', has here also the wider meaning of self-conceit (*asmi-māna*) or ego-illusion.

7. This refers to the highest tranquillity of Sainthood.



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NYANATILOKA MAHATHERA

KARMA AND REBIRTH

BY

NYANATILOKA MAHATHERA

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KARMA AND REBIRTH

When beholding this world and thinking about the destinies of beings, it will appear to most men, as if everything in nature was unjust. 'Why,' they will ask, 'is one man rich and powerful, but another poor and distressed? Why is one man all his life well and healthy, but another from his very birth sickly or infirm? Why is one man endowed with attractive appearance, intelligence and perfect senses, while another is repulsive and ugly, an idiot, blind, or deaf and dumb? Why is one child born amidst utter misery and amongst wretched people, and brought up as a criminal, while another child is born in the midst of plenty and comfort, of noble-minded parents, and enjoys all the advantages of kindly treatment and the best mental and moral education? Why does one man, often without the slightest effort, succeed in all his enterprises, while another fails in all his plans? Why can one man live in luxury, while another man has to live in poverty and distress? Why is one man happy, but another unhappy? Why does one man enjoy long life, while another in the prime of his life is carried away by death? Why is this so? Why do such differences exist in nature?'

These questions are satisfactorily answered by Buddhism. Of all the aforesaid circumstances and conditions constituting the destiny of a being, none can, according to the Buddha's teaching, come into existence without a previous cause and the presence of a number of necessary conditions. Just as, for example, from a rotten mango seed never will come a healthy mango-tree with healthy and sweet fruits, just so the evil volitional actions, or Karma, produced in former birth, are the seeds, or root-causes, of evil destiny in a later birth. It is a necessary postulate of thinking that the good and bad

destiny of a being, as well as its latent character, cannot be the product of mere chance, but must of necessity have its causes in a previous birth. According to Buddhism, no organic entity, physical or psychical, can come into existence without a previous cause, *i.e.* without a preceding congenial state out of which it has developed. Also never can any living organic entity be produced by something altogether external to it. It can originate only out of itself, *i.e.*, it must have already existed in the bud, or germ, as it were. Besides this cause, or root-condition, or seed, there are still many minor conditions required for its actual arising and its development just as the mango tree besides its main cause, the seed, requires for its germination, growth and development further conditions such as earth, water, light and heat. Thus the true cause of the birth of a being, together with its character and destiny, goes back to the Karma-volitions produced in a former birth.

According to Buddhism, there are three factors necessary for the rebirth of a human being, that is, for the formation of the embryo in the mother's womb. They are: the female ovum, the male sperm, and the karma-energy, *kamma-vega*, which in the Suttas is metaphorically called '*gandhabba*,' *i.e.*, 'ghost.' This karma-energy is sent forth by a dying individual at the moment of his death. Father and mother only provide the necessary physical material for the formation of the embryonic body. With regard to the characteristic features, the tendencies and faculties lying latent in the embryo, the Buddha's teaching may be explained in the following way: The dying individual, with his whole being convulsively clinging to life, at the very moment of his death, sends forth karmic energies which, like a flash of lightning, hit at a new mother's womb ready for conception. Thus, through the impinging of the Karma-energies on ovum and sperm, there arises, just as a precipitate, the so-called primary cell.

The process may be compared with the functioning of the so-called air-vibrations produced through speech, which, by the impinging on the acoustic organ of another man, produce a sound, which is a purely subjective sensation. At this occasion no transmigration of a sound-sensation takes place, but simply a transference of energy, called the air vibrations. In a similar way, the karma-energies, sent out by the dying individual, produce from the material furnished by the parents the new embryonic being. But no transmigration of a real being, or a soul-entity, takes place at that occasion, but simply the transmission of karma-energy.

Hence we may say that the present life-process (*uppatti-bhava*) is the objectification of the corresponding pre-natal Karma-process (*kamma-bhava*), and that the future life-process is the objectification of the corresponding present Karma-process. Thus, nothing transmigrates from one life to the next. And, what we call our Ego, is in reality only this process of continual change, of continual arising and passing away, moment after moment, day after day, year after year, life after life. Just as the so-called wave that apparently hastens over the surface of the ocean, is in reality nothing but a continuous rising and falling of ever new masses of water, each time called forth through the transmission of energy, even so, closely considered, is there in the ultimate sense no permanent Ego-entity that passes through the ocean of Samsāra, but merely a process of physical and mental phenomena takes place, ever and again being whipped up by the impulse and will for life.

It is undoubtedly true that the mental condition of the parents at the moment of conception has considerable influence upon the character of the embryonic being, and that the nature of the mother may make a deep impression on the character of the child she bears in her womb. The

indivisible unity of the mental individuality of the child, however, can in no way be produced by the parents. One must here never confound the actual productive cause -- *i. e.*, the preceding state out of which the later state arises -- with the contributing influences and conditions from without. Even if it were really possible that the new individual, as an inseparable whole, was begotten by its parents, twins could by no means ever exhibit totally opposite tendencies. In such a case, children, especially twins, would, with positively no exception, always be found to possess the same character as the parents.

At all times, and probably in all the countries on earth, the belief in ever and again being reborn, has been held by many people; and this belief seems to be due to an intuitional instinct that lies dormant in all beings. Many great thinkers too have taught a continuation of life after death. Already from time immemorial there was taught some form of metempsychosis, *i. e.*, 'transformation of soul', or metamorphosis, *i. e.*, 'transformation of body,' etc., for instance, by the esoteric doctrines of old Egypt, by Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus, Pindaros, Vergil, even by the African negroes. Many of the modern thinkers too teach a continuation of the life process after death.

The great German scientist Edgar Dacqué, in his book called 'The Primeval World, Saga and Mankind,' speaking about the wide-spread belief shared by all peoples of the world in a transmigration after death, gives the following warning: "Peoples with culture and acquaintance with science, such as the old Egyptians and wise Indians, were acting and living in accordance with this belief. They lost this belief only after the rise of the naively realistic and rationalistic Hellenism and Judaism. For this reason it would be better, concerning this problem, not to assume the

bloodless attitude of modern sham-civilization, but rather adopt a reverential attitude in trying to solve this problem and grasp it in its profundity."

This law of rebirth can be made comprehensible only by the subconscious 'life-stream,' in Pali, *bhavanga-sota*, which is mentioned in the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka and further explained in the commentaries, esp. the Visuddhi-Magga. The fundamental import of *bhavanga-sota*, or the subconscious life-stream, as working hypothesis for the explanation of the various Buddhist doctrines, such as Rebirth, Karma, Remembrance of former births, *etc.*, has up to now not yet sufficiently been recognized, or understood, by the Western scholars. The term *bhavanga*, or *bhavanga-sota*, is similar to, though not entirely identical with what the modern psychologists, as Jung and others call Soul, or the Unconscious, which, however, in no way signifies the eternal soul-entity of Christian teaching but refers to an ever-changing subconscious process. This subconscious life-stream is the *sine qua non* of all life, and in it all impressions and experiences are stored up, or better said, appear as a multiple process of past images, or memory pictures, which however, as such, are hidden to full consciousness, but which, especially in dream, cross the threshold of consciousness and become fully conscious.

Professor William James (whose words are retranslated here from the German version) says: "Many achievements of the genius have here their beginning. In conversion, mystical experience, and as prayer, it co-operates with religious life. It contains all momentarily inactive reminiscences and sources of all our dimly motivated passions, impulses, intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions; in short, all our non-rational operations result therefrom. It is the source of dreams, *etc.*"

Jung, in his 'Soul Problems of the Present Day,' says : " From the living source of instinct springs forth everything creative." And in another place : " Whatever has been created by human mind, results from contents, which were really unconscious (or subconscious) germs." And " The term 'instinct' is of course nothing but a collective term for all possible organic and psychic factors, whose nature is for the greater part unknown to us."

The existence of the subconscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota*, is a necessary postulate of our thinking. If, whatever we have seen, heard, felt, perceived, thought, externally or internally experienced and done, if all this, without exception, were not registered somewhere and in some way, be it in the extremely complex nervous system or in the Sub-conscious or Unconscious—then we would not even be able to remember what we were thinking the preceding moment ; and we would not know anything of the existence of other beings and things ; would not know our parents, teachers, friends and so on ; would even not be able to think at all, as thinking is conditioned by the remembrance of former experiences ; and our mind would be a complete *tabula rasa* and emptier than the actual mind of an infant just born, nay even of the embryo in the mother's womb.

Thus this sub-conscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota*, can be called the precipitate of all our former actions and experiences, which must have been going on from time immemorial and must continue for immeasurable periods of time to come. Therefore, whatever constitutes the true and inmost nature of man, or any other being, is this subconscious life-stream, of which we do not know, whence it came and whither it will go. As Heraclitus say : " We never enter the same stream. We are identical with it, and we are not," just as it is said in the *Milinda-Pañha* : " *na ca so, na ca añño* ;

neither is it *he* nor is it *another* one (that is reborn).” All life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious life, all life is a flux, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation. No persistent element is there to be discovered in this process. Hence, there also is no permanent Ego, or personality, to be found, but merely these transitory phenomena. About this unreality of the Ego, the Hungarian psychologist Volgyesi in his ‘Message to the Nervous World’ says :

“Under the influence of the newest knowledge the psychologists already begin to realize the truth about the delusive nature of the Ego-entity, the mere relative value of the Ego-feeling, the great dependency of this tiny man on the inexhaustibly many and complex working factors of the whole world.....The idea of an independent Ego, and of a self-reliant Free Will: these ideas we should give up and reconcile ourselves to the truth that there does not exist any real Ego at all. What we take for our Ego-feeling, is in reality nothing but one of the most wonderful *fata-morgana* plays of nature, etc.” In the ultimate sense, there do not even exist such things as mental states, *i.e.*, stationary things. Feeling, perception, consciousness, etc. are, in reality, mere passing processes of feeling, perceiving, becoming conscious etc., within which and outside of which nothing of a separate or permanent entity lies hidden.

Thus a real understanding of the Buddha’s doctrine of Karma and Rebirth is possible only to him who has caught a glimpse of the Impersonality, or *anattatā*, and of the Conditionality, or *ida-paccayatā*, of all phenomena of existence. Therefore it is said in Visuddhi-Magga XIX¹. “Everywhere, in all the realms of existence, the noble disciple sees only

1. See *The Path of Purification*, transl: by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Colombo 1956, Lake House Bookshop).

mental and corporeal phenomena kept going through the concatenation of causes and effects. No producer of the volitional act or Karma does he see apart from the Karma, no recipient of the Karma-result apart from the result. And he is well aware that wise men are using merely conventional language, when, with regard to a karmical act, they speak of a doer, or with regard to a karma-result, they speak of the recipient of the result.

"No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits ;
Empty phenomena roll on :
This is the only right view.

"And while the deeds and their results
Roll on and on, conditioned all,
There is no first beginning found,
Just as it is with seed and tree.....

"No god, no Brāhma, can be called
The maker of this wheel of life :
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all."

In Milinda-Pañha the King asks Nāgasena :

"What is it, Venerable Sir, that will be reborn ?"

"A psycho-physical combination (*nāma-rūpa*), O King," is the answer.

"But how, Venerable Sir? Is it the same psycho-physical combination as this present one?"

"No, O King. But the present psycho-physical combination produces karmically wholesome and unwholesome volitional activities, and through such Karma a new psycho-physical combination will be born."

Since in the ultimate sense, or *paramattha-vasena*, there is no such thing as a real Ego-entity, or Personality, therefore one cannot truly speak of the rebirth of such or such an individual. What actually happens here, is that a psycho-physical process, which is cut off at death, continues immediately thereafter somewhere else, in strict conformity to causes and conditions.

Similarly we read in *Milinda-Pañha*, Chapter III:

“Does, O Venerable Sir, rebirth take place without transmigration?”

“Yes, O King.”

“But how, Venerable Sir, can rebirth take place without passing over of anything? Please, illustrate me this matter.”

“If, O King, a man should light a lamp with the help of another lamp, does in that case the light of the one lamp pass over to the other lamp?”

“No, Venerable Sir.”

“Just so, O King, does rebirth take place without transmigration.”

Further in *Visuddhi-Magga* XVII it is said: “Whosoever has no clear idea about death, and does not know that death consists in the dissolution of the five groups of existence (*i.e.*, corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness), he thinks that it is a person, or being, that dies and transmigrates to a new body, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about rebirth, and does not know that rebirth consists in the arising of the five groups of existence, he thinks that it is a person, or being, that is reborn, or that the person reappears in a new body. And whosoever has no clear idea about the *Samsāra*, the round of rebirths, he thinks

that a real person wanders from this world to another world, comes from that world to this world, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about the phenomena of existence, he thinks that the phenomena are his Ego or something appertaining to the Ego, or something permanent, joyful, or pleasant. And whosoever has no clear idea about the conditional arising of the phenomena of existence, and about the arising of karmical volitions conditioned through ignorance, or *avijjā*, he thinks that it is the Ego that understands or not understands, that acts or causes to act, that enters into a new existence at rebirth. Or he thinks that the atoms or the Creator, etc., with the help of the embryonic process, shape the body, provide it with various faculties; that it is the Ego that receives the sensuous impression, that feels, that desires, that becomes attached, that again in another world enters into existence. Or he thinks that all beings are coming to life through fate or chance."

"A mere phenomenon it is, a thing conditioned,
That rises in the following existence.
But not from previous life does transmigrate it there,
And yet it cannot rise without a previous cause."

"When namely this conditionally arisen bodily-mental phenomenon (the foetus) arises, one says that it has entered into (the next) existence. However, no being (*satta*), or life-principle (*jīva*) is there that has transmigrated from previous existence into this present one and yet this embryo could not have come into existence without a previous cause."

This fact may be compared with the reflection of one's face in the mirror, or with the calling forth of an echo by one's voice. Now, just as the image in the mirror or the echo are produced by one's face or voice without any passing over of face or voice, just so it is with the arising of rebirth-

consciousness. Should there exist a full identity or sameness between the former and the later birth, in that case milk never would turn into curd; and should there exist an entire otherness, curd never could be conditioned through milk. Therefore one should admit neither a full identity, nor an entire otherness of the different stages of existence. Hence *na ca so, na ca añño*: "neither is it the same, nor is it another one." As we have said above: all life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious, all life is a flowing, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation.

To sum up, we may say :

There are in the ultimate sense no real beings or things neither creator nor created; there is but this process of corporeal and mental phenomena. This whole process of existence has an active and a passive side. The active or causal side of existence consists in the Karma-process (*kamma-bhava*), i.e., wholesome and unwholesome (good and evil) Karma-activity, while the passive or caused side consists in Karma-results, or *vipāka*, the so-called Rebirth-or Life-process (*uppati-bhava*), i.e. the arising, growing, decaying and passing away of all these karmically neutral phenomena of existence.

Thus, in the absolute sense, there exists no real being that wanders through this round of rebirths, but merely this ever-changing twofold process of Karma-activities and Karma-results takes place.

The so-called present life is, as it were, the reflection of the past one, and the future life the reflection of the present one. Or, the present life is the result of the past karmic activity, and the future life the result of the present karmic activity. Therefore, nowhere is there to be found an Ego-entity that could be the Performer of the karmic activity or

the Recipient of the karma-result. Hence, Buddhism does not teach any real transmigration, as in the highest sense there is no such thing as a Being, or Ego-entity, how much less a transmigration of such an one.

In every man, as already mentioned, there seems to lie dormant the dim instinctive feeling that death cannot be the end of all things, but that somehow a continuation must follow. In which way, however, this may be, is not clear to him.

It is perhaps quite true that a direct proof for rebirth cannot be given. We have, however, the authentic reports about children in Burma and elsewhere, who sometimes are able to remember quite distinctly events of their previous life. And how could we ever explain the birth of such prodigies, as Bentham who in his fourth year could read and write Latin and Greek, or as Stuart Mill who at the age of three read Greek and at the age of six wrote a History of Rome, or as Babington Macaulay who in his sixth year wrote a compendium of World History, or as Beethoven who gave public concerts when he was seven, or as Mozart who even before his sixth year had written musical compositions, or as Voltaire who read the fables of Fontaine when he was three years old. Is it not reasonable to assume that all these prodigies and geniuses who for the most part came from illiterate parents, should not already in previous births have laid the foundations to their extraordinary faculties?

How could we further explain that a child of righteous and bodily and mentally healthy parents and ancestors, sometimes immediately after his birth, shows characteristics and tendencies of a criminal type, perceivable by the shape of the skull, by facial expression, by the mental attitude, and behaviour recognizable to phrenologists, physiognomists or psychologists?

We may, therefore, rightly state that the Buddhist doctrine of Karma and Rebirth offers the most plausible explanation for all the variations and dissimilarities in nature, as discussed earlier.

Buddhism teaches that, if in a previous birth the bodily, verbal and mental Karma, or volitional activities, have been evil and low and thus have unfavourably influenced the subconscious life-stream (*bhavanga-sota*), then also the results, manifested in the present life, must be disagreeable and evil; and so must be the character and the new actions induced or conditioned through the evil pictures and images of the subconscious life-stream. If the beings, however, have in former lives sown good seeds, then they will reap good fruits in the present life. It is said (M. 135) : "Owners of their Kamma, or volitional actions, are the beings, heirs of their Kamma, the Kamma is the womb from which they have sprung, Kamma is their friend and their refuge. Whatever Kamma they perform, wholesome or unwholesome, *kusala* or *akusala*, they will be the heirs of their Kamma."

In the Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha (Majjhima-Nikāya 135) a Brahman raises the problem :—

"There are men who are short-lived, and those who are long-lived; there are men who are very sick, and such that are healthy; there are men who are hideous, and such that are beautiful; there are men who are powerless, and such that are powerful; there are men who are poor, and such that are rich; there are men who are of low family, and such that are of high family; there are men who are stupid, and such that are intelligent. What then, Master Gotama, is the reason that amongst human beings such inferiority and superiority are found?"

The Blessed One gave the reply :

“Owners of their Kamma are the beings, heirs of their Kamma, the Kamma is the womb from which they have sprung, Kamma is their friend and refuge. Thus Kamma divides the beings in high and low.”

In Anguttara-Nikāya (III. 40), it is Said : “Killing, stealing, adultery, lying, slandering, harsh speech and empty prattling, practised, cultivated and frequently addicted to, will lead to states of misery, the animal-world or the realm of ghosts.” Further : “Whoso kills and is cruel, will either go to hell, or if reborn as man, he will be short-lived. Whoso tortures other beings, will be afflicted with disease. The hater will be hideous, the envious will be without influence, the stubborn will be of low rank, the indolent will be ignorant.” In the reverse case, man will be reborn in a heavenly world ; or, if reborn as man, he will be endowed with health, beauty, influence, riches, noble rank and intelligence.

Dr. Grimm, in his book ‘The Doctrine of the Buddha’, tries to show how the law of affinity may at the moment of death regulate the grasping of a new germ. He says : “ Whoso, devoid of compassion can kill men, or even animals, carries deep within himself the inclination to shorten life. He finds satisfaction, or even pleasure, in the short-livedness of other creatures. Short-lived germs have therefore some affinity for him, an affinity which makes itself known after his death in the grasping of another germ, which then takes place to his own detriment. Even so, germs bearing within themselves the power of developing into a deformed body, have an affinity for one who finds pleasure in ill-treating and disfiguring others. ”

“ Any angry person begets within himself an affinity for ugly bodies and their respective germs, since it is the characteristic mark of anger to disfigure the face.

“ Whoever is jealous, niggardly, haughty, carries within himself the tendency to grudge everything to others, and to despise them. Accordingly, germs that are destined to develop in poor outward circumstances, possess affinity for him.”

Here it is desirable to rectify some wrong applications of the term ‘Karma’ (Sanskrit) or Kamma (Pāli) prevailing in the West. Karma comes from the root *kar* to do, to make, to act, and thus means ‘deed, action.’ In Buddhist usage, Karma is a name for wholesome and unwholesome volition or will (*kusala-* and *akusala-cetanā*) and the consciousness and mental factors associated therewith, manifested as bodily, verbal or mere mental action. Already in the Sutta-texts it is said : *Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammam vadāmi, cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā*, i. e. : “The will (*cetanā*), O Monks, do I call Karma. Through will one performs Karma by means of body, speech or mind.” Thus Karma is volitional action, nothing more, nothing less. From this fact result the following three statements :—

1. The term Karma never comprises the result of action, as many in the West, misled by theosophical writings, wish this term to be understood. Karma is wholesome or unwholesome volitional ‘Action,’ and *kamma.vipāka* is the ‘Result’ of action.

2. There are some who wrongly consider every happening, even our new wholesome and unwholesome actions, as the result of our prenatal Karma. In other words, they believe that the result again becomes the cause of new

results, and so *ad infinitum*. Thus they are stamping Buddhism as fatalism ; and they will have to come to the conclusion that, in that case, our destiny never can be influenced or changed, and no deliverance ever be attained.

3. There is a third wrong application of the term Karma, being an amplification of the first view, *i. e.* that the term Karma comprises also the result of action. It is the assumption of a so-called joint Karma, *i. e.* a mass-Karma, or group-Karma, or national Karma. According to this view, a group of people, *e. g.* a nation, should be responsible for the bad deeds formerly done by this so-called 'same' people. In reality, however, this present people may not consist at all of the karmic heirs of the same individuals who did these bad deeds. According to Buddhism it is of course quite true that anybody who suffers bodily, suffers for his past or present bad deeds. Thus also each of those individuals born within that suffering nation, must, if actually suffering bodily, have done evil somewhere, here or in one of the innumerable spheres of existence ; but he may not have had anything to do with the bad deeds of the so-called nation. We might say that through his evil Karma he was attracted to the miserable condition befitting to him. In short, the term Karma applies, in each instance, only to wholesome and unwholesome volitional activity of the single individual. Karma thus forms the cause, or seed, from which the results will accrue to the individual, be it in this life, or hereafter. ¹

1. The Pali term *vipāka*, which generally is translated by 'effect', or 'result', is not exactly identical with these two English terms. According to *Kathāvatthu*, it refers only to the karma-produced *mental* results, such as pleasurable and painful feeling of the body and all other primary mental phenomena ; while, all the corporeal phenomena, such as the five physical sense-organs, etc., are not called *vipāka* but *kammaja* or *kamma-samuṭṭhāna*, *i. e.* 'karma-born' or 'karma-produced'.

Man has it in his power to shape his future destiny by means of his will and actions. It depends on his actions, or Karma, whether his destiny will lead him up or down, either to happiness or to misery. Moreover, Karma is the cause and seed not only for the continuation of the life-process after death, *i. e.*, for the so-called rebirth; but even in this present life-process, our actions, or Karma, may produce good and bad results, and exercise a decisive influence on our present character and destiny. Thus, for instance, if daily we practise kindness towards all living beings, men as well as animals, we will grow in goodness. Hatred, and all evil actions done through hatred, as well as all the evil and agonizing mental states produced thereby, will not easily rise again. Our nature and character will become firm, happy, peaceful and calm.

If we practise unselfishness and liberality, greed and avarice will become less. If we practise love and kindness, anger and hatred will vanish. If we develop wisdom and knowledge, ignorance and delusion will gradually disappear. The less greed, hatred and ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*) dwell in man's heart, the less will he commit evil and unwholesome actions of body, speech and mind. For, all evil things, and all evil destiny, are rooted in greed, hate and ignorance; and of these three things ignorance, or delusion, *moha*, or *avijjā*, is the chief root and the primary cause of all evil and misery in the world. If there is no more ignorance, there will be no more greed and hatred, no more rebirth, no more suffering.

This goal, however, in the ultimate sense, will be realized only by the Saint (Arahat), *i. e.*, by one who, for ever and all time, is freed from these three roots; and this is brought about through the penetrating insight, or *vipassanā*, into the Impermanency, Unsatisfactoriness and Impersonality, or

Egolessness, of this whole life-process, and through the detachment from all forms of existence that results from that insight. As soon as greed, hate and ignorance are fully and for ever extinguished, the will for life, tenaciously clinging to existence will come to an end. There will be no more rebirth, and there will have been realized the goal shown by the Enlightened One, namely : extinction of all rebirth and suffering. Thus, the Saint (Arahat) does no more perform any Karma, *i. e.*, karmically wholesome or unwholesome volitional actions productive of renewed existence. Though the Holy One, or Arahat, is certainly not inactive and all that he does, speaks and thinks is commonly called 'good', yet it has not the least trace of attachment, pride or self-assertion.

What is called the character of man, is in reality the sum of the subconscious tendencies produced partly by the prenatal, partly by the present volitional activity, or Karma. These tendencies may, during life-time become an inducement to wholesome or unwholesome volitional activity, or Karma, by body, speech or mind. If, however, this thirst for life rooted in ignorance is fully extinguished, then there will be no new rebirth. Once the root of a coconut tree has been fully destroyed, the tree will die off. In exactly the same way, there will be no entering again into a new existence, once the life-affirming three evil roots, *i. e.*, greed, hate and ignorance, have been for ever destroyed. Here one should not forget that all such expressions referring to a personality as 'I,' 'He,' 'Holy One' etc., are merely conventional names for an impersonal life-process.

In this connection it should be mentioned that, according to Buddhism, it is merely the last karmical volition just before death, *marañāsanna-kamma*, that determines the nature of the immediately following rebirth. In Buddhist countries,

it is therefore the custom to recall to the dying man's memory his good actions performed by him, in order to rouse in him a happy and pure karmical state of mind, as a preparation for a favourable rebirth. Or, his relations let him see things (robes or other offerings) which they, for his good and benefit, wish to offer to the Sangha, saying : ' This, we shall offer to the Sangha for your future good and welfare.' Or they let him hear a religious sermon, or a recital of a Sutta, very often the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

In Visuddhi-Magga XVII it is said that, at the moment before death, there will, as a rule, appear to the memory of the evil-doer the mental image of any evil deed, or *Kamma*, formerly done; or, there will appear before his mental eyes an attendant circumstance, or object, called *kamma-nimitta*, connected with that bad deed, such as blood, or a blood-stained dagger, etc.; or he may see before his mind an indication of his imminent miserable rebirth, *gati-nimitta*, such as fiery flames, etc. To another dying man there may appear before his mind the image of a voluptuous object inciting his sensual lust.

