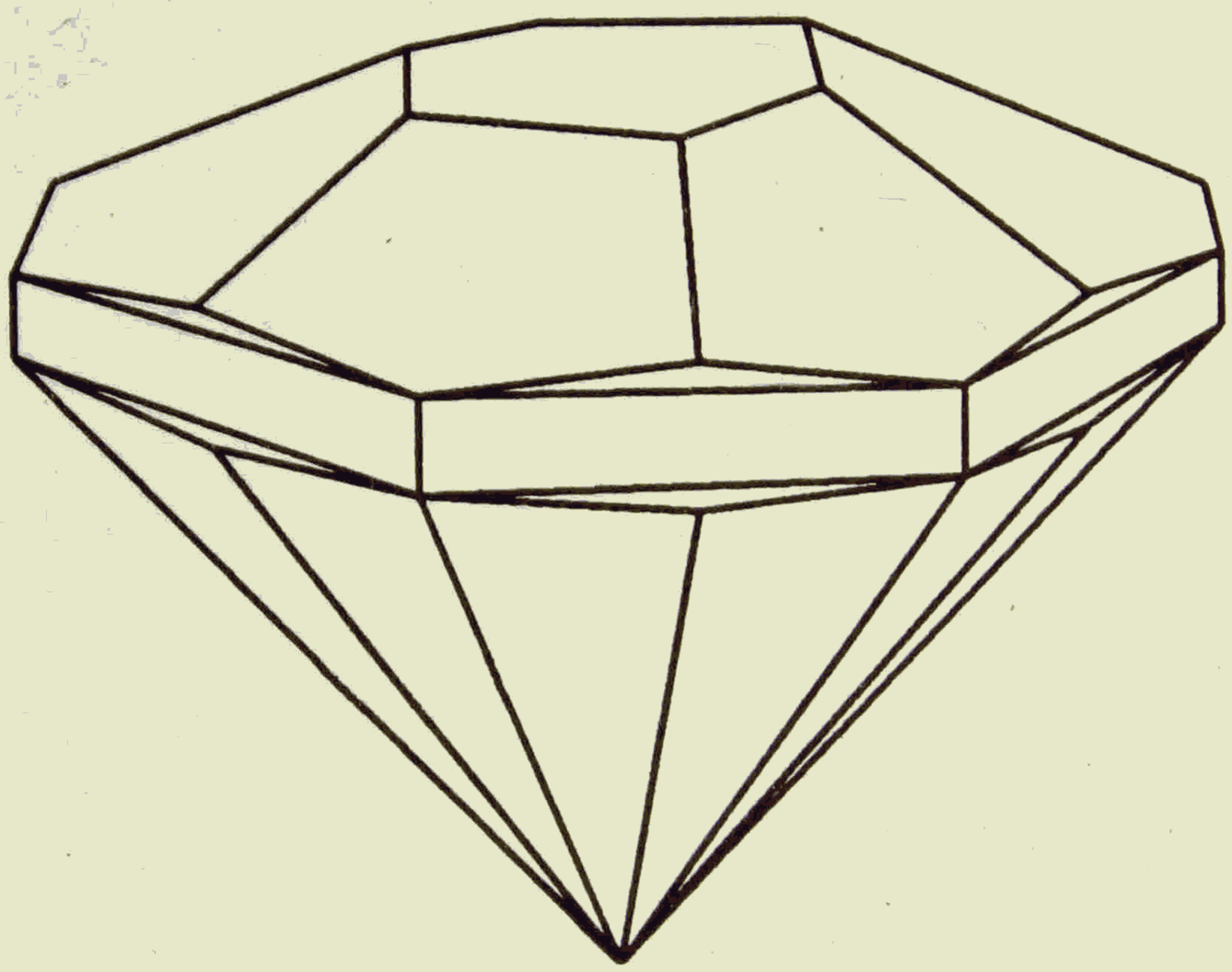
FACETS OF BUDDHISM



BY

VENERABLE HAMMALAWA SADDHĀTISSA

M.A. Ph.D. D.Litt

World Buddhist Foundation

BUDDHIST PUBLICATIONS

FACETS OF BUDDHISM

BY

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Facets of Buddhism

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EDITOR'S FOREWARD

The author, Venerable Hammalawa Saddhatissa is very well-known among Buddhists for his other popular books 'The Life of the Buddha', 'The Buddha's Way', 'Buddhist Ethics' and the *Sutta Nipata* translation. I knew him for many years as the Abbot of the London Buddhist Vihara in Cheswick. In all the years I have known him I have never heard him say a harsh or unkind word to anyone. His tolerance and compassion, and his unique understanding of English culture and manners have made him many friends and devotees. Because of this sympathy with European ways of thinking his books are particularly helpful to those not brought up amidst Buddhist culture and traditions. The true Dhamma is pure and colourless but over the centuries Buddhism has taken on board the cultural peculiarities of many religions. This is, perhaps, the reason why it has survived so long.

This book is essentially a collection of articles which have already been published in a number of different journals. The Author's intention in asking me to prepare this book was to preserve in compact and easily accessible form his work which is the fruit of much painstaking labour so that it could be of benefit to a wider readership. As far as reasonable in a book of this nature, I have removed repetitions. So if the author's writing seem disjointed it is entirely my fault.

In preparing the manuscript I have been able to remove some errors which escaped the notice of journal editors since I have had no deadline to keep to. Here and there I have tried to improve the language and have added short explanations where I felt they were needed, in all cases relying on the source text which the author himself used and confirming such alterations and additions with the author.

I was able to complete this work over a period of eighteen months during the author's last years when he devoted most of his time to literary work. The value of such work is often overlooked because of the result may not seen for many years. After reading Dhamma books