To a good man there may appear before his mind any noble deed, or *kamma*, formerly done by him, or an object that was present at that time, the so-called *kamma-nimitta*; or he may see in his mind an indication of his imminent rebirth, or *gati-nimitta*, such as a heavenly palace, etc.

In the Chinese version of the Mahāyāna-text ' Bhavaśaṅkrānti-Sūtra (ed. by Aiyaswāmi Sāstri) it is said in a similar way: " When, at the end of life, the mental consciousness is about to disappear, then all the actions that have been performed, appear in front, just as the image of the beautiful female that has been seen in dream appears before the man, when he remembers her after awakening from sleep. Thus,

O king, when the consciousness (at death) has disappeared and the future consciousness is born, it is born either amongst men, or gods, or beasts, or ghosts, or in the states of misery. Immediately after the future consciousness arises, O king, a (new) series of thought (*citta-santati*) belonging to the future arises to enjoy the resultant fruits which are to be enjoyed. O king, there has never been anything that can transmigrate from this world to the future world. But the fruit of action may be obtained in rebirth. You ought to know, O king, that when the former consciousness disappears, it is called death. When the future consciousness arises, it is called birth. When the former consciousness, O king, disappears, there is no place where it goes away to. When the future consciousness arises, it comes not from any place."

In the discourses (Suttas) of the Pali Canon, three types of Karma, or volitional actions, are mentioned, with regard to the time of their bearing fruit, namely: 1. Karma bearing fruit at life-time (*diṭṭhadhamma-vedanīya-kamma*), 2. Karma bearing fruit in the next life (*upapajja-vedanīya-kamma*), 3. Karma bearing fruit in later lives (*aparā-pariya-vedanīya-kamma*). The explanations of this subject are too technical for this brief introduction into the subject. They imply the following: What appears as a single act of sense perception or mental cognition, actually consists of a series of consecutive thought moments performing different functions in that cognitive process. The phase of that process where Karmic volition is produced consists of a number of impulsive thought moments, or *javana-citta*, which are flashing up, one after the other, in rapid succession. Now, of these impulsive moments the first one will bear fruit at life-time, the last one in the next birth, and those between these two moments will bear fruit in later lives. The two kinds of Karma bearing fruit at life-time and in the next birth, may sometimes become ineffective, or *ahosi-kamma*.

Karma, however, that bears fruit in later lives will, whenever and wherever there is an opportunity, be productive of karma-result ; and as long as this life-process is rolling forward, this Karma never will become ineffective.

The Visuddhi-Magga divides Karma, according to its functions, into four kinds : Generative Karma, Supportive Karma, Counteractive Karma and Destructive Karma, which all may be either wholesome or unwholesome, good or evil.

'Generative,' or *janaka-kamma* is the Karma which predominated at the moment of death and conditioned the present existence. It functions from the moment of birth and continues to generate, during the succeeding life-continuity, corporeal and neutral mental phenomena, such as the five kinds of sense-consciousness, and the mental factors associated therewith, as feeling, perception, sense-impression, etc.

The 'Supportive' or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, supports, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena arising during life time, and aids their continuance.

The 'Counteractive,' or *upapīṭaka-kamma*, counteracts, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena produced by generative Kamma, and does not allow them to continue.

The 'Destructive,' or *upaghātaka-kamma*, destroys the weaker karma and admits only its own agreeable or else disagreeable karma-results.

In the Commentary to Majjhima-Nikāya (No. 135), Generative, or *janaka-kamma*, is compared with a farmer sowing seed ; Supportive, or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, with the

irrigating, manuring, and watching the field etc.; Counteracting, or *upapīlaka-kamma*, with the drought that causes a poor harvest; Destructive, or *upaghātaka-kamma*, with a fire that destroys the whole harvest.

Another illustration is this: the rebirth of Devadatta in a royal family was due to his good Generative Karma. His becoming a monk and attaining high spiritual powers, was a good Supportive Karma. His intention of killing the Buddha was a Counteractive Karma, while his causing a split in the Order of monks was a Destructive Karma, owing to which he was born in a world of misery.

It lies outside the scope of this short exposition to give detailed descriptions of all the manifold divisions of Karma found in the Commentaries. The main purpose of this essay is to emphasize that the Buddhist doctrine of Rebirth has nothing to do with the transmigration of any soul or Ego-entity, as in the ultimate sense there does not exist any such Ego or I, but merely a continually changing process of mental and corporeal phenomena of existence. Further to point out that both the Karma-process and Rebirth-process may be made comprehensible only by the assumption of a subconscious stream of life underlying everything in animate nature.

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KAMMA

By

BHIKKHU SILACARA



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KAMMA

In its simplest form, expressed in the simplest words, the Buddhist doctrine of Kamma can be readily understood by the smallest child. For it says to that child: "Be good and you will be happy, now and in the future. But if you are bad, you will be unhappy, now and in the future. The world is made like that." And if the child should ask, as children will, "Why is the world made like that?" the only correct answer on the part of the adult asked will be: "I do not know why it is made like that. I also do not know why water is wet, or why fire is hot. They just are so, as you will find out for yourself when you try them, and see. And the world also is made like that, as you will find out as you go on living and getting older, that is, when you try *it* and see." However, the adult himself will wish to know a little more about what this law of the world,—of all worlds,—means, and how it works, than is expressed in this bald statement to the child in years and understanding. And when he makes enquiry into that law, as expounded by the Buddha, he finds that in the

details of its nature and working, it has unexpected ramifications which require some attention and study fully to understand. And even then, with all the study that may be given to it, it can never as a whole be fully understood by the mind of ordinary men. Only a Buddha is possessed of the mental calibre sufficient to grasp to the full the whole sequence of causation which brings about a given state of affairs in the life of any being, at any given point of time. For anyone else to attempt to plumb all these depths of causation—it is the Buddha himself who gives the warning—would be to run grave risk of mental alienation, in plain English, of madness, at the very least, temporary, and it might even be, permanent. This, however, need not deter us from trying to understand to the best of our ability, all that *can* be understood by minds such as ours. So to this task let us now address ourselves.

And first we must note what a great misfortune it is, from our Buddhist point of view, that the earlier introducers of this word, Kamma, under its Sanskrit form Karma, into the vocabulary of the western world, were not Buddhists, and consequently stamped upon the word a meaning, in the average westerner's mind, which is altogether different from the meaning it has for us who have learned the Buddha's doctrine at its original sources. The greatest offenders in this regard

have been the representatives of an alien faith who went out into Eastern countries to propagate that faith of theirs. For, in the course of their efforts to pick up the language of the lands to which they had been sent, in their talk with the dwellers in these lands, they frequently heard the expression, when such were talking of something that had happened to them (generally of an untoward nature): "O, it is my karma ; it is my karma," and forthwith jumped to the conclusion that what their Oriental acquaintances were saying was: "Oh, this is my fate ; this is my destiny. This is something imposed on me by a power beyond my control, to which I must helplessly submit." And they mentally noted down that among the other lamentable evils prevalent among those unfortunate Orientals this also was one: that they were fatalists, people who believed that their fate in life was all fixed in advance beforehand, and that nothing now that they might do, could alter it.

What excuse or grounds had these missionaries for jumping to this conclusion? Only this: that already in their own continent some such similar ideas were at one time widely held by their own fellow-religionists, and championed and propagated by several of the most outstanding and able men in the history of their own religion ! There was, for instance, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, who in his book, "De

Necessitate," proved with irrefragable logic that everything that happened in the process of nature, did so in strict dependence upon an antecedent cause ; and left no loophole for the possibility of any change in a "sinner's" career save the intervention of what he called "grace," which again could intervene, and did intervene, only according to the good will and pleasure of "God". Thus the "sinner" remained in a perfectly hopeless position, unless and until it should happen that "God" was pleased to bestow on him "grace".

Then there was John Calvin, of Geneva, a member, and a leading member, of the reformed Christian church, as Bishop Augustine was of the unreformed church, who also with perfect logical consistency proved from passages in the Christian's "holy book" that some persons by divine decree were foreordained to be saved from eternal suffering, and others equally foreordained to suffer cruel torment through all eternity by the decree of the same god, and neither the one class nor the other, whatever they might do or not do, could avoid the destiny allotted to them in advance before ever they were born, by their god.

And finally, there was Jonathan Edwards, of Boston, U.S.A., also an eminent preacher in the reformed Christian church of his country, who, from

the dogma of the fore-knowledge of the god who made the world and all in it, men included, deduced with clear and incontrovertible logic, that since all that was going to happen was already known to this god, then it had as good as already happened in his mind ; and any idea human beings might entertain that they were making things happen, according to their own wills, in one way or another, was pure illusion. Their efforts to make things happen were themselves already known in advance by the god, thus, they were not free efforts, but already ordained to happen, together with all their results.

With these ideas concerning the necessitated, predestined, foreknown nature of human action preached in their day by these three eminent worthies of the Christian church, floating about in their minds, it was little wonder that the first Christian missionaries to Indian and Indian-influenced lands, supposed that in the teaching of Karma or Kamma, they had merely lighted on an Oriental form of this belief of some of their own eminent co-religionists. Yet, despite the close resemblance in *form* to their own ideas which they thought they had discerned, it was an entirely erroneous idea of the *substance* of this Oriental saying, "It is my karma", at which these Christian missionaries arrived.

The word Karma, or in its Pali form, Kamma,

is the substantive derived from the verb *karoti*, to do, to make, to perform ; it is this, and absolutely nothing else whatsoever. So that, when an Oriental, whether Buddhist or Hindu, says: "This is my Karma or Kamma," all he is saying is: "This is my action ; this is my doing ; this is my deed. It is not somebody else's doing ; it is not somebody else's deed. It is not a god's doing, not a decree of necessity, or predestination, or foreknowledge. I did this myself." Thus, when they said: "This is my Kamma or doing," they were saying the *very opposite* of what the Christian missionary, with his ideas of predestination and foreordination and foreknowledge, thought they were saying. They were asserting their own power of making their destiny ; and all the time they were asserting this, the missionary thought they were asserting the power of something else to make that destiny what *it* chose despite all that the human being might struggle and strive to effect!

Again, what excuse had the missionary for such a terrific misunderstanding, such a complete misapprehension of the phrase he heard, that he took it to mean the exact opposite of what it did mean? The answer must be, as was Dr. Johnson's on a celebrated occasion: "Ignorance, madam! sheer ignorance!" For the men who go out to these Eastern lands to try to win adherents to the nominal

religion of their own land are not usually of any great knowledge. Only too often they have little else in their heads but the petty little stock of ideas that have been planted there in the petty little missionary colleges and training schools in which they have spent several years getting ready, as well as may be, to attack and overwhelm the supposed false views and ideas of the "heathen" once they come face to face with them. And so trained, so taught, and knowing hardly anything else about the movement of ideas current at different epochs in their own quarter of the globe, they were ignorant of the idea of *re-birth*, of *re-embodiment*, of the *repeated* manifestation at separate intervals in the visible world, of the same stream or line of human causation. Never having heard of anything else in their schools and colleges, they have entertained the naïve idea that when a human being is born anywhere into our world, this is a wholly and completely new creation of mind, of character, of the entire psychic make-up which constitutes that being. So that when an Oriental of the Hindu or Buddhist religion, said in their hearing: "This is my action," they did not reflect that one of the great chiefs of their own religion in its early days, to wit, Origen, on the authority of the holy book of that religion—"Did this man sin . . . that he was *born* blind?"—had believed in the possibility of men

committing evil before they were born into their present life, and therefore of reaping the result of that evil doing now that they are born,—they never reflected on this, and indeed, *could* not reflect on it, never having been taught that such an idea once had currency in the early days of their religion, and so they never had any possibility of understanding this teaching about Kamma.

For the idea of Kamma or Karma is intimately bound up with that of re-birth. In a sense it may be said to be part of it. One might even say, with perfect correctness, that they are the same doctrine, looked at, in one case subjectively, and in the other, objectively. In a manner of speaking, Kamma is re-birth, latent and, for the time being, unmanifest; and re-birth is Kamma become active and manifest. Kamma is like a cable running unseen under the surface of a sea, and every now and again emerging above the surface of that sea and exposing to view a small portion of its length, making its appearance known to our human vision, manifesting itself to our physical sight. Each of such emergencies is what we call a “lifetime,” only because we have no other better word for it. But in strict truth, the real “lifetime” is the stretch of the cable’s whole length both beneath and above the surface of our supposed sea, both when manifest and visible, and when unmanifest

and invisible, to human perception. And the end, the completion of *the cable of Kamma*, and not the mere termination of one of the manifestations of a portion of the Kamma-cable we usually call a “life-time,” not that mere lapse into non-manifestation of the Kamma-cable which in current phrase we name “death”. To borrow a little of the language of physics, we might say that Kamma is energy, that special form of energy which makes, or rather is, a living being. And the body through which that energy manifests itself when such a being is as we say, “born”, is the particular collection of matter through which that energy makes its presence known in the physical world, energies being known to us here only in association with some form or other of matter, not otherwise.

When or why did this energy begin to run its course, entailing all that is involved in that course, for sentient beings, of sorrow and gladness, pain and pleasure, of the undesirable and of the desirable,—entailing, in short, all that is involved in the history of a universe? Useless to ask! Who knows? Who can know? To ponder, with intent to find an answer, too deeply and long upon such questions, were to invite the breakdown of the brain that so pondered. “The beginning of beings is not to be perceived”, says a Buddhist Scripture. All we know is that the *ending*

of Kamma, of beings that suffer, may be achieved ; all the teaching of all the Buddhas being nothing else but the pointing out of the Way to that ending. Leaving aside, then, this question regarding the beginning of Kamma as profitless, alike to ask and answer, we may now turn to what is of more practical use in the life we now live ; we may turn to the consideration of some of the details of the working of this law of the continuity of energy in the field of the life of conscious beings.

The first thing we have to note about Kamma is that real, effective Kamma, the sort of Kamma which runs on from lifetime to lifetime, is *mental* Kamma, is volition. “Kamma is volition, I declare”, is one of the Buddha’s sayings. Action of the body or of speech in which there is no volition, no intention involved, such action is not Kamma in the effective sense of the word ; it does not involve any serious long-lasting fruit or result. It was on this point that the Buddha differed in his teaching about Kamma from the sect of “naked ascetics” as they were called in his day, who to-day are known as Jains. They held ~~that~~ every act whatsoever, even the most accidental and unintentional, produced full fruit ; and so when they drank water or went walking anywhere, they took great precautions to see that in performing these most ordinary acts, they did not

take any life, even in the humblest form. They drank all their water through a sieve of fine mesh, and carefully brushed the path on which they were walking, before taking each step thereon. But the Buddha, in argument with them, as recorded in the Upali Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya, proved to them that as regards ultimate effect, such meticulous care about externals was not nearly so necessary as it was to cleanse the *mind* of all tendency to hurt and harm. It was *mental* action that involved real Kamma-vipaka, real Kamma-result. The rest, though also important and to be observed, was yet only second in importance to this mental Kamma.

The next thing we have to note about Kamma is that it is not such a simple matter as in ordinary popular exposition it is frequently made out to be. In expounding Kamma and its consequences, action and its fruit, by way of illustration, use is sometimes made of the simile of an electric current. Kamma is said to be like a current of electricity running along a wire, and in its course flowing through the filament in an electric bulb-lamp, and manifesting itself, showing its presence, as light, as illumination. When the lamp is broken, or wears out, and the light therefore is extinguished, this does not mean that the current of electricity has ceased to exist, so it is said ; it only means that its method of manifestation for

the time being has been denied to it, taken away from it, but that the current is still in existence, and only waiting for a fresh means of manifestation to be provided, whatever this may be (another bulb-lamp, or an electric heater, or an electric motor), when it will again show itself as light, or heat, or motive energy, as the case may be. The electric current, in this illustration, represents the line or flow of Kamma ; and the bulb-lamp, or heater, or motor, stand for the various "life-times" of an individual in this world of visible things.

Now this illustration will do well enough as a first rough illustration of the Buddhist doctrine of Kamma, for those who have never heard of it before, for at least it does one thing effectively ; it shows the difference between Kamma as expounded outside Buddhism, and as it is expounded inside our Religion. Outside, Kamma is regarded as something made by an individual. But this illustration of it as an electric current shows that the current, that is the Kamma, is the individual. The so-called individual is only the manifestation of Kamma, its "visibilisation", its making manifest, just as the light in an electric bulb-light is only the making visible and manifest of the presence of the electric current. So far the illustration is quite correct. It only is defective in this point, that it makes out the current of Kamma to be a

simple, homogeneous thing such as is an electric current, whereas in reality the current of Kamma of which each living being is the present temporary manifestation is a highly complicated and complex thing. It is not a simple homogeneous line of energy, but rather a broad stream containing in its flow a number of simultaneously running currents of widely different character ; at least, this is so, so far as is concerned the ordinary normal man of every day, such men as you or I.

Or, perhaps, just for the sake of clearness, we had best first regard it, not as a single thin thread but as a thick cable made up of a great number of thin threads, each of these threads having a different colour, being of a different character. Thus the cable is not of one colour, whether black or white or red or green or any other colour, but is made up of, and to anyone who could see it with the physical eye, would present the appearance of, a highly speckled, variegated coil, of every variety of colour. In other words, the Kamma each of ordinary men has behind him, the line of Kamma of which each of us is the present manifestation, is a complex of many different mental impulses, some good, some bad, some neither one nor the other, some happy, some unhappy, some merely indifferent, some beautiful, some ugly, some just "plain Jane". And of all this complex, lying in

our background, what is manifest to-day as you and I, is just a little bit of one or two of these vari-coloured threads in the thick cable ; the remainder of the threads in the cable have not yet shown themselves to the light of day in actual life in this world.

For, still pursuing our metaphor of the cable made up of many threads of various colours, this cable is to be thought of as running along beneath the surface of a sea, where it is not seen by our eyes. Every little while it emerges above the surface of this supposed sea, and for a brief while shows a portion of its length, nay, only a small portion of that portion, just a few threads of may be one or two of the colours that make up its girth ; and then, it sinks under the surface of the sea again, and becomes invisible to us. Each such emergence of the cable out of invisibility into visibility is what we call a living being's lifetime ; and thus it is the making visible and seen, not the whole of the cable, but only a few threads in the composition of the cable. In other words, dropping all metaphor : The lifetime of any being is not a full manifestation of all the Kamma that makes that being, but is only a manifestation of a very small part of that Kamma. Much, very much, of a very mixed kind in us ordinary people, still remains to be manifested at some future time ; and will manifest itself, if in the meantime, by

our present action, by the Kamma we are now making, some of these threads are not changed in their character and composition, or—as is *possible*, but not very probable in the case of ordinary men—completely cut out, extirpated, by our present action, our present Kamma, or by some future action or Kamma of ours.

This is the explanation of that phenomenon in human life frequently observed by those who have lived long enough to see and note something of the ways of themselves and their fellowmen—the doing of a deed by a man which takes us by complete surprise, so utterly, so unexpectedly inconsistent with his character does it seem to us, so unlike what we should ever have expected a man like him to do, as we say ; nay, sometimes it is the doing of a deed of evil sort, by ourselves, of which we had not believed ourselves capable! “There is no fathoming the depths of the human heart,” is a frequent saying on the lips of our moralists of the West. Put more Buddhistically,—and that means, more accurately, more scientifically—this saying would run: “There is no telling what kind of Kamma lies at the back of any man, ourselves included, which may come forward and make itself manifest at any time.” “We are fearfully and wonderfully made”, says another passage from one of the religious Scriptures

of the World. It is quite true. Our past Kamma is a fearful and wonderful mixture ; and we never can tell which part of that mixture, or bad or good, or dark or bright, given propitious, favouring circumstances, is not going to come to the surface and reveal its existence in open, outward word and act.

It is the consideration of this fact of the very mixed nature of the Kamma lying behind each human being which inspires us Buddhists to an attitude of *caritas*, of "charity" towards our fellow-men, even the so-called worst of them, the evil-doing man, the criminal. Indeed, we cannot help having such an attitude ; we are compelled to it when we reflect that, for all we know, in us too, in the background, may lurk just such evil Kammavipaka, fruit of action from our past, which may at any time when circumstances favour, come into the foreground, and then we too, may find ourselves borne almost helplessly along by that undesirable impulsion into the corresponding act that will stamp us in the eyes of others as a criminal. More than that, for all we know, there may lie in the background of the evil-doer who is so despised and rejected by those who know nothing of the possibilities of Kammavipaka behind each man,—there may lie in his background some brilliant threads of the finest, whiter texture, some good Kamma of a quality we who

think we have the right to despise him, will have a great deal to do before we acquire anything like it. When the present evil Kamma of the criminal is worked out and finished with, how do we know what good Kamma of his from his past may then come into effect and make of him in the world's eyes a good man in the highest degree, perhaps even a saint? Such things have happened. Men of notoriously evil lives have turned round and become saints, like that Augustine, who in his wild youth, was well-nigh the breaker of his pious mother's heart, and yet later in life, became one of the pillars of the Church which he joined. But even on a lesser scale, there is hardly any of us who does not know of some instance in our experience of men who have completely changed their character as it seemed, and turned from evil to good. Yet, as a matter of fact, they have not changed their character at all. What has happened is only that one black line of cause and effect in that Kamma which was the man's character, one dark thread in the cable of Kamma, has run its course, come to an end, and now another and brighter and better one takes up the running in the visible outward manifestation of the man's life. And as it has been with him, so it may be with us. We are none of us, even so-called good men, so good as we think we are, or as our fellows think we are.

Neither are any of us, even the so-called bad, so bad as their contemning fellows think they are. We are none of us all white or all black. The vast majority of men are just piebald, white in spots and black in spots! Hence there is no call for anything but forbearance for the evil-doer of the moment, for pitying charity towards his unlovely ways, since, for ought we know, they may any time,—if not in this lifetime, then in another,—turn and change to good and lovely ways.

In another regard, the stream or cable of Kamma is more complicated than in the simile of the electric current it is represented to be. In that simile, it is represented as running straightforward from one lifetime to the next. But this is not what actually happens. The actions, the Kamma, of this life in general, do not give rise to their appropriate results, their due fruit, *in the immediately succeeding life*; but those results, that fruit, are reaped, come to fruition, in any subsequent life, *after* the next lifetime. The only part of the Kamma of this lifetime of any man which bears its fruit in the immediately following lifetime is the last thought which he has at the moment of death. This thought, of whatever nature it may be, bad or good, sad or glad, gloomy or bright, decides the character of the immediately following lifetime.

Hence the great, the serious importance of the thought which may be occupying a man's mind when he is on the point of death. Hence the duty laid upon all who have to be present at the death of any fellow being, to encourage him in every way possible, to think only good, happy, wholesome thoughts as his death hour approaches. And this, as a matter of fact, is what is done at every Buddhist death-bed. All friends and relatives who are about the dying person try to keep his mind directed upon everything of a comforting and happifying nature. They advise him to think of all the good things he has done to others, of all the good that others have done to him ; to think of the good that has been done both to the world and to himself by the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha ; and to pass away happy in the knowledge that he has put his trust in these three good things, these three precious treasures. If they can succeed in doing this, then they feel confident that they have done their departing brother-man the greatest service at the last that they could do him ; they have ensured him a happy and favourable immediately following lifetime. Of all that he has done of evil, in the past, he is exhorted to repent and then forget, put behind him, think no more of. For if he were to dwell upon that, evil, so that that evil were the last thought in his mind on

deceasing, then an evil following birth would be the result.

Here we see of what benefit, odd as it may sound from a strictly rationalistic standpoint, is a "death-bed repentance", when such a thing can truly be brought about. It makes it possible for the dying man to have a good thought in his mind as he passes out of this life into his next. Yet let no man deceive himself and imagine that because this may possibly be brought about, all may be well with him for his next life, after he has lived a life-time filled full of evil living. For it is by no means certain that even the presence of all the helping relatives one has about one on one's death-bed, will be able to counteract the Kamma, the result of a lifetime spent in evil thought and deeds. "The ruling passion strong in death" is not a mere pretty saying: it is a serious fact. If a man has spent a lifetime in say, acting the miser, thinking gold, talking gold, working only for gold, when his last hour and moment comes, he is only too likely to carry on even then the thoughts and desires by which he has been dominated all his life, in spite of what all about him may be trying to do to turn his mind and thoughts in worthier directions. The accumulated thought of all his life-time may be too strong despite all his friends are trying to do for him, and may still persist

in his mind, keeping out everything else, and so there may lie before him only another sordid life-time given over to his pitiful lust for filthy lucre and and all the mean ways of getting possession of it which have characterised his life-time that is drawing to a close. For all that that mis-spent life-time has done for him, he is no whit nearer to the goal of the Good.

Or if a man has been a lifelong drunkard, living only for the stimulation, the excitation, the exhilaration which alcohol taken into the body gives, then how hard it will be for him, at his dying hour, as he feels his powers waning, his life ebbing away from him, to help craving, craving with all his might, for another draught of the liquor to which he has looked all his past life-time for the revival of his powers, the imparting of a sense of well-being! It will be almost impossible for him, notwithstanding what all his friends round him may be trying to do, to turn his mind in happier directions; and so he will be only too likely to die with a last craving thought of liquor in his mind, and so prepare for himself another drink-sodden career in a new body.

For the point here is, that in the absence of any other force powerful enough to over-master it, the last thought of a dying man is most likely to be that by which he has been most dominated all his life.

His last thought is likely to be that which he was most in the habit of cherishing during his life. Thus, though technically, the last dying thought of a man determines his immediately following life, actually in most cases, it is the dominant thought of his whole life-time which determines his next birth, save and except in those cases where by one means or other a "death-bed repentance" is brought about, or good friends surrounding his dying couch, are able to turn his thoughts away out of the channel they have followed all through his life, and are able to direct them into good and happy directions, leading thereby to a good and happy immediately following birth.

It was said above that the only thought-Kamma which is effective in fruit, in result, in the lifetime immediately following that in which it is "made", is the last dying thought of the deceasing person, and that this last thought, in the absence of any more powerful Kamma generated at the time under the instigation of kind friends or other ministrants about the death-bed, will be the thought which was most predominant throughout the person's life. What, then, of all the other thought-Kamma generated by a person during his life? What of all the other countless mental impulses set going by a person throughout his lifetime in addition to the one most prevailing? Are these of no account? Are they

without fruit? Do they entail no result? By no means. There is indeed a class of thought which bears no fruit, entails no result, if it be not immediately given the opportunity to bear fruit, produce result. It is, as it were, not full-grown thought ; it is thought only in its initial stage, which has gone no further than the first faint stirrings of volition. This is the only kind of mental Kamma, thought-action which entails no consequences in the future, if it has no consequences immediately following in this lifetime, then it has no consequences at all. It is dead Kamma. By a figure of speech one might say that it is Kamma which has never properly been alive. But all the rest of a person's mental Kamma must produce effects in the future, does not die out and perish without result, but waits, gathers together, accumulates, till a suitable occasion for its working out arrives in some future lifetime, any future lifetime, after the immediately following one. It is as it were, a great storehouse, out of which may be drawn at any time in the future after the next lifetime, treasures of gleaming gold and of precious stones, or unlovely heaps of foul dross and rubbish, or worse still, of noxious poisons to infect the whole of the lifetime in which they appear. Always behind each of us ordinary folk who are yet a long way from the *summum bonum*—the clearing up and cancelling

of all the accounts of Kamma—there lies this heaped-up mass of Kamma of the past, all waiting its due turn to come forward and ripen into active, actual effects in this or in some future lifetime.

But these effects, that fruit, is not all settled and fixed to its smallest detail, in advance, like some fate or doom. There is nothing settled and fixed and frozen into immobile rigidity, in the universe as it is envisaged by the Buddha. It is all mobile, flowing, fluid, changing; and therefore at all times, at any moment, to be changed and modified and given new shape in some degree, however small. Kamma is never something settled and done with; it is always something that is happening now, and by its happening now, influencing and modifying and changing the results of the Kamma of the past.

Kamma, in short, is not altogether a cable made up of a great number of threads whose colours are fixed, and therefore remain as they are all through the length of the cable. It must rather be thought of as a cable made up of threads of various colours, which threads themselves are changing their colours through the influence upon them of the threads that run alongside them. Or perhaps it will be better to drop the simile of the cable altogether, as being too static a thing to represent the mobile, changing flow of Kamma, and to imagine Kamma as a stream of

water, or rather of many-coloured waters running in currents alongside one another in the main bed of the stream, and continually imparting some of their own colouring to the neighbouring currents, and from these neighbouring currents receiving in return some colouring that changes their own character, while all the time also, new bodies of coloured water are being added to the stream, and strengthening, intensifying whatever current of its own colour is already part of the stream.

For this is exactly how Kamma is continually working. Past Kamma, past action, is continually being modified in its present results by present action, present Kamma. And also, present Kamma in its results is continually being modified and altered by past Kamma.

To simplify matters, let us suppose the stream of Kamma representing a given living being to be composed just of two currents, one of white and one of dark water. If now, that being by his present thought-action, his present mental Kamma, pours some white water into the stream, he has thereby made the effect of any blackness that may have flowed down from the past, a little less black. He has influenced the effects of past Kamma. But *how much*, he makes it less black, depends upon *how much* of blackness has come down from the past. If

the volume of black water from the past is very great, then what white water he has added to the stream, will make only a little difference in its blackness. But if the volume of black water from the past is only a small one, then the white water now added will make a great difference in the general whitening of the stream. The Kamma of the past is influencing and modifying the Kamma-vipäka, the Kamma-fruit of the present, either in one direction or another.

Thus, at every moment our lives are in our own hands to mould afresh in whatever direction we wish to mould them. The past is not unchangeable and fixed. We can change it now by our present action. Still less is our future inevitably fixed and settled by reason of our present action, our present Kamma. When that future comes, then as now, we can again pour into the stream of our Kamma fresh water, good or bad, clear and white or muddy and dark, and make it one way or the other, as we ourselves shall determine, and no other.

This present Kamma by which we weaken or intensify past Kamma in its results, is what is called technically, *supportive* Kamma ; and it is this which furnishes the opportunity for, and calls forth into activity the various portions, good or bad, bright or dark, of our accumulated Kamma of the past. Our present Kamma, our action of to-day, may furnish

“support” either for the good or the bad that may lie in our past, and thus bring to present powerful fruition the one or the other, according as we shall ourselves choose. If we are so strong in the making of good Kamma as to heap up a great quantity of good, there is even the possibility, not only of *modifying* past bad Kamma but even of *wiping it out* altogether, of completely cancelling it. But this is a tremendous thing to do, even though it *can* be done by one sufficiently strong. For most of us, the best we can hope is by diligent attention to create such a standing stock of good Kamma as will powerfully modify the effect of our past bad Kamma, and reduce its baneful power to a minimum. But the powerful Kamma generated by an Arahant, or by one on the Higher Eightfold Path, the Kamma generated by the practising of the Jhanas and the deeper meditations, can and does obliterate all the past bad Kamma of the practiser of these mighty exercises, and so he is quit of his life’s sum ; he has solved it ; he has Nibbana. It follows that this wiping out of his account of all his past bad Kamma, takes place in the last lifetime of the Arahant.

It should now be clear that a human being *is* not anything but is always *becoming* something ; and that something which he is becoming depends entirely on his own action, his own Kamma, and on

nothing else. Thus his fate is entirely of his own making. It is never fixed. At any, at every moment, we may each begin to change it for the better, if it has been bad. Also, alas! we may, if we are not always on guard, always practising heedfulness, Sati —also we may at any moment begin to change it for the worse. “Thou good man,” says Dr. Paul Dahlke, in a striking passage in his *Buddhismus als Religion und Moral*, “Thou ‘good man,’ be not overproud in thy ‘goodness’. Thou *art* not good; thou only *becomest* good in so far as thou dost not permit thyself to become evil, in so far as thou strivest after goodness. ‘The heritage which the fathers have earned and passed on to the sons, these sons can only inherit on condition that they earn it anew for themselves each new day,’ as Goethe says. And thou ‘bad man’, be not despairing in thy ‘badness’. Thou *art* not bad; thou only *becomest* bad in so far as thou dost not strive after goodness. But now, now, this very minute, thou mayest turn; thou mayest begin to become good.”

This is so. At every moment we may, nay, at every moment, whether we want to or not, we *are* making additions to our stream of Kamma of good or bad, and so turning it in one direction or the other by some slight degree which, if we permit it, will go on increasing until we have a powerful mass of

habitual Kamma of the one kind or the other, which will produce correspondingly powerful effects in our whole life. It is this "habitual Kamma" as it is technically called, to which we ordinary people must look for our salvation, as it were, from past evil Kamma. The Arahant only can make the powerful Kamma by a few acts which will wipe out his evil from the past ; but we can produce something not quite so strong to efface past evil, but still extremely powerful in that direction, by a *habitual* cultivation of good states of mind, day by day.

It is always a good thing, and will, if persisted in, even though no good effects are immediately seen, produce very great results eventually, if every day we devote some time to thinking good thoughts, thoughts of kindness and good-will to all, of sympathy with all that are afflicted, of a fellow-feeling of happiness with all that are enjoying happiness, and of equanimity and even-mindedness towards whatever may befall ourselves, so long as others are obtaining happiness and comfort, a state of mind in which envy and jealousy is impossible. To practise these Brahmavihāras, as they are called, these "lofty or divine dwellings" of the mind, is to make very good Kamma which may have very great effect in the future if not in this present life, in turning our lives to happy issues. Of course, besides this mental practice, the true

Buddhist will not neglect the actual practice of Dāna, of giving to those who need, as far as his means will allow him, and of abstaining from doing wrong to anyone in the directions indicated in the Five Precepts to refrain from taking life, from theft, from unchastity, from evil speech, and from intoxicating liquor. All these things, mounting up, as they are steadily pursued and practised, make that accumulated habitual Kamma which will stand us all in good stead in whatever future lies before us. Indeed, it is all that will stand us in good stead. We have no other helper but our good deed ; no other condemner but our own evil deed. We have no one to fear but ourselves. No evil demon whatever can do lasting hurt or harm to the man of uprightness. He can afford to be fearless ; for there is nothing of which he need be afraid. His deeds are his strong protector ; he can have none stronger.

Thus it is in this world that men make their destinies, and make them themselves. "Here and now, is the whole fact", as the American seer Emerson once said. Here and now, according to this doctrine of Kamma taught by the Buddha, we are making our own heavens and our own hells, for there are no others but those we make for ourselves. No god can plant us in the one, and no devil despatch us to the other, apart from our own deed. It is this world, or

nothing, for us. Hence the foolishness of those who despise life in this world ; or, in a fit of madness, so hate it, as to throw it away in the act of the suicide. Life here is not despicable, is not hateful. It is our only chance of making good Kamma to counter-balance any evil Kamma we may happen to have made in the past, or at the very least, modify its evil effects. It is our sole opportunity of making good Kamma which, flowing down into the future may mount up and at length wipe out all our evil Kamma either of past or future doing, and so bring us to Nibbana's threshold. Hence a suicide is doing the foolishest thing any man can do. He is cutting off from himself the one most important benefit to be derived from the privilege of having been born a man, he is depriving himself, for the time being, of the opportunity of making any good Kamma. Suicide is not "sinful", as ecclesiastics say, it is silly. It is not a "crime", as some legalitarians say ; it is a blunder. It is a silliness, a blunder, of the worst kind, inasmuch as it is a negation of the whole purpose of life for each man born.

It is also so useless. It fails to produce what the foolish person who resorts to it, supposes it will produce,—release from some unhappy, miserable state of things in which he finds himself involved.

Since a man's last dying thought is that which

colours his immediately succeeding lifetime, and the suicide's last dying thought, by the very fact that it is a suicide's, is a thought of misery and unhappiness, his next lifetime, that immediately following, will be be a life of misery and unhappiness also. So the suicide achieves nothing whatever of what he intended by his foolish deed. He is still where he was before he committed his rash act, still involved in the same tangle of unhappiness. He is much in the position of some schoolboy who has been given a difficult sum to solve on his slate, and in despair of solving it, smashes the slate on which it is written. The slate indeed is smashed, but the sum that was written on it still remains unsolved by the boy ; and he only has it given him to solve on a fresh slate, the same old sum, with an extra punishment added, mayhap, for his fault in breaking his last slate. Much better to have kept the old slate unsmashed, and done one's best to work out the solution there, since worked out it must be on some slate or other, before each scholar in life's school may pass on to the next higher problem and its solution.

There are a number of people in this wonderful world of ours who are so unfortunate as to be required by the nature of their profession, to find evil or what they suppose to be evil, in every form of religion but their own, and to rejoice over this rather

than over the finding of good. One finds a plentiful quantity of them scattered all over the lands of the East, but they seem inclined to gather most thickly, like a plague of locusts, wherever things are pleasant, wherever soft breezes blow, laden with spicy odours, and every prospect pleases, as in Ceylon, for instance. Such people, as they move about the streets of the city where they live and do their peculiar kind of work, from time to time hear the deep boom of a bell, struck with a deer horn, from the platform of one of the pagodas in the city, and as they hear, nod to themselves with a superior smile and mutter: "Ah, some of our good Buddhist friends have done another good deed, and are calling the attention of the gods to it to make sure they don't forget to chalk it up to their credit in the account books of Kamma." And in the course of talk with these "good Buddhist friends" and others, they will bring forward the charge: "O, Buddhists are far too selfish. They think about nothing else but their own Kamma. They are always trying to make more 'merit' for themselves. That's all they care for: something for themselves."

Being compelled as just said, by the nature of their profession to find all the unpleasant things they can in all other religions but their own, and to overlook and ignore, or if they cannot do that altogether,

at least to disparge and make light of anything pleasant they may find in such religions, such people, to some extent may be pardoned for the false idea they here have conceived of the working of Kamma, namely, as an affair that has solely to do with a man's own self. For it is a false idea which they, and others akin to them, have formed of Kamma in this regard.

To begin with: When, after having performed some work of merit on the platform of the pagoda, such as providing some Bhikkhus with a meal, or offering flowers or candles before some image of the Buddha, or reciting invocations to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, a Buddhist strikes the great bell on the pagoda-platform with the deer-horn which lies beside it for that purpose, he is *not* calling the attention of any supposed keeper of the records of Kamma to another item which is to be set down in his books to the credit of the person who has struck the bell. What he is saying is this: "All ye to whose ears comes the sound of this bell, know that a deed of merit has just been performed upon the platform of this pagoda. The doer of the deed hereby gladly offers you a share of his merit from the doing of the good deed, and begs you with equal gladness to accept of the same."

That is what the bell-beating on pagoda platforms in Buddhist countries means ; for besides Kamma, there is Patikamma, as it is called in the Pali. Besides Kamma pertaining, or adhering, to the so-called individual, there is such a thing—and it is constantly being practised—as sharing one's merit with others, transferring it, or part of it, to other individuals. Many are the touching, and sometimes amusing, little stories one hears in the East of people undergoing voluntary renunciation of pleasures of one kind and another, so that the "merit" of so doing may go to some loved one and assist him or her through some dangerous illness or other misfortune of which there are so many to be met with in this life of ours. For the thread of Kamma which is any given individual's, is, after all, not an isolated thread running a lonely course through empty space, but a thread which all the time is running out and in with other threads, is being worked into, interwoven, with these other neighbouring threads into a single fabric which makes, indeed, *is*, the world. Each individual's Kamma is running alongside of, and interworking itself with the threads of the Kamma of other individuals in his family, his city, his nation, his race, his world.

Even though he may not deliberately will and intend that his 'merit' shall be 'transferred' to another

in any given cases, if he is a powerful personality, one of the great ones of the earth, his merit, as also his demerit, transfers itself to others in his neighbourhood, and beyond. It “overflows,” as the technical expression puts it, and if powerful enough, may considerably affect the Kamma of countless persons the individual never saw or was ever likely to see. Instances of this particular kind of “overflow” Kamma are found in the careers of the great “conquerors” of the world, such as Alexander the Great, and Napoleon ; or in modern times, of William the Second of Germany.

The Macedonian, beginning his life career in a little state in a little corner of the European continent, before he ended it, had produced effects that made themselves felt as far away as the Indus and the whole Punjab district of India, and affected powerfully the Kamma of all the peoples who lay between his own little native peninsula of Greece and that huge peninsula which juts out into the Indian Ocean.

Napoleon, too, born in a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, was such a very powerful personality that his Kamma overflowed all Europe, and produced the most profound changes in the Kamma of nearly every country in that continent, and of vast numbers of men living on that continent,—changes which were, some for good, and some for evil.

While, our modern example of one man's Kamma producing changes in other's Kamma, is the painful one of the exile of Doorn in Holland, once Emperor of all the Germans, and now a runaway refugee, glad of the hospitality of a little country he once in his pride thought was his at any time, for the taking. What profound changes this one man's Kamma, this single monarch's action, has produced in the Kamma of millions of men living and dead, there is hardly any need to speak. Indeed, it were better not to speak, so uniformly evil have many of these changes been. Yet, as already said, there is no such thing as unmixed good or unmixed evil in this world. And so, the "overflow Kamma" of such an one as was William the Second of Germany, has doubtless also led to many changes for good in the Kamma of many individuals in his native continent of Europe and his natal country of Germany; as, for instance, in the deliverance of the present generation of youthful Germans from the slavery of three year's subjection to the life of military barracks during the most impressionable period of their lives, and all that that implied of physical and moral degradation to their less fortunate fathers.

For this "overflow Kamma," may also be of the meritorious kind; it may be good Kamma, not bad. And such it is in the case of all powerful, good per-

sonalities. Of this we may take as first and greatest example, the Lord Buddha himself. How enormously rich and beneficent in its effect on his own continent and the world has been the "overflow Kamma" of this one individual! Countless millions of beings born in the lands of the East, in India and Burma, in China and Japan, in Ceylon and Siam, in the far-spreading plains of Mongolia, have had their Kamma completely changed for the good through the "overflow Kamma" of Gotama the Buddha. And that Kamma has not yet exhausted itself. It is still flowing on ; and in its flow fertilising the minds and enriching the hearts of many, even to-day in the spiritually dullard West who happily are open to receive its influence.

From the Buddha's Arahans, the first missionaries whom he sent forth to propagate his religion, there also overflowed good Kamma which their simple presence among them brought to the peoples in the distant lands to which they made their way. In no other manner can we understand the speedy effect for good which was brought about among the wild, half-savage tribes of Mongolia, the brutal-living horsemen of the Asiatic steppes, by the arrival among them of the first missionaries of the Buddhist religion ; and the quick and fertilising influence which their arrival also had upon the thoughtful and culti-

vated literati of China and Korea, and ultimately upon Japan.

But coming down to lower levels than that of the Arahán, every good man confers a benefit upon the world simply by living in it. His good Kamma—some of it, at least,—overflows from him and benefits all about him. And also, unhappily, every evil man, simply by his living in it, does the world an injury. Thus, we are all of us, at all times, whether we think of it or not, benefactors or malefactors of the world, simply by our continuing to exist in it. The little thread of Kamma which we call “ours,” is thus not exclusively ours—how can it be, when, in ultimate truth and fact, there is no “us”?—but in its course through the fabric of our national, and our world-Kamma, imparts something of its colouring to its neighbour threads; and if its colours are strong and full, even to many threads far removed from it in the fabric. As we have seen, one thread—that of a Buddha—may colour the threads of a whole continent, nay, of a whole world! We do not live, and cannot live, to ourselves, even if we want to. The many living threads of the so-called individual’s Kamma twine and intertwine with other threads, and change the course and colouring of these other threads for good or ill, according as our own particular thread is a good or an ill one.

Up to this point in our discussion, there is one word which has been left entirely unmentioned, and which, in the opinion of most Westerners, so they would say, ought to be mentioned, and that is *heredity*. Brought up, as most of them have been, in the mental atmosphere created by Darwin and Wallace and others around the subject of human characteristics, they will feel that an explanation of these characteristics which does not take into account, the inheritance of qualities by living creatures from their parents and more remote ancestors, is incomplete, and if it ignores this altogether, defective, nay, even more, false.

Well, the Kamma doctrine of the Buddha does not ignore heredity, the inheritance of characteristics from forebears in physical generation ; it only says that that inheritance does not apply to, and does not account for, the possession of *mental* characteristics, of the inner, most essential qualities of a man, that, in fact, which makes the man, apart from the shape of his nose, the cast of his hand, the colour of his hair, and so on. Physical heredity accounts for a man's physical characteristics, but that is all. It accounts for the physical qualities of a being, but not for his mind.

Any one can see that this is so. There is only one Shakespeare. There is no Shakespeare before the

one we know of, who transmits to that Shakespeare all those rich qualities of mind and heart which make him the author of plays that seem as if they will be remembered as long as our race remembers anything. Nor did that Shakespeare beget another Shakespeare who reproduced all that admirable, wonderful mental endowment which resulted in Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Othello.

There has only been one Mozart. There was not another Mozart before him who gave him along with his blood, the power to conceive enchanting melody. Nor was there another Mozart after him, who inherited that power from him, and showed it forth to the world.

There is only one Newton. No other that the world has heard of, preceded him as the physical transmitter to him of the powers that made the man we call Newton, the daring voyager in strange seas of thought, alone.

But leaving these outstanding specimens of the race, coming to ordinary people like ourselves, can it be said of any of us that we are the continuations *in character* of our progenitors, of our fathers and mothers? These indeed have given us some of our physical characteristics, a brow, a nose, a chin, sometimes a gait in walking ; but our *character* is our own, and often—to the surprise and bewilderment, and

sometimes, the deep sorrow, of parents—altogether different from that of our father and mother. This is a fact of common experience. What is the explanation? Simply this which the Buddha gives: that the line of Kamma manifesting in a human being is a thing independent of the human physical heredity, and only makes use of this latter, so far as it may, for its own manifestation.

Suppose that some person deceases who, as his last dying thought, has one of craving for alcohol—a person, in fact, who has been a drunkard. That last dying thought of craving for alcohol by natural affinity seeks out and finds a fertilised human ovum of the same nature as itself. It seeks out and finds for its embodiment afresh in this visible world, a pair of parents full of the same craving, in short, a drunkard's heredity. Or suppose that some being deceases whose desires are of a superior nature, whose last dying thought is of goodness and truth and beauty; such a thought, by natural affinity, will seek out and find a human womb akin to its own nature, for its fresh embodiment in human life; and as a consequence there will be born a being with the *physical basis* required for the manifestation of his qualities of love of beauty, truth, and goodness. Furnished with that physical basis, he now proceeds, as he grows up, to manifest the qualities he possesses, which qualities his

physical parents did not possess in anything like the same measure, if at all, (as in the cases of Shakespeare, Mozart and Newton, for outstanding example), but only *the physical foundation* for the manifestation of such. In short, heredity does not account for men's character, but only provides the means for the manifestation of character, for its embodiment in physical form, its showing forth in our physical world.

Considered thus, if we wish to search for the heredity of the *character*, the inmost, essential qualities of a Shakespeare, or a Mozart, or a Newton (or, indeed, of any of us), we have to go much further back than to the two persons, male and female, who provided us with a body. In the case of these geniuses, we have to go right back in history and try to discover there some other character who showed forth the qualities of a Shakespeare, or a Mozart, or a Newton ; and when we have found any who resemble such, then we shall have at least a little foundation for saying: "Here is Shakespeare's progenitor," as we regard the person of one of the great dramatists of ancient Greece ; or "Here is Newton's true progenitor," as we consider one of the great scientist-philosophers of ancient days in that same wonderful little country. Between those distant days and our own, their particular stream of Kamma may many times have shown, many of its vari-coloured threads

in this our visible world, but only now, in the sixteenth century, in England, displayed again richly to physical eyes, that particular thread of dramatic, poetic power which made the man we call William Shakespeare. Similarly, between the days of ancient Greece and now, the cable of Kamma on which there once appeared in the light of this world, a great Grecian philosopher-scientist, may since have emerged into our physical world many times, showing at due intervals, many of its other coloured strands ; but only in this present age, in England, brought to the light that particular thread of acute intellectual power which made itself known, when provided with a physical body by suitable parents, as the genius Newton.

As to *how* Kamma seeks out and finds the body best suited to its next embodiment, this is something which we do not know. Yet, we may hazard the guess that it finds its path to its next goal as an aerial electric charge finds its path to earth, namely, through the means that offers the best, readiest mode of release of tension. We do not, and minds like ours, *cannot*, know all the full details of Kamma and its working. This was one of the four things which the Buddha himself declared to be *acinteyya*, that is, not to be thought about too much. Such thought, such brooding, would be liable to bring on mental derange-

ment, he said. Only a Buddha is capable of fully understanding Kamma and all its methods of working.

“Then Kamma is as much a matter of faith as any god-believer’s belief in his god!” some will say.

In a way it is, but with this very important difference, that the god-believer’s belief is belief in a pure unknown quantity which, just because it is unknown, is invoked as the cause of anything about whose cause he is unable to find out anything ; thus, it is an unknown quantity pure and simple, an x sign, which may mean anything or nothing, when at last it is found out what it stands for. But Kamma, causation, is one of the fundamental laws of the actual visible world we know in our experience of every day. And the Kamma-doctrine of the Buddha is simply the extension of that every-day known and manifested law to the field of human character itself. It is simply the transference of the best known law of physics to the field of psychosis.

It is a fact that men are born with innate, inborn dispositions or characters which are not accounted for by heredity. How is that fact to be explained? How is the phenomenon of the emergence of such a complicated thing as a human character (a phenomenon which is occurring every second somewhere or other upon the surface of the inhabited globe) to be accounted for? It must have a cause, like every

other phenomenon. To say that a god has produced it, is no answer at all in this case, any more than it is in any other. The savage in the African forest will also tell you, which he cannot otherwise explain, with the—to him—perfectly sufficient answer, that his Ju-ju did it. But this is not a perfectly sufficient answer to anybody but himself, that is, to anybody who has got beyond the stage of the savage in mentality.

So it is here. We reason from the known to the unknown. We know that cause and effect prevail in the physical world. It is therefore only a fair presumption that they also equally prevail in the psychical world. Most certainly that extraordinarily complicated phenomenon, a human character, cannot just spring up out of nowhere in particular, every time a human ovum is fertilised and in due course issues upon the world a new human being. The onus of proof that such a monstrosity occurs lies upon those who maintain it. It does not lie upon others to prove that it is not so ; for it is the universal law of the world that all phenomena have their due and appropriate cause in an antecedent condition without which they cannot come about. But, as already said, the character of the human parents or the nature of the upbringing or the environment by which the new being is surrounded, do not account for its character, which is always itself, and sometimes so in complete *defiance*

of all these factors. Hence the believer in the doctrine of Kamma holds that belief as one firmly based on reason, that is, upon inference from facts already known with certainty in the fields where he possesses full means of ascertaining facts and their connections.