some people change their lives at once but for most the effect is more subtle. In times of difficulty they refer again to the Dhamma for solace and see new and deeper facets of the Dhamma which they had overlooked before. The fact that a book can be referred to at leisure and read whenever one wishes makes it very valuable as a source of teaching. In our busy Western society few people listen to sermons regularly and when they do they are more often than not in a frame of mind not very conducive to understanding the Dhamma. In the time of the Buddha there were many people who, on hearing the Dhamma for the first time, attained to the realisation of *Nibbana* and immediately asked for ordination in the Order of monks or nuns. Although I have heard hundreds of sermons by well-known monks I have never seen or heard of anyone who was ready to give up their worldly enjoyments on the spot. The Dhamma is the same as before but the spiritual maturity of the people has deteriorated. The present time is an age where proper understanding of the Dhamma can only come through practising meditation. Personality-belief or ego is so strong in most people that no amount of preaching, even by an enlightened monk let alone an ordinary one, will be sufficient to destroy it. Concentration first needs to be developed to a level significantly deeper than that of ordinary daily life. To achieve this it is essential to renounce household life for a period of some weeks or months and to practise meditation intensively. Only a mind that is free from mental hindrances and well concentrated on the mental and physical phenomena within can see things without delusion. Without this understanding of Dhamma by direct experience no one can attain to *Nibbāna*.

The order of chapters is a natural one; starting with subjects of an introductory nature, followed by those dealing in more detail with doctrine and lastly by those offer more scholastic approach.

In the foot notes, the references are to the Pali texts of the Pali Text Society, the page numbers of which are given in square brackets at the top of the page in the translations and in the body of the text in the case of *Vinaya* and *Jātaka* books.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To vast numbers of people all over the world the Buddha is honoured as the embodiment of great wisdom and great compassion. He is followed as a great teacher who showed the path to liberation. The Buddha's life clearly shows how, after experiencing the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, he adopted the middle path and thereafter taught others to tread it.

A prince from North India, he was brought up in the lap of luxury and became skilled in the arts and sciences of the day; in his 29th year, following the birth of a son to his wife (also his cousin) Yasodharā, he renounced the world and practised severe austerities for six years; realising the truth by his own efforts, he thereafter preached the Dhamma for forty-five years and passed away at the age of 80.