It was said above that Kamma finds its way to the womb that will provide it with most accurate expression just as lightning reaches the earth by the path that offers it easiest access thither. That is so. Drunkard in last life goes to drunken womb ; refined nature to womb that favours the continuance of such a nature ; and so on. But what if the nature is so refined, so super-earthly in its characteristics that no human womb can provide it with the encasement or embodiment appropriate to its refined, super-earthly quality? In that case, of necessity, it finds that embodiment it requires in some sphere higher than earth, in one or other of the "worlds of the gods," as Orientals call them, or "heavens," as Occidentals name them. But suppose the Kamma is of a very low, gross, degraded sort, so low, so gross, so degraded, that no earthly womb can possibly supply it with appropriate embodiment, then it will necessarily have to seek, and will find, that appropriate embodiment in a world lower and more gross than our physical world, a world of suffering greater than ours is, in short, it will find its appropriate embodiment in one of the hell-worlds.

Yet another possible embodiment remains to the Kamma according to its nature. Suppose it is not so degraded as to be able to find its only appropriate embodiment in a hell-world, but yet is so gross in some ways, say, in the way of gluttony, that no human womb can provide it with an appropriate expression of that gross vice, then the unpleasant possibility lies open of its taking its next embodiment in the form of an animal of gluttonous character, say a pig. Or if the character of the deceased person has been of such a very fierce, ferociously cruel nature that no human womb can give it adequate expression through a human body, then it is an animal body which will have to provide that expression, an animal of some of the more ferocious beasts of prey. In the opinion of the present writer it is not a very likely thing that any human being among the civilised races of to-day could be of so swinish or so tigerish a disposition that only a pig's or a tiger's body could appropriately give expression to their swinish or tigerish disposition ; nevertheless, it remains an unpleasant *possibility*.

“Only an unpleasant possibility!” some readers may say. “Why, it's a perfectly *horrible* idea, that a man should be born a pig. I never want to believe anything so disgusting as that ; and I don't know how you Buddhists manage to do it.” Well, we Buddhists

don't believe that a man is born a pig. What we believe is that piggish Kamma takes shape, and must take shape, in piggish form. But when that piggish Kamma which has been given temporary expression in corresponding form, is worked out, then some section of the heap of accumulated Kamma which lies behind nearly every living being, will now come into effect, and the next birth in that line of Kamma will be, most likely, a human birth.

For no states are eternal—as, how can they be?—in a universe whose very nature is of the essence of change, of mutation. It is a horrible idea that any being should be subject through all eternity to unending torment in a hell-world ; and Buddhists have difficulty in understanding how any reasonable, decently feeling person can calmly contemplate the possibility of such a thing, let alone actually believe that such a thing is so. To our logical, Buddhist understanding of things, it is a completely false idea. Hells cannot be eternal any more than any other state in a flowing universe. They must come to an end, as does everything else, at some period or another ; and the sufferers therein obtain release from their torment when they have worked out the Kamma which took them there. And similarly with the descent to that variety of hell-world, the animal kingdom, with its constant, never-ceasing exposure to all sorts of

alarms and apprehensions and cruel deaths. The state of the being who unhappily falls thither is not an eternal one ; it has its end, that unhappy kind of life, and it may be, and often is, a very speedy end. And then the being is born again in a happier form, in a human one, as the result of penultimate Kamma coming into effect ; and he again has the opportunity, as result of that human birth, to make good Kamma for the future which may prevent him from ever again falling into the hell-world of the animal kingdom.

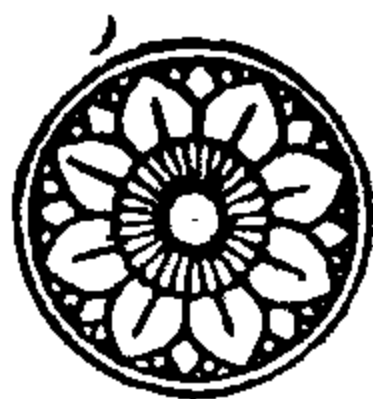
There remains yet another Kamma-possibility, this time the best possibility of all. It may happen that all the Kamma, both good and bad, of a certain given stream of Kamma is completely cleared off, except a very small portion, which portion it is that keeps the individual still alive and active in our world. Now, by the performance of powerful Kamma of the good sort, the individual wipes out the last remnant of the bad Kamma he may have behind him. All his Kamma-accounts are squared ; there is no more left unsettled of either sort. He is what is called an Arahant, and when his present body expires, there being no more Kamma remaining, there can be no further embodiment of Kamma ; in other words, there is no more re-birth. There remains only Nibbana, more accurately, Pari-Nibbana. For Nibbana, the complete extinction of self-referring activity of any

kind, can and does take place, even in his present embodiment, in one who has striven successfully to bring all self-ideas, all Atta-notions, to an end ; and so he has Nibbana, even in this present body.

But most of us ordinary folk are a long way from that high consummation of all efforts on the path of the noble. Our present task is to make all the good Kamma we possibly can as a counterbalance, as far as may be, to what bad Kamma we may have made in the past, and unhappily, may quite possibly still make in the future. This we have to do, here and now in this earth-life of ours, since there is nowhere else to do it in. This and this alone, our good deeds, will stand by us as our saviour and supporter in any future state we may encounter. For it is no mere sententious saying but a solemn truth, that our Kamma, our action, is our father and our mother, the family, the race, to which we belong ; that we have no other friend, no other refuge, but our good deeds. These, and only these, can be depended on to go before us and receive us with kind welcome in whatever future lies ahead of us, as friends and relatives greet the wanderer who returns from a far journey.

A strong sense of self-responsibility is thus the keynote of the character of every man who has understood even a little the Kamma doctrine propounded by the Buddha. For such an one knows that at every

moment, by what he thinks, or says, or does, he is adding to the stock of the good or the evil, that is, of the happiness, or the unhappiness of himself, and so, of the world of which himself is a part. He knows that in the last resort he has no friend but himself, but his own good deed ; and no enemy but himself, but his own evil deed. And so knowing, he abases himself before no god for its favours, fears no devil for its malice, but puts his whole trust in his own right endeavour, strengthened and encouraged in that endeavour by the knowledge that in the twenty-five hundred years that have passed since first it was taught by the Buddha, all who have practised it right on to its culmination in Araham-ship, have found it lead to the final ending of Kamma, to the *summum bonum*, the Good Supreme, Nibbana.



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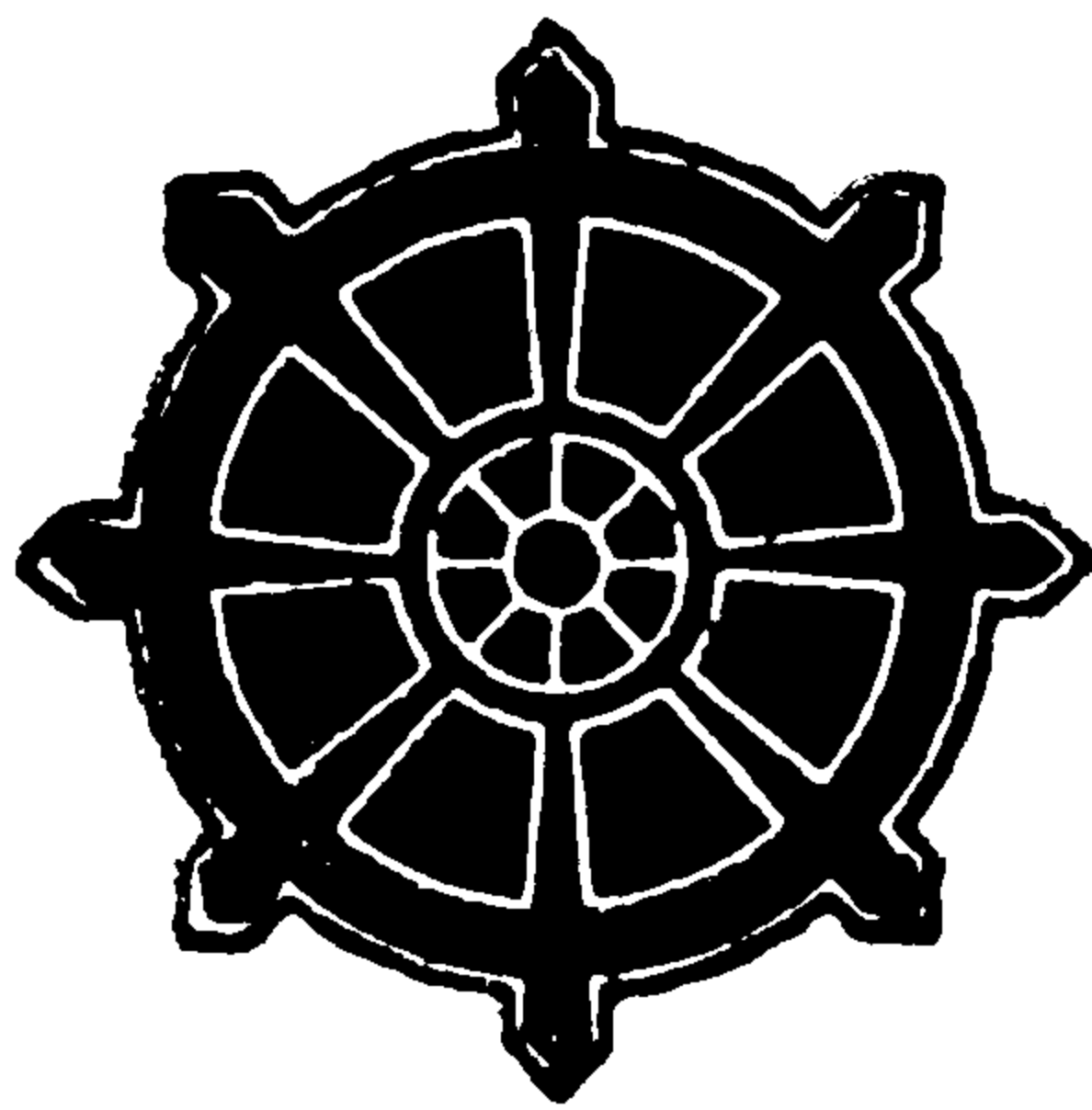
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THE CASE FOR REBIRTH

I

The doctrine of reincarnation, the ceaseless round of rebirths, is not, as many people imagine, confined to Buddhism and Hinduism. It is found in some form or another in many ancient religious and philosophical systems and in many parts of the world.

In the oldest records of man's religious thinking we find traces of a belief in the 'transmigration of souls'. Some of the forms it took were naturally primitive and crudely animistic; there is for instance a theory that the ancient Egyptians embalmed their dead to prevent the *Ka*, or soul, from taking another body. If the idea existed in Egypt it almost certainly must have been familiar also to the Babylonians and Assyrians, who shared many of the most important religious beliefs of the Egyptians.

Coming to later times we find reincarnation prominent in the Orphic cult of Greece in the 6th century B. C., when it formed part of the teaching of Pherecydes of Syros. In the Orphic view of life man is a dualism, part evil and part divine. Through a succession of incarnations the individual has to purge himself of the evil in his nature by religious rites and moral purity. When this is accomplished he becomes liberated from the 'circle of becoming' and is wholly divine.

This corresponds very closely to the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain teaching, and there may have been a connection between them; but it is not possible to establish one on historical evidence. Although by the 6th century B. C. the doctrine had already been developed in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and may have travelled West along the trade routes, there is still a possibility that it arose spontaneously in Greece. The emphasis on ritualism differentiates it from the Buddhist view, but it is significant that it was at about the same time in both Greece and India that the idea of reincarnation first became linked with a scheme of moral values and spiritual evolution. The connection of Orphism with the mysteries of ceremonial magic must not be allowed to blind us to the fact that it represented a great advance in religious thinking. Hitherto, reincarnation had been regarded in primitive cults as a merely mechanical process, to be controlled, if at all, by spells, incantations and physical devices. This is the idea still prevalent among undeveloped peoples in certain parts of Africa, Polynesia and elsewhere, where, far removed from Indian influences the idea of metempsychosis must have sprung up spontaneously.

Through Orphism reincarnation came to be taught by, among others, Empedocles and Pythagoras. In the hand of the latter the Orphic mysticism was converted into a philosophy. This philosophical aspect of the teaching was inherited by the Platonists, while its mystical character was preserved in the traditions of Gnosticism.

In many respects Greek Gnosticism resembled Hinduism; it was syncretic and eclectic, capable of absorbing into itself

ideas from outside sources while at the same time it impregnated with its own thought the beliefs peculiar to other systems. Its influence was felt over many centuries, persisting into the Middle Ages of Europe. In the early centuries of the Christian era we find it in the teachings of men as dissimilar in the general character of their outlook as Plotinus, Cerinthus and Marcion.

Clement of Alexandria about the second century C. E., wrote very largely from the Gnostic standpoint. He combined reincarnation with the necessity of striving for an enlightened moral elevation; a result that could be achieved only through a development taking place not merely in the present life but in past and future incarnations as well. This belief was shared by the *Pre-existiani*, a sect that numbered among its adherents some of the most advanced thinkers of the period, including Justin Martyr and the great theologian Origen. They represented a very powerful intellectual movement, one in which the natural freedom of Greek intellectualism was struggling for survival in a world that was sliding towards the Dark Ages. Many of their ideas survived in Neo-Platonism; but for the most part they were driven underground to find an insecure refuge in the suppressed teachings of the so-called heretical sects that came to be known collectively as the Cathars, or 'Illuminati'.

A not dissimilar doctrine of transmigration is found in the Kabbalah, where it goes under the Hebrew name Gilgul. It forms an integral part of the Kabbalistic system and is one of the features that distinguish Kabbalism from primitive Judaic thought. The Hekhāloth, a Kabbalistic work of the

Gaonic era, gives Gnostic and Pythagorean ideas along with the orthodox stream of Talmudic teaching. The result may be regarded as Hellenised Judaism, but modern research on the Kabbalah tends to suggest that its original sources may be much older than has hitherto been granted. It may in fact preserve a very ancient Rabbinical tradition which was not intended for the masses. Much of its philosophical content is of a high order and reveals a creative expansion of Jewish thought in which reincarnation occupies a significant place.

The idea of a transmigrating soul is the central theme of the Bhagavad Gita: "As the soul in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, even so does it pass to another body. As a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the incarnate soul cast off worn out bodies and enter into others that are new" (Gita, Chapter II, vs. 13 and 22).

Throughout the Upanishads the idea of "soul" (ātman) in this sense persists; it is the totality of selfhood and personal identity which transmigrates, occupying successive bodies, becoming now a man, now a god or an animal, yet in some way preserving its uniqueness as the personal ego throughout. Because of certain difficulties attaching to this concept, however, it was somewhat modified in Vedanta, the last phase of Upanishadic thought. In its place arose the theory that the ātman, as an unborn, unoriginated principle not in any way affected by the activities, good or bad, of the phenomenal being, was not identical with the individual at all, but with the "Supreme Soul", the Paramātmān or (neuter) Brahman.

Mahavira, the founder of Jainism (the Nigantha Nātaputta of the Buddhist texts), held unequivocally to the “individual soul” theory. Jainism teaches that there are an infinite number of individual souls transmigrating in happy or unhappy states according to their deeds. But whereas in Vedānta release, or Moksha, comes with the realization that the “I” is really identical with the Paramātmān or Brahman (the idea summarised in the formula “*Tat tvam asi*” — Thou art that), in Jainism it is believed to come only with the complete cessation of rebirth-producing activities. Since automatic and involuntary actions are considered to bear resultants as well as those performed intentionally, the Jain ideal is complete inactivity. As will be seen later, the Buddhist doctrine concerning what it is that undergoes rebirth, and the nature of the moral law that governs Karma and Vipāka, or actions and results, differs from both these theories and eliminates the teleological and ethical difficulties to which they give rise.

The faith in survival after death which is basic to religious thought has its natural correlative in reincarnation. If life can extend forward in time beyond the grave it must surely be capable of having extended from the past into the present. “From the womb to the tomb” has its complement in “from the tomb to the womb”, and to be born many times is no more miraculous than to have been born once, as Voltaire pointed out.

The opposite view, that a being comes into existence from non-existence, implies that it can also — and most

probably will—come to an end with the dissolution of the body. That which has a beginning in time can also cease in time and pass away altogether. The doctrine of a single life on earth therefore holds out no promise of a future life in any other state; rather does it make it improbable. But if we accept that there is a survival of some part, no matter what, of the personality after death we are accepting also a very strong argument for its existence before birth. Reincarnation is the only form that after-death survival could logically take.

So it is not surprising that wherever religion has developed beyond its simplest beginnings some idea of spiritual evolution through a series of lives is found to be a part of its message. The doctrine of reincarnation together with that of the moral law of cause and effect not only provides an explanation of life's inequalities and the crushing burden of suffering under which countless millions of people labour, thus disposing of the problem raised by the existence of pain and evil in the world; it also gives a rational and practical hope where none existed before. It is, moreover, the supreme justification of moral values in a universe which otherwise appears to be devoid of ethical purpose. It is evident that the Orphic and Gnostic cults recognised this fact when they introduced the concept of moral values into their theology.

II

In all of these systems of thought rebirth is seen, as it is in Buddhism, to be the only means of spiritual purgation. It is necessary for the moral and spiritual evolution of the individual that he should, through a variety of experiences, by his consciously-directed efforts struggle upwards from the lower planes of sensuality and passion to a state of purity in which his latent divinity becomes manifest. That the Cathars, the Kabbalists and others mixed up this reasoned and enlightened doctrine with the practice of what was later to become known as ritual magic, and with theories of the immortal soul that were frankly animistic, is no argument against the essential truth of their belief. Reason has to emerge slowly and painfully from unreason. It was in like manner that the true principles of science were unfolded at the time when scientific method was growing up alongside the occult practices of the astrologers and alchemists. We may smile at the alchemist's faith that he could find a means of transmuting base metals into gold, but in this age of nuclear physics the idea does not seem quite so crazy as it once did. The alteration of atomic patterns in the structure of metals is no longer entirely outside the range of possibility. The alchemist's methods may have been hopelessly wrong; his basic assumption was not. Similarly, the transformation of the base metal of human nature into the pure gold of divinity is still a possibility. It is only a question of finding the right key to unlock the doors of the mind.

To understand how the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth differs from all of those that have been mentioned, and why

the term "rebirth" is preferable to "reincarnation" or "transmigration", it is necessary to glance at the main principles of Buddhist teaching.

These are summed up in the Four Noble Truths:

The Truth concerning Suffering

The Truth concerning the cause of Suffering

The Truth concerning the cessation of Suffering

The Truth concerning the Way to the cessation of Suffering.

The first proposition is nothing more than a self-evident fact: that suffering is inherent in all forms of existence. No one can go through life without experiencing physical pain, sickness, disappointment and grief; none can escape old age and death. Suffering is even more prevalent in the life of animals than in that of human beings, and Buddhism takes into account all forms of sentient life. But aside from these obvious aspects of the universal world-suffering there is the fact that all conditioned existence is unstable, restless and lacking in fulfilment. It is a process of *becoming* which never reaches the point of completion in *being*. This in itself is suffering. In brief, life even at its best is unsatisfactory.

In the formula of the Three Characteristics of Being, all phenomenal existence is defined as being impermanent, fraught with suffering, and devoid of self-essence. These three characteristics derive from one another; because existence is transitory it is painful; because it is transitory and

painful it can have no enduring essence of selfhood. There is no "soul" in the sense of a total personality-entity, for what we call the self is merely a current of consciousness linked to a particular physical body. This current of consciousness is made up of thought-moments of infinitesimal duration succeeding one another in a stream of inconceivable rapidity. The psychic life of the individual is just the duration of a single moment of consciousness, no more. We are living all the time what is in reality a series of lives. The life-stream is the rapid succession of these consciousness-moments, or momentary existences, resembling the running of a reel of film through a projector. It is this which gives the illusion of a static entity of being where nothing of the kind exists. The general characteristics of personality are maintained, but only in the same way that a river maintains the same course until something diverts it or it dries up. Thus there is no "immortal soul" that transmigrates, just as there is no river, but only the passage of particles of water flowing in the same direction. Anattā, soullessness, is therefore bound up with Anicca, impermanence, and Dukkha, suffering. The three Characteristics are three aspects of the same central fact.

Yet this state of soullessness is capable of producing rebirth. How can this be so, if there is no transmigrating entity — no "soul" to reincarnate? The answer is to be found in the Buddhist system of ethico-psychology, the Abhidhamma. There it is shown that the act of willing is a creative force, which produces effects in and through the conditions of the physical world. The thought-force of a sentient being, generated by the will-to-live, the desire to enjoy sensory experiences, produces after death another being

who is the causal resultant of the preceding one. Schopenhauer expressed the same idea when he said that in rebirth, which he called "Palingenesis", it is the *will*, not an ego-entity, which re-manifests in the new life. The being of the present is not the same as the being of the past, nor will the being of the future be the same as the being of the present. Yet neither are they different beings, because they all belong to the same current of cause and effect. Each is part of an individual current of causality in which "identity" means only "belonging to the same cause-effect continuum". Since mind and body are alike continually undergoing change—or, more precisely, they are made up of constituent factors which are arising and passing away from moment to moment—this is the only kind of "self-identity" which connects the various stages of a single life through childhood, youth, maturity and old age. Buddhism presents a dynamic view of existence in which the life-continuum is merely the current of momentary existences, or successive units of consciousness, linked together by causal relations, both mental and physical. The process may be likened to a current of electricity, which consists of minute particles called electrons. An electron is much lighter in weight than an atom of the lightest chemical element, hydrogen, yet waves of these particles in the form of an electric current can produce many different effects in heat, light and sound, and can produce them on a tremendous scale. In the same way the units of consciousness constitute an energy-potential which in the Buddhist view is the basic energy of the universe, operating through and in conjunction with natural laws.

So we see that mental force is a kind of energy, which Buddhism has linked with moral principles by way of Karma, actions, and Vipāka, moral resultants. Buddhism maintains that the physical universe itself is sustained by this mental energy derived from living beings, which is identical with their Karma. The energy itself is generated by craving. It operates upon the atomic constituents of the physical world in such a way as to produce bodies equipped with organs of sense by means of which the desire for sensory gratification, produced by past experiences, may be satisfied again. In this world the mind-force which produces rebirth has to operate through the genetic principles known to biology; it requires human generative cells and all the favourable physical conditions of heat, nutrition and so forth, to produce a foetus. When it does so, the foetus and the infant that it later becomes bear both biologically-inherited characteristics and the characteristics carried by the past Karma of the individual whose thought-force has caused the new birth. It is not a question of a "soul" entering the embryo, but of the natural formation of the foetus being moulded by an energy from without, supplied by the causative impulse from some being that lived before. It is only necessary to conceive craving-force as an energy-potential flowing out from the mind of a being at the moment of death, and carrying with it the karmic characteristics of that being, just as the seed of a plant carries with it the botanical characteristics of its type, and a mental picture is formed that corresponds roughly to what actually takes place. Mind force is creative, and its basis is desire. Without desire there can be no will to act; consequently the "will" of Schopenhauer is identical with the Buddhist Taṇhā, or Craving.

The second of the Four Noble Truths, therefore, is that the cause of suffering in the round of rebirths is Craving. But one cause alone is not enough to give rise to a specific result. In this case, craving is conjoined with ignorance. The mind generates craving for sensory experience because of ignorance of the fact that these experiences are impermanent, unsatisfactory and so themselves a source of suffering. So the circle of becoming, without discernible beginning and without end, is joined. This wheel of existences does not exist in time: time exists in it. Hence it does not require a point of beginning in what we know as time. It is the *perpetuum mobile* of cause and effect, counter-cause and counter-effect, turning round upon itself.

But although, like the revolution of the planets round the sun, it goes on perpetually simply because there is nothing to stop it, it can be brought to an end by the individual for himself, through an act of will. The act of will consists in turning craving into non-craving. When this is accomplished and Nirvana, the state of desirelessness, is reached, there is no more rebirth. The life-asserting impulses are eliminated and there is no further arising of the bases of phenomenal personality. This is the objective set forth in the third of the Noble Truths; that concerning the cessation of suffering.

The Way to that cessation, which is the Noble Eightfold Path of self-discipline and meditation leading to perfect purity and Insight-wisdom, is the subject of the last of the Four Noble Truths, and gives epistemological completeness to the whole.

The Buddhist system of thought is thus presented as a reasoned progression from known facts to a conclusion which is ascertainable by the individual and is also accessible to him as a personally-experienced reality. The round of rebirths, or Samsāra, does not come to an end automatically, neither is there any point at which all beings revolving in it gain their release by reason of its ceasing, for it has no temporal boundaries. But anyone can bring to an end his own individual current of cause and effect, and the whole purpose of the Buddha's Teaching was to demonstrate the theoretical and practical means by which this can be achieved. The painful kind of "immortality" conferred by rebirth in conditioned existences is not to be regarded as a blessing, but rather as a curse which man pronounces upon himself. Nevertheless, by understanding it we are able to gain assurance that there is in truth a moral principle governing the universe; and by learning to use its laws in the right way we become able to control and guide our individual destinies by a higher spiritual purpose and towards a more certain goal.

III

Of late years interest in the doctrine of rebirth has been greatly stimulated by the publicity given to several cases of people who have remembered previous lives. For a long time past it has been known that under deep hypnosis events in very early infancy, outside the normal range of memory, could be recovered, and this technique has been increasingly employed for the treatment of personality disorders. It cannot be used with success on all patients because of the involuntary resistance some subjects show to hypnotic suggestion, which inhibits the co-operation necessary to obtain deep trance. But where it can be applied it has definite advantages over the usual methods of deep psychoanalysis, one of them being the speed with which results are obtained.

The technique is to induce a state of hypnosis and then carry the subject back in time to a particular point in childhood or infancy at which it is suspected that some event of importance in the psychic life may have occurred. In this state, known as hypermnesia, the subject becomes in effect once more the child he was, and re-lives experiences that have long been buried in the unconscious. Memories of earliest infancy, and in some cases pre-natal memories, have been brought to the surface in this way.

Some practitioners have carried experiments in regression even further, and have found that they were uncovering memories that did not belong to the current life of the subject at all, but to some previous existence. In cases where nothing could be proved, the rebirth explanation has been

contested, and various theories such as telepathy, fantasies of the unconscious, and even clairvoyance, have been put forward to account for the phenomena. But apart from the fact that many of the alternatives offered call for the acceptance of psychic faculties which, if what is claimed for them is true, themselves bring rebirth nearer to being a comprehensible reality, none of them alone covers all the phenomena which have been brought under observation. If, for example, xenoglossy, the ability shown by some subjects under hypnosis to speak languages unknown to them in their normal state, is to be explained by telepathy we are brought face to face with a supernormal faculty of the mind which itself contributes to our understanding of the manner in which mental energy may operate in the processes of rebirth. But although telepathy has now been acknowledged as one of the unexplained phenomena of parapsychology, along with clairvoyance, telekinesis and psychometry, it cannot legitimately be expanded to include all the phenomena these experiments have disclosed. To account for all of them on these lines it would be necessary to combine every one of the known extra-sensory faculties into one concept, that of a freely-wandering, disembodied intelligence, independent of spatial and temporal limitations. If we are to apply here the scientific law of parsimony, the more likely alternative is the obvious one that they are simply what they purport to be—memories of previous lives.

As to the theory that the memories are products of the unconscious mind, it cannot survive the proof to the contrary which comes from the revelation of facts that could not have been known to the subject in his present life. These are

objective and circumstantial and they exist in abundance, as any reading of the literature on the subject will confirm.

The best-known example of this kind is the case of Bridey Murphy in America, which raised a hurricane of controversy when it broke into the news a few years ago. It was followed some time later by a similar case in England in which the subject, Mrs Naomi Henry, remembered under hypnosis two previous existences. The experiments were carried out under test conditions by Mr. Henry Blythe, a professional consultant hypnotist. In the presence of several witnesses tape recordings were made of the sessions, which were held under the supervision of a medical practitioner, Dr. William C. Minifie, who testified that the hypnotic trance was genuine. It has been said of these recordings that they provide "what must surely be the most thought-provoking, absorbing and controversial angle ever offered" on the subject.

What happened was this. Mrs Naomi Henry, a thirty-two-years-old Exeter housewife, the mother of four children, was cured of the smoking habit by hypnotic treatment given by Mr Henry Blithe, of Torquay, Devon. He found her to be "an exceptionally receptive hypnotic subject", so much so that without informing her of the purpose of his experiments he began a series of sessions in which he succeeded in taking her back beyond her present life.

Mrs Henry remembered two previous existences. In the first she gave her name as Mary Cohan, a girl of 17 living in Cork in the year 1790. Among other circumstances

she told how she was married against her wishes to a man named Charles Gaul, by whom she had two children, Pat and Will. Her husband ill-treated her, and finally caused her death by a beating which broke her leg. Whilst describing these events in the trance she was evidently re-living the intense emotional experiences of the past with the vividness of a present reality rather than of a mere memory. Intervening time had been obliterated and she was once more the illiterate Irish girl she had been over a century and a half before. Her marriage, she said, took place in St. John's Church, in a hamlet named 'Grenner'. Several of the facts she related were afterwards verified on the spot, but no village of the name of "Grenner" could be traced. Eventually, however, some records dating back to the 17th century were found in the possession of a parish priest, and in them mention was made of a Church of St. John in a village named Greenhalgh. The name is pronounced locally just as Mary Cohan gave it — "Grenner".

Next she remembered a life in which she was Clarice Hellier, a nurse in charge of twenty-four children at Downham in 1902. After relating what she remembered of this life she went on to describe her last illness, her death and her funeral, which it seems she had been able to witness. She was even able to give the number of the grave, 207, in which she had been buried.

When Mrs Henry emerged from her trance she had no recollection of what had taken place and it was only when she heard the recording that she learned the purpose of the experiments. The authenticity of this case has been established beyond reasonable doubt.

One of the most remarkable men of recent times, Edgar Cayce, obtained evidence of an even more striking nature. Born in Christian County, Kentucky, in 1877, he suffered as a young man from a psycho-somatic constriction of the throat which deprived him of his voice. Orthodox medical treatments having failed, he was treated by hypnotic suggestion, which was not a recognised form of therapy in those days. In deep trance his voice returned to normal and he diagnosed his own condition. Not only did he describe the physiological symptoms in terms of which he knew nothing in his waking state, but he also prescribed treatment.

His self-cure was so remarkable that he was persuaded, rather against his will, to try prescribing for others whose illnesses would not respond to medical treatment. This he did with great success, using technical terms and prescribing remedies which, as a man of only moderate education, he was quite unfamiliar with in his normal state. Sometimes the medicines he prescribed were conventional remedies in unusual combinations; sometimes they were substances not found in the standard pharmacopoeia. Cayce himself was puzzled and somewhat dismayed by his abnormal faculty, but since it was proving of benefit to an increasing number of sufferers he continued to use it, only refusing to take any payment for the help he rendered. He soon found that a hypnotist was unnecessary; his trances were really self-induced, and he worked thereafter solely through auto-hypnosis.

One day while Cayce was giving a consultation a friend who was present asked him whether reincarnation was true. Still in the trance, Cayce immediately replied that it was. In

answer to further questions he said that many of the patients who came to him for treatment were suffering from afflictions caused by bad Karma in previous lives. It was because of this that they resisted ordinary treatment. Asked whether he was able to see the past incarnations of his patients and describe them, he said that he could.

When he was told what he had said in the trance, Cayce was more disturbed than before. The thing was getting decidedly out of hand. He had never heard the word Karma, and his only idea of reincarnation was that it was a belief associated with some "heathen" religions. His first reaction was to give the whole thing up, as being something supernatural and possibly inimical to his Christian faith.

It was with great difficulty that he was persuaded to continue. However, he consented to be questioned further under hypnosis, and after having given some readings and more successful treatments he became convinced that there was nothing irreligious or harmful in the strange ideas that were being revealed. From that time onwards he supplemented all his diagnoses by readings of the past Karma of his patients. It was then found that he was able to give valuable moral and spiritual guidance to counteract bad Karmic tendencies, and his treatments became even more effective. He was now treating the minds as well as the bodies of the patients who sought his help.

When Cayce discovered that he was also able to treat people living at great distances, whom he had never seen, the

scope of his work broadened until it ultimately extended all over the United States and beyond. Before he died in 1945 Cayce, with the help of friends and supporters, had established an institution, the Cayce Foundation, at Virginia Beach, Virginia. It is now operating as a research institute under the direction of his associates. Cayce left a vast number of case-histories and other records accumulated over the years, and these are still being examined and correlated by the Foundation. For further information on Edgar Cayce, his work and the light it throws on rebirth, the reader is referred to *Many Mansions* by Gina Cerminara, "*Edgar Cayce, Mystery Man of Miracles*," by Joseph Millard, and numerous publications issued by the Cayce Foundation.

There is a great deal in the evidence to suggest that Cayce in his hypnotised state had access to lost medical knowledge, as well as the power to see the previous lives of others. In the Buddhist texts of a very early date there are references to advanced medical knowledge and techniques of surgery in some ways comparable to our own. Jivaka, a renowned physician who was a contemporary of the Buddha, is recorded as having performed a brain operation for the removal of a living organism of some kind. But there are still older records. The Edwin Smith Papyrus (c. 3,500 B.C.) describes the treatment of cerebral injuries, and the writings attributed to Hippocrates include directions for opening the skull. The great Egyptian physician, Imhotep, who lived about three thousand years before the Christian era and was a many-sided genius comparable to Leonardo da Vinci, had such skill in medicine that he became a legend. He was deified under the Ptolemies and identified with Asklepios, the

god of healing, by the Greeks; but there is no doubt whatever that he was an actual historical personage. Without venturing beyond what is naturally suggested by Edgar Cayce's statements concerning rebirth, and their linking up with the often unusual but brilliantly successful treatments he prescribed, it is possible to see that there might be a direct connection between the knowledge possessed by these ancient physicians and the abnormal knowledge released from Cayce's unconscious mind under hypnosis.

But even Cayce was not altogether unique. Egerton C. Baptist, in "Nibbāna or the Kingdom?" quotes the following from "Life and Destiny" by Leon Denis:

"In 1880 at Vera Cruz, Mexico, a seven-year-old child possessed the power to heal. Several people were healed by vegetable remedies prescribed by the child. When asked how he knew these things, he said that he was formerly a great doctor, and his name was then Jules Alpherese. This surprising faculty developed in him at the age of four years."

In Buddhism, the faculty of remembering previous lives and of discerning the previous lives of others is one that is developed in the course of meditation on selected subjects. But it is acquired only when a certain precisely-defined stage of Jhāna, or mental absorption, has been reached. The subject is dealt with in the Canonical Texts of Buddhism, and at considerable length in the *Visuddhi-Magga* of Buddhaghosa Thera.¹ Those who have practised meditation to this point

1. Translated by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli: *The Path of Purification* (Colombo 1956, Lake House Bookshop).

in previous lives without having attained complete liberation from rebirth may be reborn with the faculty in a latent form. In the case of others, hypnosis seems to provide a short-cut technique to releasing some at least of the dormant memories of former lives, just as it provides a short cut to results ordinarily reached by deep psychoanalysis. There is much to be done in the way of more extensive and systematic investigation before definite conclusions can be tabulated. The chief difficulty is to obtain suitable subjects for the tests.

IV

A question that is often asked is: if rebirth is a fact, why is it so rare for people to have any recollection of their previous lives?

There are several answers to this. The first and most obvious is that even ordinary memory is very restricted, and varies greatly in extent and vividness with different people. Death itself, the Lethe of psycho-mythology, is an obliterating agent, for it is necessary for each consciousness to begin its renewed course more or less a *tabula rasa* with the formation of a new physical brain. Another factor is the nature of the lives intermediate to one human birth and another. There are, as Buddhism maintains, rebirths in states that are non-human and in which the consciousness does not register impressions clearly, so that a series of such lives between one human birth and another may erase all traces of memory connection between them. A study of the earliest behaviour patterns of children, however, will furnish much evidence to suggest that they bring with them into the new life certain dim awarenesses that do not belong to their present range of experience. The aptitude certain children show for acquiring some particular skills strongly suggests remembering rather than learning. The headmistress of a kindergarten school told the author that a few years after the end of the First World War she noticed that some of her boy pupils were showing a maturity of mind and a facility in gaining knowledge which was so unlike anything in her previous

experience that it roused her curiosity. After making a study of these children she came to the conclusion that they were not learning but remembering. She became convinced of the truth of rebirth when one small boy, born after the war and exhibiting a highly-strung nature which she had formerly attributed to post-war conditions, one day became violently agitated by a sudden explosive noise close behind him. The fear he showed was out of all proportion to the cause; in fact he fell into an almost cataleptic state. When he recovered he told her that he had a vague memory of a tremendous explosion and a brilliant flash of light, and that the loud noise had brought it back to him so vividly that he felt as though he was dying. From that time she was convinced that her extremely intelligent but often nervously unstable pupils were the reincarnations of men whose immediately previous lives had been cut short by the war, and who had been reborn almost at once into the human state to complete the interrupted Karmic continuity of that particular life.

Many children lead vivid lives of the imagination, or so it is supposed. They sometimes speak of things that bear no relation to their present experiences. Parents as a rule do not encourage this kind of imaginativeness, particularly if some of its manifestations cause them embarrassment. They then peremptorily forbid the child to tell any more untruths. But are these always untruths? May they not in fact be residual memories of past experiences? In any case, they are driven under by the parents' unsympathetic attitude and quickly become obliterated by new impressions. In the East, where children are allowed greater latitude to prattle of what they will, this does not happen. The difference may account for

the frequently-noted fact that instances of people recollecting past lives are more numerous in the East than in Western countries. The son of a distinguished Indian doctor practising in Burma started talking of his "wife" and of events and people belonging to another realm of experience as soon as he was able to speak. The boy was living in a tri-lingual environment where Hindi, English and Burmese were spoken, but his father noticed that from the start he used words to denote familiar things, such as doors, tables and houses, which were not Hindi, English or Burmese. The doctor noted down a number of these words phonetically, with the intention of later on trying to identify them. Unfortunately, at that time the Japanese occupation of Burma took place and the records were lost, so it was never possible to establish whether the words belonged to any existing language or not.

Cases of children remembering their previous lives in considerable detail are not uncommon in Asian countries. An example which bears all the classic features of this phenomenon is that of Pramod, the son of Babu Bankey Lal Sharma, M. A., Shastri, a Professor in an intermediate college at Bissauli in the district of Badan. The boy was born at Bissauli on March 15th 1944. As soon as he was able to utter any words clearly he pronounced the names "Mohan", "Moradabad" and "Saharanpur". Later he said quite distinctly, "Mohan Brothers". When he saw his relatives purchasing biscuits he told them that he had a big biscuit factory in Moradabad, and on being taken to large shops he would frequently say that his shop in Moradabad was bigger than any other shop. As time went on he became insistent

that he should be taken to Moradabad, where he had a brother, sons, daughter and a wife.

When he was able to give a clear account of himself he said that he was Paramanand, the brother of one B. Mohanlal, the proprietor of a catering firm, Messrs. Mohan Bros., having branches in Saharanpur and Moradabad. As Paramanand, he said, he had died of a stomach ailment at Saharanpur on May 9th 1943. The date was just nine months and six days before his birth as Pramod.

Early in the year 1949, when the boy was five, a friend of the family, Lala Raghunandanlal of Bissauli, told one of his relatives living in Moradabad about the boy and his assertions. It was then learned that there was actually a firm of Mohan Bros., caterers, the proprietor of which was named Mohan Lal. When the story was told to him, Mr. Mohan Lal visited Bissauli with some of his relatives, and there met the boy's father. Young Pramod, as it happened, was paying a visit to some relatives in a distant village at the time (July 1949) and could not be seen. Professor Bankey Lal however consented to take him to Moradabad during the forthcoming Independence Day holidays.

They arrived in Moradabad on August 15th. On alighting from the train the boy at once recognised his brother and ran to embrace him. On the way to Mohan Lal's house Pramod recognised the Town Hall and announced that his shop was close at hand. They were riding in a tonga which, to test the boy, was being driven past the shop. Pramod recognised the building and called out for the vehicle to stop.

He then alighted and led the way to the house in front of Mohan Lal Brothers' premises where the late Paramanand had lived. There he entered the room which Paramanand had kept for his religious devotions, and did reverence to it. He also recognised his wife and other relatives, and recalled incidents known to them, by which he established his identity to their complete satisfaction. The only person he failed to recognise was his eldest son, who had been thirteen years old when Paramanand died and had altered greatly in the five years' interval.

After a touching reunion with the relatives of his former life, the boy expressed a desire to go to his business premises. On entering the shop he went to the soda-water machine and explained the process of making aerated water, a thing of which he could not have acquired any knowledge in his present life. Finding that the machine would not work, he at once said that the water connection had been stopped, which was a fact; it had been done to test him. After that he said he wanted to go to the Victory Hotel, a business owned by a cousin of Paramanand's, Mr. Karam Chand. The boy led the way to the building, and entering it pointed out some rooms on the upper storey which had been added since his time.

During the two days of their stay in Moradabad the boy was taken to the Meston Park by a leading citizen of the town, Sahu Nanda Lal Saran, who asked him to point out where his civil lines branch had been. At once the boy led the company to the Gujerati Building owned by Sahu Lal Saran and indicated the shop which had once been the branch

of Mohan Bros. On the way to the Meston Park he had already recognised and correctly named the Allahabad Bank, the waterworks and the district jail. Some of the English words, such as Town Hall, were not in use in the small town of Bissauli, and Pramod had never heard them, yet he used them accurately. He not only identified his former relatives but also people who used to visit his shop on business.

The following is the account given by Mr. J. D. Mehra of Messrs. Mohan Bros., Moradabad, a brother of the late Paramanand:

“My brother, Paramanand, aged 39, died of appendicitis on 9th May 1943 at Saharanpur about 100 miles from Moradabad. Pramod, the boy concerned, was born on 15th March 1944 at Bissauli. As the boy grew up he began to utter things of his previous life. For instance, he would say to his father when offered biscuits that he would have biscuits of his own shop and that he owned a big shop at Moradabad. He used to refer to his four sons, daughter and wife. When his mother would prepare meals he would say to her, ‘Why should you prepare meals? I have an elderly wife, send for her.’

“As requested by us it was decided to bring this boy to Moradabad on August 15th 1948 (the day of India’s Independence). Sri Karam Chand, the eldest of our brothers, went to the station to receive the boy and his father. When Mr. Bankey Lal, the father, alighted from the station with his boy, Pramod spotted out Sri Karam Chand from the crowd and clung to him, and would not go to his father.

When questioned whether he knew the gentleman he at once replied, 'Yes, he is my *Bara Bhai* (elder brother.)'

"Whilst passing the Town Hall compound the boy said that it was the Town Hall, an English word with which he was not familiar in his own small city ... When taken round the place where biscuits were manufactured he said that it was a bakery, another English word not familiar to him in his birth-place. Entering the kitchen he said that he used to sit on a wooden cot there and pray. Before he entered the room he did Namaskar to the place where he used to sit in meditation.

"Seeing his wife without the vermilion mark on her forehead he questioned her — 'Where is your Bindu (mark) on the forehead?' This was a very significant remark for a boy of his age...."

The boy's own father, Shri Bankey Lal Sharma, wrote the following testimony:

"I have read almost all the versions of the statement regarding the rebirth of Paramanand of Moradabad. As I have been the eye-witness of all these things, I can say with emphasis that everything contained in the report is true to its minutest detail.

"Paramanand is a wonderful child with a very fine intelligence. He began to utter "Moradabad" and 'Mohan Brothers' alone one year back. Since December last he spoke of the firm he owned during his last existence and also the

articles he dealt in. A few days later he made a reference to a shop of his at Saharanpur. Biscuits and tea have been his great attraction. Although nobody attaches any importance to them in my family, he is very fond of them. It was through the association of biscuits that he spoke of his previous soda water and biscuit firm.

“When he visited Moradabad he recognised almost everybody with the exception of a few, especially his eldest son who is much changed.... He recognised other sons, his only daughter, wife, brothers, mother and father and several others whom he contacted during his previous life....

“I am a middle-class man, but the boy is not satisfied with the present status. He often stresses on business and opening a big shop in Bombay or Delhi. In the latter place, he says, he had been several times on business. He wants aeroplanes, ships, mansions, radios and all modern fashions.

“He has a great leaning towards his past relatives and does not want to live with me. He requests me to purchase and have a bank of our own. ..”

It was only with great difficulty that the boy was taken away from Moradabad after the visit. He showed such unwillingness to leave his old relatives and the shop that his present father had to carry him away in the early hours of August 17th while he was still asleep.

On the day prior to their departure, August 16th 1949, a large public meeting was held at the Arya Samaj where Prof. Bankey Lal, Pramod's father, gave a full account of

the development of the boy's memories since his early childhood. The case was investigated in the full light of local publicity by people known to all the persons concerned.

Among numerous cases from Burma the following, given on the testimony of U Yan Pa of Rangoon, is one of the most thoroughly substantiated.

In the village of Shwe Taung Pan, situated close to Dabein on the Rangoon-Pegu trunk line, the eldest daughter of a cultivator named U Po Chon and his wife, Daw Ngwe Thin, was married to another cultivator of the same village, named Ko Ba Thin. This girl, whose name was Ma Phwa Kyin, died in childbirth some time later.

Shortly afterwards a woman in Dabein, Daw Thay Thay Hmyin, the wife of one U Po Yin, become pregnant and in due course gave birth to a daughter whom they named Ah Nyo. When she first began to speak this child expressed a strong wish to go to the neighbouring village, Shwe Taung Pan. She declared that she had lived and died in that village, and that her name was really not Ah Nyo but Ma Phwa Kyin.

Eventually her parents took her to the village. The child at once led them to the house of the late Ma Phwa Kyin, pointing out on the way a rice field and some cattle which she said belonged to her. When the father, mother and two brothers, Mg Ba Khin and Mg Ba Yin, of Ma Phwa Kyin appeared she at once identified them. They confirmed that the house, field and cattle were those that had belonged

to Ma Phwa Kyin, and when the child recalled to them incidents of her former life they admitted that her memories were accurate and accepted her as being without doubt the dead girl reborn. Later she convinced her other surviving relatives in the same way.

The girl Ah Nyo, now about twenty-five years of age, is everywhere in the neighbourhood accepted as the former Ma Phwa Kyin reborn.

More numerous are the cases in which specific skills are carried over from one life to another, rather than any distinct recollection of identity. Among musical prodigies we find Mozart composing minuets before he was four years old; Beethoven playing in public at eight and publishing compositions at ten; Handel giving concerts at nine; Schubert composing at eleven; Chopin playing concertos in public before he was nine and Samuel Wesley playing the organ at three and composing an oratorio at eight. The musical precocity of Brahms, Dvorak and Richard Strauss was manifest at an equally early stage. In a less specialised field there is the case of Christian Heinrich Heineken, born at Lubeck in 1721. At the age of ten months he was able to speak, and by the time he was one year old he knew by heart the principal incidents of the Pentateuch. "At two years of age he is said to have mastered sacred history; at three he was intimately acquainted with history and geography, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, besides being able to speak French and Latin; and in his fourth year he began the study of religions and church history."

This amazing child created a tremendous sensation, crowds of people flocking to Lubeck to see and discourse with him. He died at the age of four, soon after he had begun to learn writing. That he was able to master so many abstruse subjects before he could even write is proof that his abnormal achievements were not the result of learning but of remembering.

Sangayana, the journal of the Union of Burma Buddha Sasana Council, reported in its issue of July 1954 the case of a six-year-old girl, Ma Hla Gyi, who showed remarkable intelligence for her age, combined with a phenomenal memory. "She can read," the report stated, "the most difficult Pāli verses a few times, memorise and recite them promptly and correctly." In a test given to her she recited the final stanza of the sub-commentary on the Buddhist Compendium of Philosophy in Pali without an error, after reading it five times. She was also able to recite without a single error a page of the Pāli Paṭṭhāna text (an abstruse Abhidhamma passage) after looking at it for one minute. This might be explained by the possession of a photographic memory, but for the fact that the child could understand what she read and was able to give its meaning.

These and many other instances of the appearance from time to time of child prodigies, although not constituting direct evidence for rebirth present a phenomenon for which biology and psychology cannot account. That memory itself is something extra to the activities of the brain cells is a conclusion accepted on physiological grounds by Max Loewenthal and others. From the cases available for exami-

nation it would seem that memories carried over from one life to another are subject to the same broad general principle as are ordinary memories belonging to the current life: we remember what most interests us, and what we most desire to remember. Therefore a strong Karmic predisposition to a particular form of study is more likely to persist from the past life than are the actual details of that life, which may be connected with personal psychological reactions and emotional responses that are in the ordinary course of nature suppressed.

V

Despite great advances in the study of genetics, there is still much that is unexplained in the biological processes that produce living organisms. While the transmission of hereditary characteristics through the genes can be traced in the operation of physical laws, there is yet no known method of accounting for the sudden mutations that occur from time to time and so give rise to variations of species. Yet these mutations, and the fact that they are possible, is a matter of the first importance, since it is by them that biological evolution takes place. For many generations the structural units of a chromosome, the genes, remain the same, and produce uniform hereditary types; but suddenly, without any intermediary stages, a new type is formed from them which may or may not continue to propagate itself. A well-known example of this is the fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*. which, being normally an insect with a grey body and long wings, produces from time to time a spontaneous mutation having a black body slightly different in shape, and very short wings. Many similar cases are known of this kind of departure from a hereditary form, but precisely what different combinations of genes, chromosomes or atomic patterns cause the variation, or why they occur, is still a mystery to biologists. All that can be said is that the changes are isomeric transformations of the kind found in simple molecular structures, and that they follow the laws of chemical kinetics which also apply to non-living substances under certain conditions.

Between "living" and "non-living" matter there is no sharp line of distinction, for it is known that the processes by which living cells nourish themselves from their surrounding medium, assimilate material for their sustenance and divide into other cells capable of independent existence is closely paralleled by processes observable in chemical molecules. For example, virus particles, which are the simplest form of life known at present, have to be considered as living units because they perform all the essential functions of living cells: yet at the same time they are regular chemical molecules, subject to all the laws of chemistry and physics. As living molecules comparable to the genes by which organic life is propagated, they are able to multiply, and they are also capable of producing biological mutations which result in the appearance from time to time of new types of a particular virus. Yet a purely chemical study of them shows each type of virus to be a well-defined chemical compound similar to various complex organic compounds that are not strictly "living" matter. They thus represent a "bridge" between "living" and "non-living" substance, and possibly the point at which the "non-living" merges into the "living". What has to be sought is the directive principle that prompts the transformation and guides the molecules to combine into more complex organic structures. To be able to follow the process, even right from its earliest stage, is not the same as to know its cause, and it is here that scientific method has to enlarge its scope to include the study of principles and laws underlying the phenomena of the physical universe and functioning on a different level from that to which the scientist has hitherto confined himself. Inasmuch as Buddhism locates these ultimate principles in the mental and immaterial, rather than

the physical, realm, the enquiry must necessarily be turned towards the interaction between mind-energy and the material substance through which it manifests itself. If the transformations of non-living into living matter, and the developments which these transformations afterwards undergo are regarded as the physical manifestations of Kamma and Vipāka (Kamma-result), it is only necessary to add these to the present stock of scientific knowledge as the unknown factors that at present elude identification, for many things still obscure to become clarified, without resorting to the supernatural, for an explanation.