The Community of Monks *(Saṅgha)* which the Buddha established continues to this day to embody the ideal life praised by the founder and to take prime responsibility in transmitting the doctrine *(Dhamma)* so clearly enunciated and set forth in the Pali Canon. One cannot help but be impressed by this teaching of love and wisdom which is based on reason and understanding. Constant emphasis is laid on practise of this teaching at all times, dismissing blind faith and ritual.

One of the most striking statements to be found in the teaching is that ascribing good and evil or wholesome/skilful *(kusala)* and unwholesome/unskilful *(akusala)* states of mind to preceding thoughts of like nature. Such states cannot conceivably result from the prior influence of an external agency; one becomes pure or otherwise through one's own efforts. The Buddha said:

> "By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself, indeed, is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. no one can purify another."[1]

In order to attain to genuine happiness, either mundane or supramundane, one has to lead a moral life based on right under-

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[1] Dhp. v 165.

standing acquired through mental culture. This is the very core of Buddhism. The Buddha's Way is an ethico-philosophy. If its validity is recognised and its recommendations practised with diligence, many problems which cause sorrow, worry, frustration and disappointment will be dissolved.

The Buddha inculcated three virtues in his disciples; generosity, morality and mental culture. He discouraged five vices; cruelty, theft, promiscuity, deceit and intoxication. These social evils are the cause of passion, hatred and delusion. One who can free himself from them is a peaceful, wise person.

Furthermore, such a person should develop such benign qualities as liberality, righteousness, energy, patience, honesty, resolution, friendliness and equanimity. The body, speech and thoughts must be disciplined by abstention from cruel actions, wrong speech and wrong views. One should not do unto others anything which one would not like done to oneself. One should cultivate love towards all beings. One should respect the property and spouses of others. One should speak only what is true and beneficial to others. One should be abstemious and heedful of one's spiritual welfare.

Being constantly mindful of the Buddha's teaching, one will eventually realise that man is master of himself. Through one's own experience one will infringe the moral precepts as a result of a mind infected by greed, hatred or delusion or by lesser variations of these taints; therefore, it is all the more essential that one maintains a state of mindfulness. A personalised way of doing this is to recollect that renowned saying of the Buddha:

> "He who sees me sees the Dhamma;
> he who sees the Dhamma, sees me."[1]

By a frequent study of the Dhamma and by a process of self-analysis, one will have a greater awareness of the conditions of the world, both within oneself and around one. Seeing the ever-prevalent state of unsatisfactoriness *(Dukkha),* as so boldly stated in the First Noble Truth, a more compassionate frame of mind should result than hitherto when, perhaps, one simply assumed that the misfortunes of others was their 'bad luck' whilst remaining thankful that oneself had escaped their fate. Seeing, also, that everything is in a state of

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[1] S. iii. 120.

constant change *(anicca),* then letting go, renouncing, becoming non-attached to material things and mental concepts becomes much easier.

The importance, one might say the uniqueness, of Buddhism rests on a thorough understanding of the foregoing. It is absurd to say, "I am a born Buddhist" since a commitment resulting from such understanding is entirely a personal choice; not a matter of parental derivation. And the way to right understanding follows from careful consideration, reflection, analysis and investigation, which leads to intensive practise, study and realisation. The Buddha rightly said:

> "Even if he recites a large number of holy scriptures but, being slothful, he does not act accordingly, he is like a cowherd counting the cows of others, he has no share in the righteous life."[1]

> "Even if he recites only a small number of scriptures, if he is one who acts rightly in accordance with the law, he; having forsaken passion, hatred and ignorance, being possessed of true knowledge and serenity of mind, being free from worldly desires both in this world and in the next; has a share in the righteous life."[2]

Sir Edwin Arnold encapsulates this practical view of religion in his 'Light of Asia' as follows:

> "Seek nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
> Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruit and cakes.
> Within yourself deliverance must be sought:
> each man his prison makes."

The author wishes that this brief introduction may pave the way for you to read this and more books on the teaching of the Buddha which will lead to everlasting happiness.

With mettā

† Hammalawa Saddhatissa

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[1] Dhp. v 19.

[2] Dhp. v 20.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Abhv.	