The embryo human being derives its hereditary characteristics from the genes of the parents, sharing in equal measure the chromosomes of father and mother, the sex being determined by the proportion of what are distinguished as X and Y chromosomes. Female cells contain always two X - chromosomes, while the male has one X and one Y, and it is in the substitution of one Y for an X-chromosome that the basic difference in sex consists. At the time of conception the male sperm cell unites with the female and by the process of syngamy forms one complete cell, which afterwards divides into two, thus starting the process of mitosis by which the complete organism eventually comes into being. Here, what is *not* known is exactly why in certain cases the X and Y chromosomes combine to form a female, while in others they produce a male cell. This may be purely fortuitous; but it is more in accordance with the scientific view of cause and effect to suspect the presence of another factor that in some way determines the combination. The Buddhist view that this unknown factor is Kamma (Karma) or energy-potential,

the mental impulse projected by another being which existed in the past, is one that science by itself can neither prove nor disprove, but it provides the most likely explanation — in fact, the only one which can be offered as an alternative to the improbable theory of chance. Kamma as cause, and Vipāka as result, also provide an explanation of the intermediate conditions in which sex characteristics are more or less equal in one individual, or where it is possible for a complete change of sex to take place. The Kamma which in the first place produced a male may be weak, or may become exhausted before the life-supporting Kamma comes to an end, in which case the characteristics of the opposite sex may become so marked that they amount virtually to a sex-transformation, the result of a different kind of Kamma coming into operation.* Similarly, masculine thoughts and habits gradually becoming dominant in a female may bring about more and more marked male characteristics with the passage of time, and these influences may be so strong that they actually reveal themselves in physical changes. On the other hand, they may only affect the psychic life. What is certain, as this analysis will attempt to show, is that the thought-accretions do have the power to affect not only the general outlook and habits, but the physical body itself. For “thought-accretions” we may substitute here the Buddhist term Sankhāra, since this is one of the various associated meanings of this highly-comprehensive word.

* The Commentary to Verse 43 of the Dhammapada relates a sudden change of sex, due to exceptionally weighty Kamma, in the case of a youth, Soreyya, who became a woman as the result of a thought of lust directed towards an Arahant, the Thera Mahā Kaccāyana.

Individual character is usually attributed to two factors, the first being heredity. But simple physical characteristics alone are not always traceable to this cause. Colour-blindness, although it can be followed back through successive generations and shows clearly-marked biological transmission, is not invariably hereditary; and in those individual features that partake of both the physical and psychological, such as the sexual deviations referred to above, the hereditary influence does not provide any satisfactory explanation. That they are not hereditary is the conclusion of most authorities. This also applies to the many examples of infant prodigies and to the less striking, but nevertheless significant, instances of children who bear no resemblance whatever to their parents or grandparents. Where hereditary traits transmitted through the genes of the parents cannot account for differences in character the second factor, environmental influence, is brought in to explain the variation. But this also fails to cover all the ground because the same antecedents and the same environment together frequently produce quite dissimilar personalities, and there are numerous examples of pronounced characteristics appearing at birth, before any environmental pressure is brought to bear on the developing personality.

In Buddhist philosophy it is axiomatic that more than one cause is necessary to produce a given result, so that while character may be partly drawn from heredity, and partly modified by environment, these two factors do not in any way rule out the third factor, that of the individual Sankhāra, or kamma-formation-tendency developed in previous lives, which may prove itself stronger than either of them. Hereditary transmissions themselves are a part of the operation

of the causal law, for it happens that owing to strong attachments the same persons may be born again and again in the same family. This accounts for the fact that a child may be totally unlike either of its parents in temperament, tastes and abilities, yet may resemble a dead grandfather or some more distant ancestor. Physical appearance may be derived in the first place from the genes of the parents, but it undergoes modifications as the individual develops along his own lines, and it is then that distinctive characteristics, the result of habitual thought-tendencies stamping themselves upon the features, become more pronounced.

That the mind, or rather the mental impressions and volitional activities, produce changes in the living structure, is a fact which science is beginning to recognise. Hypnotism affords an opportunity of studying this phenomenon under test conditions. It is only recently that hypnotic suggestion as a mode of therapeutic treatment has been officially recognised by medical associations in many parts of the world, but it is already being used with success as a form of harmless anaesthesia during operations and childbirth, and as a treatment for psychological disorders. Clinical experiments with hypnosis are helping to reveal the secrets of the mysterious action of mind on body, for it has been found possible by suggestion to produce physical reactions which under ordinary conditions could only be obtained by physical means. Doubtless many of the "faith cures" of Lourdes and other religious centres are the result of a strong mental force, comparable with that produced under hypnotism, acting upon the physical body; the force in this instance being the patient's absolute conviction that a miraculous cure will take place.

The task of the hypnotic practitioner is to induce this acquiescent and receptive state of unquestioning faith by artificial means. This, of course, requires the consent and co-operation of the subject, and it is here that the difficulty usually arises. The patient must have complete faith in the operator to enable him to surrender his own will entirely, for the time being, to another person. When full control of the subject's mind is gained the required suggestions can be made with every confidence that the mind of the subject will carry them out, and the astonishing thing is that not only does the mind obey, but the body also responds. If, for instance, the idea of a burn is conveyed through the mind, the mark of a burn duly appears on the flesh on the spot indicated, without the use of any physical means to produce it. Many similar experiments attest to this close inter-relationship of the mental and physical, and prove beyond question the truth of the Buddhist teaching that mental conditions precede and determine certain classes of phenomena which we have been wont to consider purely physical and material.

Hysteria also produces marked physiological changes in certain circumstances, among them being the well-attested phenomenon of "phantom pregnancy."

All this has a distinct bearing on the manner in which the mental impulses generated in past lives, particularly the last mental impressions at the time of the preceding death, influence the physical make-up, and often predetermine the very structure of the body, in the new birth. Before going more deeply into this a specific example may be offered for consideration.

REBIRTH CASE HISTORY

From the records of the Burma Buddhist World-Mission.

S. T., Karen, aet 20. Birthplace, Upper Burma.
Examined in Rangoon, 1949.

The subject, a Karen house boy employed by a friend of the writer, while he was in all other respects physically sound, well built and well proportioned, suffered from an unusual malformation of hands and feet. Across his right hand a fairly deep, straight indentation, roughly following the "heart line" of palmistry, but much deeper and sharper than any of the normal lines of the hand, and extending right across the palm, divided the hand into two sections. Above this line the hand was not as well developed as at the base of the palm, and the fingers had something of the childish, unformed appearance that is one of the physical accompaniments of cretinism, although not to the same degree. Lower down on the hand and across the forearm there were similar marks, but not so pronounced as that at the base of the fingers. The left hand was indented in the same unusual fashion, but to a lesser degree; and linear indentations of the same kind appeared less distinctly across both feet and on the calves, the lines being roughly parallel to one another. In addition to this, two toes of the left foot were joined together.

The boy's previous employment had been with a leading Rangoon surgeon who, after examining these marks had declared that although they had been present from birth they could not have been caused by any pre-natal injury or abnormal condition in the womb. Questioned about them,

the boy confirmed that they were congenital, and stated that all the indentations had been much more pronounced in childhood. Furthermore, at birth three of his toes had been joined, but his father, with the rough surgery of village folk, had separated two of the toes himself. During his infancy and boyhood these malformations had been a cause of acute suffering to him, for at times, particularly when the attention of others was drawn to them, his right arm would swell, and severe pain would be felt in all the affected parts. At such times he experienced mental as well as physical distress, being conscious of fear and depression in connection with the malformations.

According to the boy's own narrative, as a child he had been very reluctant to talk about his physical defects, but one night, lying under the mosquito net with his mother he felt a sense of security which enabled him to speak freely. He then told her that he remembered incidents of his previous life which were the cause of his terror and distress whenever he was reminded of the marks. He had been, he said the son of a rich man, possibly a village headman, who had died leaving him three adjoining houses and a large quantity of silver stored in large vessels of the type known as Pegu jars, besides other treasure secreted in various parts of the buildings. After his father's death he had lived alone, unmarried and without servants, in one of the three houses. One night a band of dacoits, armed with bamboo spears, broke into the house and demanded to be told where the treasure was hidden. When he refused to tell them, the robbers bound him with wire in a crouching position, with his hands firmly secured between his legs. In this position, tightly bound and unable to move,

they left him huddled in a corner while they ransacked the other two houses, finally making off with the entire store of silver and jewellery. For three days he remained in that position in acute agony, and one of the things he remembered vividly was that blood, dripping from the deep cuts made in his hands by the wire, fell onto his feet and congealed between three of his toes. Some time during the third night he suddenly became aware, in his alternating periods of consciousness and insensibility, that he was looking down at a still form crouched in a corner, and wondering who it was. It was only later that he realised the body was his own, and that his consciousness was now located in a different and less substantial form. The rest of his recollection was confused and obscure. It seemed to him that for a long time he wandered about the scene of his former life, conscious only of a sense of loss and profound unhappiness. In this condition he appeared to have no judgement of the passage of time, and was unable to say whether it lasted for days or centuries. His sense of personal identity, too, was very feeble, his thoughts revolving entirely around the events just prior to his death, and the memory of his lost treasure, which he felt a longing to regain. He seemed, he said, to have his whole existence in a single idea which was like an obsession: the loss of his wealth and the desire to recover it.

After a long time he again became aware of living beings, and felt an attraction towards a certain young woman. He attached himself to her, following her movements, and eventually another transition was effected, in a manner he was unable to describe clearly, as the result of which he was reborn as the woman's child.

These were the memories that lingered with him in connection with the strange malformations of his hands and feet, and which he told his mother in halting, childish words when he was able to speak. The case-history bears several features in common with other instances of the recollection of previous lives that are fairly frequent in the East, and so may be profitably discussed as a typical example. One fact, however, should be noted at the outset: the child who made the claim to these recollections had nothing material to gain by doing so. Neither had the parents. Another noteworthy fact is that the boy was a Karen, of a family that had been nominally Christian for two generations, and would be expected to have no belief in the doctrine of rebirth.

Certain interesting and very significant features emerge from an analysis of this particular case. In the first place, the *craving* motif is strongly marked throughout. The young man's choice of a solitary life in a house filled with valuables suggests a fear of employing servants and a tendency towards miserliness in his character. After death, in the Peta state (i. e. as an unhappy ghost), his attachment to the lost treasure and to the locale of his previous life persisted as the strongest element in his consciousness up to the time when he again became attracted to another human being. So far, this important part played by the impulse of craving and attachment links the story with other instances of Petas haunting the spots where their former property was located; but here there is another element, that of fear, combined with the attachment. This fear was generated during the days and nights when the subject crouched, bound with wire, in the empty building, with no possibility of escape. In remote spots on the

outskirts of villages and townships it is even now possible for such a solitude to remain unbroken for weeks at a time. An intensely strong mental impression of the wire cutting into the flesh must have been formed during this period, and it was probably the last image present in the consciousness at death. In accordance with the principles of Abhidhāmma psychology, this last thought-moment would determine the character of the Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa, (connecting-consciousness or rebirth-consciousness), and would thus become the chief factor in determining the conditions of the new birth. To understand how this comes about we must turn to a brief consideration of the Buddhist analysis of consciousness.

The process by which thought impressions register themselves is called Citta-vīthi, or the course of cognition, and there is a Citta-vīthi connected with each of the organs and fields of sense-cognition; that is, eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch (body) and mind. The passive flow of the subconscious mind-continuum (Bhavanga) is disturbed whenever an external impression through one or other of these six channels impinges upon it. This disturbance is called Bhavanga-calana, (vibration of the subconscious mind-continuum) and it lasts for exactly one thought-moment. It is followed immediately afterwards by Bhavangupaccheda, or the cutting-off of Bhavanga, which is a definite interruption in the smooth flow of the subconscious current. At this point the thought-moments begin to follow a set progression of cognitive response beginning with Pañca-dvārāvajjana, which is the turning towards the sense-door (in this case one of the five physical organs). This is followed by the arising of the Consciousness-moment appertaining to whichever of the

sense-doors, eye, ear, nose, tongue or body, is involved. This is the involuntary act of turning the attention towards the external object, and it is followed at once by Sampaticchana, which is the actual seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling, as the case may be. When this has been effected, the function of Santirana, or Investigation, comes into play; at this stage associative ideas arise by which the mind is able to identify the impression that has been received, so that the next stage, that of Votthapana, or Identification, can be produced. Votthapana is the stage of conscious recognition, at which the object assumes a definite identity in the mental awareness. This stage is then succeeded in a full course of cognition by no less than seven Javana¹ thought-moments during which consciousness relating to the object arises and passes away. It is followed by Tadālabhāna, which is the holding of the impression and the registering of it upon the mental stream; this stage, which lasts for two thought-moments, completes the Citta-vīthi of that particular impression, making sixteen thought-moments of the course of cognition from the first awakening of attention to the object to its fixing upon the consciousness. Each of these thought-moments is complete in itself, consisting of three phases, Arising (Uppāda), Enduring (Thiti), and Passing away (Bhanga).

The relative intensity or feebleness of impressions varies considerably. One single impression may be the subject of thousands of complete Vīthi, each of them very distinct (Ati-mahanta). If the impression is less marked it is called

1. Lit. 'Impulsion'. It is at that phase that Kamma, good or evil, is produced.

Mahanta (distinct), and does not give rise to the Tadālabhāna stage. Still weaker is an impression that does not even reach the Javana stage (Paritta; i. e. feeble); while if it is very feeble indeed (Ati-paritta) it passes away after the Bhavanga-calāna (vibration of Bhavanga) without any of the subsequent thought-moments arising. An extremely vivid and clear impression reaching the mind door, accompanied by a full course of cognition, is called Vibhūta (vivid). It is such impressions as these, repeated over and over again, which influence the mind and may be capable ultimately of influencing the body, with or without the accompaniment of a volitional impulse directed towards that end. Normally the mind is selective, turning again and again to those impressions which are most agreeable, while ignoring the others; but under certain exceptional conditions disagreeable impressions force themselves upon the attention so strongly that they cannot be thrust aside. Very often such impressions may be rejected by the conscious mind, yet linger in the Bhavanga ineradicably.

We are here dealing with states of consciousness arising in the Kāma Loka (the world of fivefold sense-perception) and such as come into being through contact with external sense-objects; the course of ideational objects, those entering through the Mano-dvāra, mind-door, is slightly different. In the cognitive series (citta-vīthi) dealt with above, the Javana thought-moment occurs up to seven times, but in loss of consciousness or at the moment of death it subsides after the fifth repetition. At that moment, representing the end of the final phase of the current life, cognitive thought (Vīthi-citta) is experienced, and this takes the form of an idea-image

which may be that of predominant Kamma, of something associated with that Kamma and its performance, or else a representation of the destiny to which the past Kamma has been directed. At the expiry of the cognitive thought (Vīthi-citta) or that of the Bhavanga, there arises the Cuti-citta (death consciousness) which performs the function of cutting off, and immediately after that the Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa, or connecting-consciousness, arises in the next life as rebirth-consciousness. In the formula of 'Dependent Origination' (Paṭicca-samuppāda) this is expressed as: "Viññāṇa paccayā Nāma-rūpa" — "From (Rebirth-) Consciousness arise Name and Form", i. e., mental and physical aggregates. This Consciousness, conditioned by Ignorance and Actions (Kamma) motivated by Craving, carrying with it the predominant impressions of the last thought-moments, functions as the Bhavaṅga of the next existence and so determines the key, as it were, in which that life is pitched. Thus the life-continuum flows on from one existence to another in the endless succession of Paṭisandhi, Bhavanga, Vīthi and Cuti.

There is no actual thought-existence that passes across from one life to another, but only an impulse. Each moment of consciousness passes away completely, but as it passes it gives rise to a successor which tends to belong to the same pattern; and this process is the same, whether it be considered from the viewpoint of the moment-to-moment life-continuum that makes up a total life-span, or from that of the connecting link between one life and the next. The rebirth is instantaneous and is directly conditioned by the preceding thought-impulse. Since both mind and body are conditioned by it,

even the distinctive pattern of the brain convolutions that accompanies a particular talent, say for music or mathematics, is the result of this powerful mental force operating from the past life and stamping its peculiar features on the physical substance, the living cell-tissues of the brain. It is this which accounts for the phenomenon of genius in circumstances where heredity offers no tenable explanation. In the case of the Karen boy under discussion the most potent rebirth-force, craving, was conjoined with a strong impression of physical suffering and physical marks, and this impression had been the central pivot of consciousness for three days and nights — long enough to set up a thought-construction (or a pattern impressed on the Bhavanga) sufficiently emphatic to influence the succeeding phases of consciousness and the new body that was formed under its direction. In some way not yet known to science, the thought-energy released at the time of death is able to control the combinations of male and female gametes and by means of Utu (temperature) and the other purely physical elements of generation to produce a living organism that embodies the nature and potentialities of the past Kamma in a new life (*Anāgata vipāka bhava*).

Here it should be noted that strongly marked tendencies, both mental and physical, as well as actual memories belonging to past lives, are most in evidence when the rebirth is direct from one human life to another. The memories themselves are transferred by impression on the brain cells, so that the ordinary rules of memory obtain here, and it is the most recent and vivid impressions that survive. Intermediate lives in one or other of the remaining thirty planes of existence can efface altogether the memory of previous human lives,

and if these intermediate existences have been in any of the lower states, where consciousness is dim, or spent in the inconceivably long life-span of the Deva realm, it can hardly be expected that there should be any recollection at all. This is only one of the many reasons why most people altogether fail to remember having existed in a previous state, and yet may have a vague feeling that they have done so. In the case under review the subject spent an undefined period in the state of a Peta, or what is popularly known as an "unhappy ghost". His own belief was that this state lasted for a long time; but in such conditions time is a purely subjective element. His existence as a Peta may in fact not have lasted for more than few thought-moments. Questions put to the boy by the writer, however, seemed to indicate that the interval of Peta-existence had actually been of considerable duration, for after his rebirth he had not been able to identify any places or people from the former life. Everything had changed from his memory of it. Other attempts to draw some clue as to the period of the previous life were equally profitless. The primitive weapons of the dacoits did not necessarily indicate that it took place before the invention of firearms; for the statement that they used wire points to a more recent date. It is possible, however, that the boy's use of the word "wire" was a linguistic error; he may have meant thin strands of creeper, which would produce the same effect. His joined toes, corresponding to the manner in which they had stuck together with the congealed blood, is a striking instance of the enduring power of a mental impression. Crouched with his head bent down to his knees, his hands and feet would be the central objects of his Citta-vīthi, and

what was happening to them must have stamped itself visually on his consciousness, to reproduce itself later in his new body by means of Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa.

This case is the most remarkable one known to the writer for the demonstration it gives of the mind's influence upon the physical body in a direct causal sequence from one life to another. That the process of mutation from one existence to the next is carried out without any "soul" or transmigrating entity is another fact that becomes apparent on examination of the case history. The only factor of identity between the headman's son, the Peta (unhappy ghost) and S. T. the Karen houseboy, was the craving-impulse that carried with it the potentiality of re-manifestation; that is, Bhava (existence) resulting from Upādāna (attachment). The terrors and physical affliction were the direct outcome of the Upādāna, or Attachment. In terms of Dependent Origination, Sankhāra (Kamma-tendencies) conditioned by Avijjā (Ignorance) had produced Viññāṇa (Consciousness), and from that consciousness had sprung a fresh Nāma-rūpa (Mind-body) bearing all the marks that had impressed themselves on the last moments of consciousness during repeated Citta-vīthis on the same object. It is thus that all living beings carry with them, throughout countless existences, the inheritance of their own thoughts and actions, sprung from past tendencies and nourished on the ever-renewed craving that comes from contact between the senses and the objects of the external world. Heredity itself is merely one factor in the multiple operations of the law of Kamma and Vipāka (result), and it too is greatly influenced by the direction taken by past interests, activities and attachments.

In the Buddha's Teaching it is naturally the moral aspect of Kamma and Vipāka that is stressed; and indeed there is a moral aspect to every major volitional impulse. The relationship of good Kamma and good Vipāka, bad Kamma and bad Vipāka, however, is not always obvious at first glance. A child born with a physical deformity, as in the present case, has not necessarily inflicted injury of a similar kind on someone else in a previous life. The physical defect may be the result of a strong mental impression produced by some other means. But as in the case of the Karen boy, the ultimate cause can invariably be traced back to some moral defect of the individual concerned—— to some trait of character unduly dominated by the Āsavas, the taints or fluxes associated with the grasping tendency which in Paṭicca-samuppāda is shown as the immediate cause of the process of "Becoming" (Upādāna, or Grasping, gives rise to Bhava, or Becoming; which in its turn causes Jāti, Arising or Rebirth). Thus the whole individual life-process, including its physical medium, the Rūpa (body), must be viewed as "Santati", that is, a causal-continuum of action and result, all the actions being to some degree tainted by craving for existence, passion, self-interest and ignorance, until the attainment of Arahatsip extinguishes these energy-supplying fires.

It only remains to be noted that in the operation of mental impulses upon living cells at the time of their uniting, and during the processes of syngamy and mitosis, Buddhism offers a fully scientific explanation of the biological mutations described at the beginning of this chapter.

VI

Buddhism teaches that there are altogether thirty-one planes of existence on which rebirth is possible; the human plane is only one of them. The Thirty-one "Abodes" comprise the states of extreme suffering, or "hells", to which people consign themselves by reason of their bad Karma; the realms of the unhappy spirits, or "Petas", who on account of attachment to mundane concerns of a low order are more or less earthbound; the animal world into which people may be reborn through the manifestation of bestial characteristics; the realm of superior spirits intermediate between earth and the heavenly planes; the heavenly planes themselves, which are the abodes of Devas enjoying sense-pleasures as the result of their past good actions; and lastly the Brahma worlds, wherein beings who on earth have attained specific spiritual goals live for aeons in pure and immaterial forms. All of these states of existence, however, are impermanent; sooner or later they come to an end, when the Karma that has produced them is exhausted. Rebirth then takes place once more, as the result of craving and residual Karma of another type from past lives which then comes into operation. So the process of Samsāra continues until all craving is extinguished and Nirvāna is reached.

It is important to realise that Buddhism does not teach rebirth only on the human level. If it did so it would leave unexplained all the phenomena of spiritualism and a great deal

more besides which has to be accounted for in human experience. Many western spiritualists have now come to accept rebirth as a fact because it is the only valid explanation of certain data which cannot otherwise be fitted into the spiritualist concept. To give only one example, it is well known that spiritualist mediums find it impossible to "contact" certain people after death, while with others they are able to do so. This has always been a great difficulty to spiritualists, but the Buddhist answer is a simple one: it is not all who are reborn into the so-called spirit worlds; and furthermore some of these planes of existence are too remote from the human world to be accessible to any ordinary "medium".

The idea of other realms of existence is more difficult for those to accept who have become conditioned to thinking in terms of "naive realism," and it sometimes happens that through a misunderstanding of the Buddhist doctrine of Anattā (no-self) they believe that rebirth can take place only in a physical and human body. This is an error which the Buddhist texts do not support. To deny the possibility of rebirth in the animal world, for example, is a negation of the universal applicability of the moral law of cause and effect which the Buddha consistently proclaimed. Both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism teach unequivocally that if the Karma of the last thought moment before death is on a low moral level governed by any of the unwholesome factors associated with lust, hatred and delusion, the next manifestation of the causal continuum will be on precisely that level. In other words, rebirth as an animal, a Peta or a being in one of the hell states will result. It must be understood that this is not at all the Pythagorean idea of the "soul" of one type of

being entering the body of another. For the sake of a clearer understanding of the processes of Samsāra in regard to other realms of existence, the following extracts from letters from the present writer to a friend are given.

“Like yourself, when I first studied Buddhism I thought of rebirth as being only in human form. In the beginning that was satisfactory; as you say, ‘a nice, clear-cut philosophy, rational’ — and of course ethical as well. But further consideration revealed certain mechanical difficulties in the way of direct rebirth invariably from one human state to another. It meant, for instance, that at the moment of death some conception must be taking place somewhere which was in all respects ideally suited to be the vehicle of expression for the Karmic potential released by the death. Of course, conception is actually taking place in millions of cases all over the world at any moment one cares to name; yet still it seems that too many coincidental factors must somehow be present to bring the thing within the realms of probability. Again, if animals are to be taken into the scheme, which is philosophically necessary in order to make the world-view comprehensive and to get away from the anthropocentric idea that ethics and spiritual meanings apply only to mankind — an idea which always seemed to me quite indefensible — it must be that the rebirth concept is somehow extensible to other modes of existence besides the human. After all, why should we assume that we are the only form of sentient and intelligent existence in the cosmos? Does the scientific outlook forbid us to envisage the possibility of other modes of life, simply because we cannot see, hear or handle them? Does not science itself tell us that most of the significant things in

the universe, the things that really shape the visible world, are themselves invisible and intangible forces? We have to take many things on the authority of science which we cannot see and test for ourselves. True, somebody else has presumably tested these theories and so, science being a body of shared knowledge, as distinct from the esotericism of personal revelations, we accept the findings—that the universe is of such and such a construction, that man has evolved from lower forms of life, and so forth. Even when we are led by gradual degrees to Einstein's general theory of relativity, the space-time complex, curved space, the expanding universe and other ideas which nobody, not even the scientists themselves, can demonstrate in tangible form we go on believing something that we cannot realise, or ever hope to realise except as perhaps a mathematical concept, simply because we have faith in the former discoveries of science and have seen that the method bears results. In other words, we believe in the method, even when we cannot check its latest results for ourselves. At that stage very few of us are philosophers enough to ask ourselves why we believe in a substantial physical universe when every new concept of science brings us into a more abstract world and proves that the universe is in reality something quite different from the mental picture we have formed of it from the data furnished by our senses. In a universe of energy, what has become of the solid, impenetrable substance of our world? If it is not exactly illusion, it is so different from the reality that its appearance at least may be termed illusion. Because it is a *shared* illusion and one that is necessary to our continued functioning within the framework of a world that we must regard as substantial, we are compelled to go on treating it as though it were actually the thing it appears to

be as interpreted by our sensory awarenesses. But when we try to apply the laws of Newtonian physics to nuclear physics, and Euclidean geometry to the multiple space-time dimension we find that these laws, while they are still valid in the limited sphere of the material world are quite inadequate to cope with the abstract and much more complicated world of mathematical (and therefore philosophical) reality. From then on we have to suspect that the relatively simple material universe, in which certain things just cannot be, because they cannot be always seen, heard or felt, is only a very partial aspect of the whole. What was simple and obvious to Charles Bradlaugh becomes not quite so certain. But still, through habit we go on asserting the validity of materialistic principles in spheres where it is far from certain that they obtain. So people say that there cannot be a heaven because they were always told that heaven existed somewhere up above the clouds, and stellar exploration (even before it becomes a fact) has disproved this.

“But on what principle do we insist that heaven or hell must have an objective, external existence? If ‘heaven’ is happiness and ‘hell’ misery, they are personal and subjective states; they exist independently of physical location. To take a concrete example, two men may be sitting side by side in a bus. One is desperately unhappy, perhaps through remorse, unsatisfied longing, anger or any one of the myriad causes of human misery; he may be contemplating suicide, even. The other is blissfully happy: he has perhaps got promotion in his job, just had his first book published and the reviewers have been enthusiastic, or he has married the girl he loves. Each of these two men is inhabiting his own personal world, which

has nothing to do with the world of the other; yet physically they are sitting side by side in this familiar world shared by us all. They may both get off at Sloane Square; but for one of them Sloane Square is a bus stop in heaven, while for the other it is located nowhere but in hell. So these states of being — really the only true states, since the external world has no part in making them what they are, but itself takes on whatever aspect they give to it — are internal, subjective and purely mental states. As such they have no connection with location in time or space, or the events of the world going on about them. Each of us lives and has his own peculiar experience in a separate world, to which the external world presents only points of contact and general reference

“So, if this can be the case in regard to two living men in a bus, whose physical bodies are touching one another but whose minds — and therefore real being — are living in different realms, why do we insist that if heaven exists as a reality it must be accessible by space travel or anything of that kind? In doing so we are naively applying laws that are relevant to physical space and time to other modes of conscious being where they are not relevant at all.

“What I am trying to express is a different vision of the world of reality. To me it seems that the real world is an intangible world of mental events and concepts, to which the external is only incidental. This may of course take the appearance of Berkeleyan idealism or, worse still, mysticism. But in reality it differs fundamentally from both; it is not Berkeleyan idealism because it does not attempt to brush aside the physical world as being non-existent. It accepts that

world as a reality; but not the whole or the final reality. It differs from mysticism in that it does not lose touch with the conditions in which we function as living, material organisms, and does not postulate any invasion of the laws governing extra-physical phenomena into the realm of the physical to the disorganisation of the latter. The worlds exist side by side; interpenetrating one another and affecting one another in various ways, but only within the limits imposed by the laws peculiar to each, and in conformity with those laws. Each world stands in relation to the others as a teleological necessity."

It may be objected that of the two men in the bus, the happiness of the one and the wretchedness of the other have certainly been caused by external events; something has happened to them to put them into their respective heaven and hell. That is true; but it is retrospective to the cause, while we are dealing with the effect as it now is. Their present conditions, whatever may have induced them, have no reference to one another nor to the objective world they share; they are living in discrete worlds that have been created for them by their reaction to some previous events. Now had they been indifferent to those events they could not have been plunged into hell or exalted to heaven by them. So finally their condition can be traced back to their own minds and the degree of their susceptibility to external occasions for joy or sorrow. A certain thing happening to one man may cause him a mild and fleeting unhappiness; the same thing happening to another may reduce him to suicidal despair. The same kind of event objectively, but vastly different in its results — that is, in the kind of world it creates internally.

If that is the case, which is the more significant — the event in itself or the respective mental conditions of the two men, which have invested it with such different degrees of importance? If we say, as it seems to me we are bound to say, that the mental condition is the more significant, it must follow that it is the mental state, not the event, that represents the true reality in any situation. The illustration of the two men in the bus may be a trite and obvious one, but from it we are entitled to draw certain inferences concerning the nature of states of being in terms of isolated experiences. One of them is that the mind has its own habitat and a limitless capacity for creating its own worlds out of the raw materials of any situation. That these worlds of subjectivity have their counterparts in planes of existence other than our own is borne out by the testimony of Swedenborg, William Blake and a host of others whose independent experience has given them glimpses of their reality.

The part science plays in life is only on the fringe of mankind's collective experience. In any case, when we bring science into the problem of being we ought to begin by defining just what we mean by the word. The most we can say is that science is a body of knowledge concerning accepted facts, gained by the pursuit of a certain method which has been found to give results in the past and so is presumed to be valid for all investigations. Scientific theories are constantly subject to alteration as knowledge increases, but scientific *method* remains the same. Therefore at any given point it is the method that is more important than any particular stage it has brought us to in the never-ending pursuit. But there can be no assurance that the method will

eventually succeed in revealing everything; in fact its progress suggests that the more it reveals the more there remains to be explored. It continually opens up new vistas, each of which demands that it be explored with new compasses. The 'expanding universe' may be just a natural allegory of man's expanding knowledge of the universe; something to which there can be no final limit. It becomes increasingly difficult to apply any sort of scientific knowledge to ontological questions, even when it seems to have some bearing on what we desire to know. Science may destroy religious myths but it has not made any important change in the terms of philosophical thought. It has given us a wider range of symbols and a more exact terminology, but that is all. We are no longer obliged to talk of the elements of earth, air, fire and water, but the philosophical concepts they stood for remain fairly constant. Everything we know is merely a subjective experience based upon data presented by our senses, and these data come to us in the form of impressions which are in most cases far removed from the nature of the object as it really is. All that physics tells us is that the objects of the external world would appear to us quite differently if we possessed a different kind of cognitive apparatus. But even this was known long ago. Things that we see, hear, smell, taste and touch have no intrinsic properties, only the characteristics we invest them with in the course of cognising and appraising. Thus the world of aesthetic values lies only in ourselves, and is in some respects different for each of us. In this mental world, made up of highly-individualised impressions combined with the concepts that have gathered about them from prior association and, in the field of abstract concepts the biases, predilections and prejudices that are personal to the individual

concerned, the range of variations becomes limitless. No two people think exactly alike; which means that no two people inhabit precisely the same world. Two persons may agree on all factual points, yet the interpretation they give to the totality may produce two quite different pictures.

So the world we live in is largely, if not wholly, a mental construct. Science gives us information about the external world which we know to be true so far as it goes. It is true because it is seen to work; if we apply the knowledge practically we get the expected results. Constructing a machine in accordance with certain proved laws of physics we get something that flies, defying another law of physics, gravitation. Something which one law seems to make impossible thus becomes practicable by the understanding and use of other laws. It is this form of progression from the impossible to the possible that has made our world what it is. The laws governing the propagation of sound make it impossible for the voice of someone talking in London to be heard in New York, and three hundred years ago the "natural philosopher" would have been content to leave it at that and would have had a hearty laugh at the notion of radio. But Newton could probably not have dismissed it as impossible because the genius of a really great scientist is like all other forms of genius — it includes a large amount of imagination. Had it not been for the old alchemists with their absurd theory that somehow the elements of one metal could be rearranged to form another, we should never have had modern chemistry. Even those who went further than the elixir of life and the transmutation of metals, and tried to produce the 'homunculus', an artificial man, were only in a crude way trying to anticipate something which bio-chemistry may one day make possible.

And here it may be noted in passing that even if science should ultimately succeed in generating life from non-living matter, the achievement will make no difference to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth according to *Kamma*. The karmic causal current may remanifest through vital elements brought together artificially in the same way as it does through the natural biological processes. The artificial production of living organisms may deal the final blow to the theory of divine creation but it will not in any way affect the Buddhist explanation of life.

The laws that work in science are continually having to give way before the discovery of fresh laws which either cancel them out or modify them, or make them subservient to ends which previously they appeared to obstruct. And as this process develops we find ourselves becoming more and more doubtful as to whether it will reach any conclusive end. The horizon is eternally receding from us, the spiral nebulae forever trusting outwards into limitless space. The familiar and comfortable world of 'things' is meanwhile dissolving into abstract forces, a whirling dance of electrons, of atoms which are never the 'same' atoms from one moment to another of their restless existence. Does what we see bear any relation whatever to the external reality? Can we ever be certain that physics itself is 'true'?

Speculative thought has been dried up at its source by the realisation that science alone can never help to reveal ultimate truth, but can show us only expanding areas of what is relatively true. It was because of this that Wittgenstein was constrained to renounce all attempts to erect systems of philosophy, even negative systems, and was particularly

averse to theories which take mathematics or natural science as the ideal. But while the scientist remains content to work within the areas of relative truth and to leave teleological questions alone, his self-denial does not forbid others from making use of his knowledge in the attempt to trace a coherent pattern in the diversity of human experience. We have evidence from other sources that it is possible to improve man's perceptual apparatus and extend it, and by that means we may break through the impasse. It is only necessary that the ideas we bring into play should not be of a kind that science has shown to be false on grounds within its own province.

The limits of scientific competence should be clearly understood. It is a common error to suppose that science has accounted for a phenomenon when it has given it a name, and that it has explained a cause when it has merely described a process. To take an example, 'natural selection' is accepted as one of the primary factors in evolution. But if we ask what *causes* natural selection—precisely why does a living organism choose one course of action rather than another, or whence comes the instinctive urge to mate in a certain way that 'happens' to be conformable to biological needs—science is silent. It does not know the answer. It has named a process, and shown how it works, but it has not discovered the reason for it. To say that there is no reason is to evade the issue. The purpose may be assumed to lie in the final result; but that is legislating after the event. A certain phenomenon may be produced by accident, but for a long and involved series of such accidents to bring forth in the end a highly-organised and equipped animal of the type of the higher vertebrates is stretching pure chance too far. All the evidence

points towards some kind of drive behind the process; but this theory is vitiated by the fact that the drive does not go directly towards the fulfilment of its purpose. It blunders along by a painful process of trial and error — stopping, retracing its steps, coming to dead ends and scattering the debris of its failures along the path of geological time. Yet always, ensuring that in some way its surviving stages are contributory to the ultimate result, whatever that may be. This drive, or demiurge, cannot be a creator-god, for if it were it would achieve its purpose with greater economy and, presumably, with more regard for ethical principles. That these are completely lacking in nature is one of the strongest arguments against the emergent theory. All the indications in fact are opposed to the idea of a supreme deity, whether God be conceived as a complete being or as an evolving and progressively-revealed spiritual principle. Yet when all this is granted we are still left with the vacuum created by the lack of a purposive directing force. The question still remains: Can biological processes be explained in purely physical terms, or do the problems of structure, function and organisation necessitate some kind of teleology? The scientist may reject the “Vitalism” which Hans Driesch postulated as a necessity, but something of the kind is needed to account for organic evolution.

Buddhism meets the challenge with the concept of the force of craving, an impersonal urge to fulfilment continually renewing itself in successive manifestations. The “demiurge” and the “Élan vital” are both functionally represented in this concept. Here we have not a ‘something’ which has visualised the final result from the beginning and has been capable

of creating from nothing and moving directly towards its consummation, but a blindly-groping urge which shows itself in the instinctive behaviour of animals and on the deeper psychological levels of human beings. It is the one great creative impulse to which all the laws of the universe are subservient.

Far from precluding the possibility of other states of being besides our own, science makes them, by inference, a logical necessity. The facts suggest that, in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, 'an enlarged psychology, and possibly an enlarged physiology — possibly even an enlarged physics — will have to take into account and rationalize a number of phenomena which so far have been mainly disbelieved or ignored.'

It is as well to bear in mind that the existence of extra-terrestrial modes of being had always been recognised until science, by confining the method and grounds of knowledge to the material level, caused an unprecedented antagonism to metaphysical ideas. The revolution in outlook justified itself in many ways, but a new rationalism is emerging which has its roots in the enigmatic territory that modern physics has revealed beyond the tangible world.

Understanding of how rebirth in the human state takes place is sometimes obscured by misconceptions regarding certain biological principles, especially those relating to the transmission of hereditary characteristics. Here it is necessary to realise that "the various parts of an organism are not received intact from the parents but developed out of comparatively simple structures present in the egg. There is no

• real analogy between heredity and the legal notion of inheritance of property. One speaks loosely of a given hereditary character being 'transmitted' from parent to offspring, but obviously this is impossible since the only materials which can be thus transmitted are those contained in the uniting sex cells, the eggs and spermatozoa in higher animals. An individual receives from his parents not a set of fully-formed characters but a set of determinants or genes, as a consequence of whose activities the hereditary characters are developed. This concept of hereditary determinants is fundamental for an understanding of heredity." (Prof G. H. Beale, Lecturer in Genetics, Edinburgh University, 1957.) The determinants are therefore only a contribution to the sum total of characters, or personality. The extent to which they are decisive must depend very largely on other factors, not all of which are to be accounted for by environment. Heredity and the predispositions from past *Karma* may be complimentary to one another, as when attachment leads to repeated rebirths in the same racial group, or even in the same family; or the *Karmic* tendencies may modify or counteract the hereditary characteristics. It is only if rebirth is taken to mean the transmigration of a "soul" that there is any conflict between it and the known facts of genetics.

The emphasis laid upon *Anatta* is fundamental to the Buddhist point of view. There is no "soul" in the sense of an enduring entity; in its place there is mental energy flowing out from living creatures which after their death continues its current of causality by assembling out of physical substances a new being. But this 'new being' which is the continuation of the *Karmic* cause-effect current of the previous one, does not

necessarily have to be a human being. It may be an animal or it may be a being existing in other realms, where it produces a body in accordance with the particular laws of generation obtaining in those realms. If it has brought about a birth in the *Deva* or *Preta loka* (which are justifiably called 'spirit' realms, since 'spirit' has nothing to do with 'soul' but denotes a particular type of body, different from the bodies of the terrestrial plane) it continues with a more or less recognisable personality. It is similar enough in general characteristics to the person who died to be recognisable as belonging to the same current of causal identity, and so we call it the 'same' person, just as we say that John Smith at ninety is the 'same' person as John Smith the infant which he once was. Actually they are not the same, except in this conventional sense; they merely belong to the same continuum of cause and effect. The new being, *Deva* or *Preta*, also retains memories of the previous life, and if emotional links of other attachments are strong it continues to share the interests of people living on this, our own plane. Furthermore, when personality is very strongly marked it is all the more likely to reproduce characteristics which make it identifiable as the 'same' person in a new manifestation.

In this way Buddhism accounts for the phenomena of the seance room. Rebirth in these other realms, or *lokas*, does not necessitate a soul any more than does rebirth as a human being or animal. When the result of the Karma that has caused the rebirth in the *Deva* or *Preta* realms is exhausted, the mental energy once more flows out to operate through the conditions of the physical world and human rebirth takes place again. Or it may be that another *Deva* or *Preta* rebirth

will come about, or a rebirth in any other of the thirty-one planes of existence, according to the nature of the residual Karma.

There are several lines of enquiry on which investigation into rebirth may be carried out. It has been possible to indicate only a few of them here. The serial continuity of life, which so many people in all ages have felt instinctively to be a truth, however, carries with it the force of an intellectual conviction to all who seek for a purpose and a moral pattern in human experience. It is not too much to say that the whole of man's future development depends upon an acceptance of rebirth and a fuller understanding of the ethical principles it brings to light. Mankind is now ripe for a complete re-assessment of values and a re-statement of the universal principles on which our moral and spiritual convictions rest. Unless this is undertaken we stand in danger of a catastrophic destruction of all those virtues by which man has risen to his present position in the hierarchy of living beings. It is only by the acceptance of rebirth as a fact that the sense of moral responsibility in an ordered universe can be restored.



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OR

THE WAY OF DETERIORATION



By S. George



C

PUBLISHED FOR THE MABA BOOKS SOCIETY OF Ceylon
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1948.

PREFACE

This small pamphlet entitled "The Aparihāniya or Avoidance of Deterioration", written by the late Mr. S. Ginige, contains the seven principles of conduct which the Buddha had propounded in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta as being essential for the stability and progress of rulers.

The article has been written in a very homely manner with the view of showing the way of progress to those politically minded men of eminence who desire to take into their hands the reins of self-government in Ceylon.

These salutary principles the author has applied to human conduct, politics, and government and in doing so has revealed a highly endowed brain which would have rendered valuable service to public welfare had he been able to live a few more years. Each principle has been discussed as a law and in commenting on each such law he has brought into bearing a vast field of knowledge and experience which few can boast of and which must necessarily be of immense help to those who desire to follow the lines of least resistance and of calamity and downfall. It can hardly be gainsaid that the Aparihāniya Dhamma introduced into the policy of government will yield a democracy of the highest order.

In the discussion of the seven principles of conduct the Author has tried to fathom the depths of the Buddha's omniscience and has appreciated the broad minded tolerance of, and the absence of malice jealousy and hatred in, that Great Teacher. The endeavour to

eradicate the prejudice against devas and brahmas by showing that the very same principles upon which one human being becomes useful to another human being operate between devas and human beings is worthy of notice.

The importance given to the presence of men of moral rectitude in the matter of the welfare of a country is very highly commendable and ought to win for the memory of the late Mr. Ginige respect and honour.

H. D. Ratnatunga

Tangalla, 7th October, 1948.

"*Namāmi Buddhāṃ*"

APARIHĀNIYA

OR

AVOIDANCE OF DETERIORATION

INTRODUCTION

TO the Vajjis of Visāla, the Tathagata preached seven laws for avoiding worldly degeneration and therefore for effecting worldly progress. These laws are meant for nations, but these same laws apply with equal force to the deterioration and progress of clans, families and societies. Like all HIS other Teachings, these laws are as applicable today as at the time they were preached about two thousand five hundred years ago. Therefore, it would behove to study these laws carefully as so many new parties and unions are being organized.

Being on the verge of self-government, and having accepted partial self-government, the Ceylonese have the necessity of considering themselves as a nation. As a large majority of the Ceylonese are Buddhists, it is advantageous, nay, imperative that they should impress on the population the Buddhist principles of maintaining national progress. The experience of this country in unions and activities of Buddhist interest is that they cannot progress or maintain the same interest and enthusiasm as at their inceptions. This is an undeserved stigma that the Buddhists of this country have earned for Buddhism either through ignorance of the Dhamma or through not heeding to the Dhamma or through both. It is up to the Buddhists to remove this blemish as early as possible and the only way of doing so is to study these laws carefully and to put them to practise.

The Tathagata Himself said and a careful study will also show that, even if any one of these seven laws were observed, deterioration would be avoided and progress obtained. Therefore, the observance of all the seven

laws should necessarily result in progress. But the observance of a law cannot be effected without a knowledge of that law. As such, it is the duty of every progressive Buddhist to study these laws carefully.

THE FIRST LAW

The first of these seven laws is "constant meeting and meeting in large numbers". This does not appear very imposing, but a close analysis will show that it teaches the best form of democracy. The principle of this law is meeting and the two aspects of meeting are the constancy and the number that meets.

It is a human failing that a man always desires to meet only those whom he likes, but he little remembers that this liking took place only after meeting. From childhood to manhood and thence to senility, this liking occurs only because of meetings. A child meets another child. There may be a little shyness apparent in both and they might at first only admire, or take stock each of the other from a distance. If these two children were to meet the next day also, there would probably be a smile in each of them showing pleasure of recognition. They might join together in play. If they were to meet the third day also, there would undoubtedly be signs of pleasure of meeting. Each has taken a liking to the other and they have become friends. As long as this regular meeting takes place, so long will this friendship last. In grown-up people also, this same peculiarity is apparent. Formation of cliques in social gatherings, clubs and societies is caused by the likings due to constant meetings. If these cliques were to maintain the frequency of the meetings of its members, each individual member would begin to think of himself as well as of the other members as integral factors of that clique and also refer to that clique as "my" or "our" clique. Thus constant meeting leads to liking, liking to friendship and friendship to plurality of possession.

If two men were to meet one day, they would like children, take stock each of the other by each carefully noting the actions and behaviour of the other. If they were to meet the following day, they would probably only recognize each other. On the third day, they might converse on the weather and probably come to know each other. On the fourth day, they would be bound to converse on the topics of the day. On the fifth day they would be discussing on those things that they are most interested in and would be interchanging ideas. On account of these interchanges of ideas, it would be found after some time that both of them have the same views on many subjects. Thus it is seen that meetings lead to conversation, conversation to interchange of ideas and interchange of ideas to unity of vision or outlook. If these meetings were of a number larger than two, the same process would take place with the result that there would be a larger number with the same vision or outlook. It may be that interchange of ideas of a clique, sometimes, turns out to a hot discussion, but if actual interchange of ideas take place, there will be final unity in decision and that clique will be firmer bound together.

Thus constant meetings result in likings, likings result in friendship and friendships result in plurality of possession. And meetings of large numbers lead to conversations of the many, conversations of the many lead to interchange of ideas of the many and interchanges of ideas of the many lead to unity of vision or outlook of the many. Therefore, constant meetings and meetings in large numbers result in plurality of possession and unity of vision of those meetings. These are the principles of democracy of a higher order than that understood today.

THE SECOND LAW.

The second of these laws is "meeting in unison, rising in unison and working in unison" A close analysis of this law shows that it teaches the best form of communism. The principle underlying this law is unity and its three aspects are meeting, motion and work.

Meetings in unison are for the purpose of friendly discussions with the desire of arriving at decisions which, in the eyes of all concerned, are correct and right. Such decisions cannot be arrived at by meetings for the purpose of imposing the views and ideas of any one particular person or particular faction on all assembled. The very idea of imposing one's own views on others is based on the idea of one's own superiority over the others. Casting or imputing the slur of inferiority on the others only shows one's own weakness of character, which is not a quality of the great and noble. No one has the right to impose one's own views on another. It should be remembered that every man has the right and capability of thinking and as such he can form conclusions of his own on any subject. The only right anyone has in influencing another in forming conclusions is to place facts before him for consideration which he may not know or see otherwise. Every person affected by any particular subject has the right to have and to express his own opinion on it. Whether it is right or wrong is to be judged by everybody or in the future.

Further, the attempt at imposing the views of a particular person or faction definitely creates an opposition of one or more and the probability is that the opposition will grow in strength. From the inception of that opposition, it will make every attempt to frustrate not only the original attempt of the imposing faction, but also every other attempt that the imposing faction will make in the future. There can never be the possi-

bility of bringing any two opposing factions of this nature together until both the opposing factions meet with a common danger. Nor will it be possible to alter any one faction from carrying its views to the ultimate end against all opposition, whatever happens. These are meetings in opposition and not in unison.

For a meeting to be in unison, there should be unity of purpose, which should be the arriving at of the correct decision that would be most beneficial to the common welfare of all. The common welfare can be considered only if all look at the problem before them in the same light of a common problem. But if one looks at it from a selfish point of view only, another from a material point of view only and a third from an idealist point of view only, without making any effort to understand the views of others, the result will be that the problem is not considered in the light of a common problem. The problem will be looked at in the same light by all those who think of the problem only as a common problem. The individual should be forgotten in the community, which will result in the unity of thought. Therefore, unity of purpose is available only amongst those who are bound together by the unity of thought.

Most of the countries are governed today either on democratic principles or on communist principles. If all the democratic governments were grouped together, it is to be expected that they are working on the same principles with the same outlook looking forward to the same result. This same expectation should be available from all the communist governments. But it will be found that the principles of no two countries are the same. Democratic United Kingdom is based on imperialism, while democratic United States of America is based on materialism. Even

the principles of Egypt fostered in democracy by the United Kingdom, being based on self, differ from those of the United Kingdom. The communism of Soviet Russia differs from that of Communist China. These differences are due to the differences in outlook. The same outlook can be maintained by the distribution of ideas in such a way that all understand them in the same way. This is possible by the unity of expression. It is for this reason that parties use their party slogans. Thus unity of thought is dependent on unity of expression.

What is this unity of expression? It may be said that the same thing can be expressed in any language. The Ramayana is a great epic relating a certain story. Rama was the son of King Dasaratha. He married beautiful Sita. Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, King of Lanka. Rama collected an army and waged war for about 8 years against Ravana, killed him and destroyed his country as punishment for the offence. The Iliad is also an epic relating a certain story. Menelaus, King of the Greeks, married beautiful Helen. Helen was kidnapped by Paris. Paris was the son of King Priam of Troy. The Greeks waged war for about 8 years against the Trojans, killed Paris and destroyed Troy as punishment for the offence. Purged of detail, the plots in both epics are the same. The beautiful queen of a royal husband was kidnapped by a member of a neighbouring royal family who was punished by waging a long war lasting eight years which ended in the destruction of the offending royal family and their country. The scene in the Ramayana is India and Lanka. The scene in the Iliad is Greece and Troy. In the Ramayana, the reason for abducting Sita is the crime of Lakshman, the brother of Rama, in manhandling Suparnaki who developed a sudden passionate love for Rama. In the Iliad, the reason for the abduction of

Helen is the passionate love of Paris for Helen. In the Ramayana, Rama is born with divine powers. In the Iliad, the divine powers are allotted to Helen. In the Ramayana, Rama is a prince and Ravana is a king. In the Iliad, Menelaus is a king and Paris is a prince. Except for these difference of detail, the story is the same. On account of the passionate love of Suparnaki, the Ramayana came into existence, and on account of the passionate love of Paris and Helen, the Iliad came into existence. It is very probable that both these epics relate the same story, the differences being the differences of expressions of Valmiki and Homer.

Then again, Odysseus, on his return journey, stepped into an island for water. Circe, the Sorceress who ruled this island, converted all his men into swine by forcing them to drink a magic potion. Odysseus made himself immune by means of a magic herb, visited her palace and forced her to restore his men safe. Vijaya and his followers, being driven from home, landed in an island. Kuveni who ruled that island imprisoned all his men when they stepped into a certain tank for water. Vijaya being armed with a magic string, visited her at her place of abode and forced her to restore all his men safe. These two stories appear the same but for the differences in expression of Homer and Mahanama. Further, Vijaya lived with Kuveni for a number of years as husband and wife. Kuveni was finally discarded and was murdered by her own relatives. Dido kept Aeneas with her for a number of years trying to win over his love in vain. When Aeneas left Carthage, Dido built for herself a funeral pyre which she mounted. These two stories are also probably the variations of the same story differing according to the expressions of Mahanama and Vergil. Thus it will be seen that the expressions of the same story may differ as the languages in which they are related differ.

can be changed. The easiest is the encroachment by the foreign or outside element. When the outside element enters, it either merges into the expressions of the country thereby becoming native or remains separate. That element remaining separate should be discarded as otherwise it will be a cancer eating into the unity of thought of that nation. For instance, when England was conquered by the Normans, the Norman barons merged into the native nobility till they became one, but the commoners did not mix so freely with the result that there were two factions. That is the actual origin of the Royalists and the Roundheads as they were known in later years. Further elements have crept in with the result that there are more parties now. Thus it will be seen that unity of thought can be obtained and maintained by the unity of expression.

Therefore, meeting in unison is dependent of unity of purpose, unity of thought and unity of expression. Unity of purpose is the desire of a correct and right decision, unity of thought the same outlook of the common welfare by losing the individual in the community and unity of expression the common language.

Rising in unison means united motion in work. Once the decision has been arrived at all concerned should set about it at the same time. If one sets about it on the same day, another on the following day, a third a week hence and the fourth a month hence, the movement will not be in unison. They should set about it at the same time and continue till it is complete. None should absent himself during the period. In movement also, the communal idea should predominate. The individual should consider himself an integral part of the community which would not be the community in his absence. Unfortunately, this is more commonly seen in matters of general illfare than of general welfare. It

will ordinarily be very difficult to bring a community together for something that is for the general good of the community. For instance, if a hospital or reservoir to collect drinking water were to be built, it would be difficult to collect the community. But if it were a street fight or a carnival, all the community would be found collected. This is due to the natural indolence of man. It is for this reason that in all strikes all are united in stopping work at the same time, but that same unity and readiness in taking work over again is not found. It is for this reason that strikes can be easier organized and started than ended. But no progress can be made until people decide to move together. It is on account of the natural indolence of man that discipline has to be so much insisted on in armies, navies and air-forces as otherwise the purpose of maintaining these institutions would be lost. Thus rising in unison or united motion is necessary for the progress of a community,

Working in unison means working together for the common good. It is possible only if each considers that the work is his own work. The individual should consider himself as part of the entirety. Whatever the work is that has to be done, be it small or large, each individual should consider it as his own. Each soldier has to consider himself as part and parcel of the army. The army does not exist without him. Therefore he must fight with the army. His fighting is the army's fighting. Likewise, the community cannot work without him. He must work with the community because he is the community. If four people decide to build a house in common, each building one wall, and three of them build three walls and the other slacks in work and does not build his wall, the house cannot be completed. Similarly, the slackness of each individual in a community bars the progress of the community.

Thus unity of purpose, unity of thought and unity of expression lead to meetings in unison. Meeting in unison, rising in unison and working in unison lead to communal progress. These are the principles of communism of the highest order.

THE THIRD LAW.

The third law is "not introducing discarded laws and principles not cancelling accepted laws and principles and adherence to existing laws and principles. A superficial glance tends to the belief that this law teaches experience. The theme is laws and principles and its aspects are addition, cancellation and adherence.

It should be noted that careful distinction is made in defining these laws and principles that are not to be introduced. It prohibits the introduction only of those laws and principles that have been discarded, but does not prohibit the introduction of any law or principle that has not been discarded. The rejection of a law or principle is made either because its evils are easily discernible or because its evils were experienced. An instance of the latter was the introduction of totalitarianism to Great Britain. The beheading of Charles the first and the iron rule of Oliver Cromwell under the name of the Republican Government so shocked the British that Great Britain framed laws leaving no possibility for a recurrence of that experience.

The Tathagata has advised us against the making of and the trafficking in intoxicants because he saw the evils caused thereby. The maker of intoxicants himself delights and induces the others to delight, in the pleasures of intoxication. He little realizes that they are providing the way for physical and mental weakness and that the progenies of persons addicted to intoxicants are also mentally and physically deficient. Thus the making of

and the trafficking in intoxicants degenerate the people. Therefore, the making of and the trafficking in intoxicants ought to be considered one of the discarded principles in Buddhist countries.

The Tathagata has also advised us against the making of and the trafficking in poisons because of the evils caused thereby. It is only insatiable hate that can induce a person to make poisons and traffic in them. Further, the possession of poison makes a person feel himself to be armed with a crafty weapon which is the weapon of the depraved. The use of poison gas in World War one made the world look aghast at the brutality and the depravity of the Germans. There are also many instances of poisons acting disastrously on the very wielders of this weapon. Therefore, it is a weapon that gives a false sense of security which leads to illfare and not to welfare, to deterioration and not to progress.

The Tathagata has also advised us against the making of and trafficking in destructive weapons. The possession of destructive weapons gives the possessor a false sense of physical strength and thereby he falls into danger. This same principle is applicable to the nation too. The trafficking in such weapons is only distributing this same false sense of physical strength to others too, thereby causing warfare between those parties. These are the distributors of hate.

The Tathagata has also advised us against the rearing of and the trafficking in animals for slaughter. A person who can rear an animal for the sole purpose of slaughtering shows mental abasement. Every sight of such animal and every feeding of such animal is only a rearing of the cruelty in him. Trafficking in such animals shows a more debased mentality than the rearing.

The Tathagata has also advised us against the trafficking in humans. A person who can traffic in humans can have no self-respect in him at all. It is an accepted fact by all civilized countries that slavery is the occupation of the morally debased. The Tathagata was the first preacher against slavery and not Lord Wilberforce

It will be seen that the abstinence from these five vices is advocated in order to keep the people away from depravity as each and all of them are causes of depravity. Any nation consisting of depraved people cannot progress, but must degenerate. The Tathagata saw the evils of these five vices and advised us against them. Therefore, the five principles, namely, (1) the making of and the trafficking in intoxicants, (2) the making of and trafficking in poisons, (3) the making of and the trafficking in destructive weapons, (4) the rearing of and the trafficking in animals for slaughter and (5) the trafficking in humans, are those whose evils are easily discernible to Buddhists and as such, Buddhist countries should not introduce them as they are discarded principles.

Every nation that has a history behind it has some principles and laws which have been accepted as good and sound on experience. It would be unwise to cancel them as they have the test. The Tathagata has advised sufficiently for us to accept the principles or laws of avoidance of killing, avoidance of stealing, avoidance of lying and the avoidance of the wrongful feeding of the senses. The advantages of these principles or laws are well known and require no repetition. Some argues that these are negative principles on the assumption that killing, stealing, lying and wrongful feeding of the senses are active principles. But it is wrong. Winding a ball of thread is as much active as the unwinding of it. Likewise, the practice

of killing, as well as the avoidance of killing is active. In the practice of killing, the winding of the thread or the grasping is done. In the avoidance of killing, the unwinding of the thread or the getting rid of what is grasped is done. Both are active. Some may state that these principles are for individuals only and not for nations or as national principles. But this is wrong because individual's principles become national principles when those individuals form the nation. What is true of the microcosm is true of the macrocosm. Therefore, these should be the accepted principles of all Buddhist countries.

The adherence of the existing laws is absolutely necessary for the progress of any nation. The violation of those laws will only cause unnecessary exertion for that nation. The Tathagata has advised the observance of the law of providing for the sick, the old and the vagrant, the law of educating the younger generation and the law of entrusting suitable work to the employees and paying them due remuneration. These laws are put into practice in hospitals, old-age pensions, orphanages and vagrant's homes, free education and wages boards. It should be remembered that the observance of these laws was preached at a time when these present-day institutions were not even dreamt of. But they exist today and they are to be adhered to today and are worth adhering to as they tend to the progress and therefore to the avoidance of deterioration.

It will be thus seen that this law teaches the lessons of experience and not conservatism as one is inclined to think at the beginning.

THE FOURTH LAW.

The fourth law is "the support of the aged, respect to the age, honouring the aged, veneration of

the aged and the liking to know from the aged. This teaches how to obtain and profit by inheritance.

The younger generation is bound at least by bonds of gratitude, if for no other reason, to maintain and support the older generation, for its very existence in that state is due to the energy and goodwill of the older generation. The older generation in its young days has sweated, used its energy and taxed its brain to feed, clothe and educate the younger generation from infancy to youth. The younger generation's duty is to follow the same example with regard to the generation that is coming and to be grateful to the older generation. "Do unto others as you would they would do unto you" is a maxim to be followed in worldly matters. Treat the old in the same way you desire to be treated in your old age.

The respect, the honouring and the veneration, it may be said, mean the same thing unless the distinctive differences are noted. The respect is the regard paid in the presence of the aged. Rising from one's seat and offering it to the aged, helping him in his movements, showing regard to his well-being and paying a little attention of like nature with feelings of love is respect. Honour is the regard paid in absence. Trying to emulate the aged with remembrance of their activities, referring to the deeds and actions of the aged with respect are forms of honouring the aged. Respect and honour are both physical in nature, but veneration is mostly mental activity or worship activated by feelings of respect and honour. Veneration leads one to accept whatever is said by the venerated without question or doubt.

The due treatment, respect, honour and veneration to the aged shows the nobility of character. Further, the aged leaves an inheritance to the young which the young enjoy even when the aged are living. It is an

accepted fact that what is inherited with a blessing prospers more than the inheritance without. The aged who are supported, respected and honoured will always bless those supporting, respecting and honouring them. That inheritances accompanied with curses always do immense harm is well known.

Support creates love, love creates respect, respect creates honour. Respect and honour accompanied by love creates veneration. On account of the acceptance of what the venerated states without question, one is tempted to accept the venerated as a living example and to follow his footsteps in one's own activities. Following the footsteps of the venerated aged cannot lead one to harm for the simple reason that such aged reached that age and won that veneration without coming into harm.

The aged who are supported, respected, honoured and venerated will naturally delight in the welfare of the younger and be at all times ready and willing to advise and explain their experiences when occasion arises. This occasion should be provided for by inquiry and question. Therefore, the younger should be ready and willing to question and to know from the aged their knowledge of things and their experiences. This is an inheritance that is more valuable than a very wealthy fortune.

Thus it will be seen that this law teaches how to obtain one's inheritance from the aged and the way of profiting by that inheritance. Such profit is an obstacle to deterioration and leads to progress.

THE FIFTH LAW.

The fifth law of the avoidance of deterioration is "not living with maidens forced into communion by threats and not living with maidens in forcible communion". This is based on the respect to maidenhood and motherhood.

A man threatens a maiden to live with him in communion for the sole purpose of satisfying his uncontrollable passion. When threats also fail, there generally follows serious harm and animosity of factions. When threats succeed, the usual result is a progeny of vicious temperament, for the male is excited by passion and the female by fear. Mixture of passionate blood and frightened blood can result only in vicious blood. Therefore, communion with maidens forced by threates will produce a generation of vicious people.

Any human forced into an undesirable position will foster feelings of hate for retaliation if opportunity arrives. This human quality is not absent from either. Therefore, if a man were to force a maiden to live in communion with him, he would be activated by passion while the maiden would be governed by hate. The resultant progenies of such alliances will be more dangerous than in the previous instances, because it is a mixture of passion and hate. Therefore, forced communion will produce a brutal generation.

There are also the personal degeneration and disadvantages due to these communion. A person who uses force or threat to satisfy his passions at the sacrifice of another's most valuable character or principle reduces himself to one of mean character of no principles. Further, every such action creates a faction against him to retaliate with the result that he has to arm himself for safety. Thus two opposing factions, each hating the other, come into existence on account of the passions of one person. A nation so divided by factions cannot have any alternative but deterioration.

On the other hand, the normal satisfaction of the sexual passion leaves no room for deterioration, because

the progenies will be of normal blood and the mother who actually imparts the rudimentary lessons in recognising good and evil will not be activated by feelings of fear, shame and hatred but by feelings of domestic love towards the progeny. Further, he who seeks only the satisfaction of his normal passion from woman will regard her with love, honour and respect and there is no room for the woman either to step out of the normal procedure. The progenies of such unions also will be normal and therefore can rise to great heights. Besides, the mother and father will both strive to impart the highest moral code to such progenies, thereby paving the way for future progress.

The early impressions created in the young normal bloods tend to introduce feelings of love which change into those of respect, then to those of honour and finally to those of veneration of the parents. Generally the mother gets more love and veneration from the offspring because the first impressions of love are created for the mother due to the fact that she exercises a greater influence in creating those early impressions. Thus the veneration for the mother. It will be further seen that he who venerates his mother will not be excited inordinately in sexual passions on account of the clash between the habitual respect and veneration to the mother and the temporary excitement of the inherent sexual passion. Thus he will respect young womanhood by reducing his feelings to normality.

This law is based on the respect to maidenhood, but its results are far-seeing. The immediate result and the future result of the observance of this law are self-control and morality, respect to maidenhood, a morally strong female population and a future population of noble-charactred people.

THE SIXTH LAW.

The sixth law is "the due treating, the respecting, the honouring and the venerating of the shrines internal and external and offering of lawful meet offerings as decreed of yore and offered of yore". This law is based on tradition, convention and custom with the veneration of the guru in the background.

This law might raise many a doubt as to the extent the Tathagata was prepared to support the existing faiths and religions, because in this HE exhorts us to venerate and to make offerings to the ancient shrines which were necessarily not of Buddhist origin or character. But the Tathagata is clear in the statement of this law in separating the idea of veneration of every existing shrine or place of worship from the offerings at such shrine which should be lawful and meet. Esteem and veneration for the existing shrines are based on the fact that everyone is entitled to his own belief, faith and religion, which the other should respect, not because the other is a believer of those same beliefs, faiths and religions, but because of his nobility of character. In this section of the law, the Tathagata teaches more than tolerance.

The reason for the following of the customs in making lawful and meet offerings to these or at these shrines is that it is required for worldly welfare. The principle underlying this requirement is the pleasing of the devas that may be there. As much as there are people who work for another only according to the treatment they get from the other, so also are there devas who work for the benefit of the human only according to the offerings the human makes on their behalf. That this is so is seen from the following words of the Tāthagata:—

"Yasmim padese kappeti—vasam pandita jatiko
 Silavantettha Bhojetva—Sannate brahmacariyo
 Ya tattha devata asum—tasam dakkhinamadise
 Ta pujita pujayanti—manita manayanti nam
 Tato nam anukampanti—mata puttamva orasam
 Devatanu kampito poso—sada bhadrani passati"

"Wherever in a place the sensible man abides and there entertains self-controlled virtuous brahmacaris and; any devas being in that place, to them gives merits thereof and offers gifts of respect, those devas having been entertained entertain him in return and having been honoured honour him in return. Towards such they extend their sympathies as a mother to her only son. The person favoured by the devas always experience good fortune."

There is difference of opinion over the meaning of the word "dakkhinam" as to whether it means giving gifts or giving gifts only of merit, as offerings to devas is thought to be contrary to the letter and spirit of Buddha Dhamma. What Buddha Dhamma objects to is the giving of offerings to gods in the expectation of salvation thereby, as such is not possible. Buddha Dhamma does not object to the giving of offerings to the teachers, to the elders, to the superiors, to the dependants, to the beggars and even to animals. Then why not the devas alone? Such "dakkhina" to the teachers, to the elders, to the superiors and to the devas are gifts of "dekum" of the Sinhalese who offer a minimum of a bundle of betel leaves as such. The last traces of the observation of giving gifts of respect to the devas was seen till recent times in the division of the paddy harvest. The first portion set apart and given is the "deiyanne kotasa" (the share of devas). When the paddy crop is collected and heaped near the threshing-floor, a heap of ears of corn, balled the "deiyanne kotasa", is made and that

threshed. The paddy [separated from the chaff] is removed, converted to rice, cooked and brought back to the threshing floor along with a vegetable preparation known as "kiri" (milk). Here the owners, the workmen, the neighbours and even the passers-by are invited for the feast which is known as the "deiyanne dane". It is only after the completion of this "deiyanne dane" that the threshing of the balance crop takes place. It was then seldom that failures of paddy-crops due to pests, absence of rain and various other causes prevalent now were heard of. Whether it was the observance of this "dekum" or not can be judged from the results obtained with and without such observations. Therefore the pleasing of the devas is required for the welfare and progress.

It is said that Buddhists are tolerant of other religions. Toleration is only passive indifference. Buddhists are expected to be more than indifferent to or tolerant of other religions. They are expected to respect, honour and revere other religions as well. But it does not mean that the Buddhist is expected to accept the teachings of other religions as correct and to follow them. What is expected of the Buddhists is that they should in no way disturb or put obstacles in the way of those religionists in their worship but help them in their worship in the correct way as far as is possible. For it is preferable to see a person with even one principle, be it theogonic, theistic, non-theistic, monotheistic, pantheistic or atheistic, to a person with no principles at all as the person with even one principle will try to live up to it. Thereby such person will see and know the fright of samsara that will make it possible for him to understand the Buddha Dhamma. Therefore, all places of worship internal and external should be revered.

Besides, this respect and veneration, which is more than tolerance, for internal and external shrines lead to

harmony and concord internally and externally. Harmony and concord will lead to the absence of strife and war with outside nations, leaving the nation free to manage their internal affairs. Thus respect and veneration for the shrines within generate internal harmony and concord leading to progress and for the shrines without generate harmony and concord with the outsiders leading to the absence of the fear of war.

The offerings to a shrine within or without will be by a section of the people at a minimum. Helping this section in the performance of its offerings finds reciprocal goodwill with the result that that offering becomes national in character. In course of time it becomes a national custom which will be handed down as a national tradition. Thus national unity is obtained and maintained by these national traditions. Further, every place of worship, whether Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic or Christian, comes under the hold of a particular deva who is pleased with offerings at that place. The satisfaction of his desire of seeing that offering made is always reciprocated by that deva by looking after those making the offering as a mother looks after her children. Unfortunately, this deva displeased would not have the same interest on those causing the displeasure as a mother displeased would have on her offending children. The mother would forgive and forget, but the deva would not. The neglect of the regular offering will first cause the deva to be indifferent to the nation, which indifference will later turn to hate, because the deva is as much a slave to conceptions and misconceptions as man is.

Therefore, the traditions, covenants and customs coming down as shrines (chetiyas) should be observed as national events for the progress and well-being of a

nation. This the Tathagata preached by this Apari-hāniya Dhamma for worldly progress

THE SEVENTH LAW.

The seventh law of this Aparihaniya Dhamma is "the rightful providing of protection, shelter and support for the holy (ariyas), the incoming of the holymen (ariyas) who have not come and the staying of the holymen who have come into the realm". This law is based on the veneration due to the spiritual teacher.

The Holy (Ariyas) have already broken the bonds of sansara or are engaged in that task. As such they possess practically nothing, their worldly desires are nothing and their need is only quiet. Therefore protection, shelter and support of such do not demand much expense and labour. But at the same time it is not so either, because they (the Holy) do not 'complain of any shortcomings in the treatment towards them, but silently disappear to quieter parts. A country may put up palatial buildings, provide all amenities of civilization for the inmates, appoint servants to attend and provide palatable and rich dishes of food and other requirements only to find that the Holymen have disappeared.

Then the question arises as to what this protection, shelter and support is that is required. The protection, shelter and support required is to provide the necessary quiet that is required by all the Holies (Ariyas). It was cast on the Tathagata that HE hid Himself from the hum and bustle of the world through fear of meeting in argument. The Tathagata appeared before such accuser and proved to him on his own argument that the Tathagata was to be praised for the preference of that quiet. Therefore, protection, shelter and support should be provided in such a way as to be welcome to the Holies (Ariyas).

This provision is a national duty, because the presence of a single holy man (Ariya) is a valuable asset to a nation. Mythology shows that in severe droughts and pestilences, Holy Saints have been invited and got down as the last resource with success to rid the drought or pestilence. The stepping of the Holiest of the Holies, the Tathagata into the outskirts of Visala rid it of the pestilences of plague, want and devils' curse. Instances of lesser saintliness are those of King Sri Sangabo whose presence alone overcame drought and the evils of Raktakshi. Many a noble individual action has saved many a country from severe loss. Therefore, it will be admitted that the presence of Holy men is a national asset. Further, the presence of Holy men (Ariyas) in a country will always make the people in that country follow the steps of the Holy men. Thus the people will become noble in outlook.

The Holy Men (Ariyas) will come only to places where the due protection, shelter and support are available. Places of hum and bustle they shun. It will be noticed that people of noble character are by nature quiet, and desire to be in places where quiet is available. Therefore it is evident that the Holy Men (Ariyas) will like to come to realms which contain more noble-charactered people than others. Hence it becomes necessary for a nation to be noble-charactered to summon the Holy. In such countries the Holy Men (Ariyas) once come would like to remain and spend their time in quiet comfort and be teachers to guide the people in the correct path for their welfare.

Thus the presence of the Holy Men, the incoming of the Holy Men and the remaining of the Holy Men show the noble-character of the people. A noble characterized race cannot deteriorate as long as that noble-character is maintained. Hence this law teaches that

the noble-character of a nation is a bar to its deterioration and leads to progress.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE APARIHANIYA DHAMMA

The seven laws of avoidance of deterioration preached by the Tathagata to Vajjis or Lichchavis of Visala at the Sarandada Chetiya are as follows:—

1. As long as the Vajjis shall constantly meet and shall meet in large numbers, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

2. As long as the Vajjis shall meet in unison, rise in unison and work in unison, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

3. As long as the Vajjis shall not introduce discarded laws and principles, shall not cancel accepted laws and principles and shall adhere to existing laws principles, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

4. As long as the Vajjis shall support the aged, respect the aged, honour the aged, venerate the aged and shall have the liking to know from the aged, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

5. As long as the Vajjis shall not live with maidens forced into communion by threats and shall not live with maidens in forcible communion, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

6. As long as the Vajjis shall pay due treatment, respect, honour and veneration to the shrines internal and external and shall offer the lawful and meet offerings to those shrines as decreed of yore and offered of yore,

so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

7. As long as the Vajjis shall rightfully provide the protection, shelter and support of the Holy Men (Ariyas). as long as the Holy Men (Ariyas) not come shall come into the realm and as long as the Holy Men (Ariyas) already come remain in the realm with comfort and ease, so long shall their progress be expected and their deterioration shall not happen.

The Vajjis or the Lichchavis were a strong and powerful kingdom whose strength lay in their unity. They frequently met and every meeting was fully attended by all. If any suffered and disability, all the others were there to participate in that disability. The whole tribe would attend even the ceremonies of the individuals and would unite in receiving with honour any distinguished visitors to the realm. They would sit at the feet of their elders and the female kind were held in high regard. But this unity was destroyed by bribery and corruption due to the machinations of the King of Magadha who overcame the Lichchavis. Thus the Vajjis or the Lichchavis prospered only as long as they observed these seven laws.

It will be found that the period of prosperity of any Buddhist country lasted only during the time that these laws were observed and the rate of prosperity depended on the number of laws that were observed. Even in Non-Buddhist countries, progress has been on the observance of one or more of these laws. According to the historical record of Ceylon, in the time of Vijaya the first two laws appear to have been observed. In the time of Pandukabhaya, the sixth law also appears to have been observed in addition. On account of the observance of these few laws, there was internal progress. Since the introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon by Mahinda in

the time of King Devanapètissa, it has been different. It is ironical that the differences in a united nation like the Sinhalese of old should have been caused by the misguided Singha, the messengers of peace, in introducing the Vaitulya doctrine into the Theravada Teachings. This is the first internal difference in the history of the Island. In fact, this Island's prosperity has depended on its acceptance and support of the Theravada Doctrine. During the periods that the Theravada Doctrine had been neglected the country had always suffered reverses. But the Island has tried to observe these seven laws up to the present time as can be gathered from the remnants of the ancient form of government.

The ancient form of government of this Island appears to have been one based on the first and second laws mostly, the others being the characteristics which have become inherent in the race as is shown by the natural hospitality to the visitors, preservation of many ancient customs and traditions and others of like nature. The system of government was very simple in structure, but was one free from internal strife. Every village "gama" was a unit under a chief of their own selection known as the "Gamérala" meaning the chief of the village. Usage made it "Gamarala". All in the village met every evening under the campfire and discussed all incidents of the day and the matters of tomorrow so that there was united action for the progress of all concerned. If one person required ten men to clear his chena and another fifteen to plough his paddy field, the work was distributed amongst them in such a way that both could be done. If at the same time there was a roof to be repaired and thatched and in another house a dead body to be buried there was no shortage of labour because the work would be distributed amongst them. All the requirements from the biggest to the lowest of

all the people, both high and low, were attended to. One had only to send word to the "nekatiya" when his services were required. In return, the "nekatiya" had only to inform the "Gamarala" that he had to bury his dead and he would get all the requirements from the coffin to the little salt required for food. But there were no wages paid. All labour was available. They distributed the work amongst themselves. A number of "gamaralas" also formed a unit known as a "Korale" under a chief selected by the Gamaralas known as the "Korale-rala" meaning chief of the Korale. At their meetings they discussed the building of small tanks, repairing of temples and the observances of the annual peraheras and offerings to the ancient shrines. A number of Korales formed another unit known as the "Rata" under a chief known as "Raterala" selected by the Koraleralas. A number of Rateralas formed a bigger unit called the "Danawwa" under a sub-king. This "Danawwa" later changed due to the absence of royalty to a "Disawani" under a Dissawa. These sub-kings (Uva-raja) or the dissawas forming the unit kingdom selected the King who appointed the judiciary and the executive known as the "Adikaramas"; so that the King with the executive dispensed justice and the villagers were the actual administrators. This is the most democratical form of government and is also the most communal form of government that can be imagined. May the people of Sri Lanka follow these Seven Laws of Aparihaniya.

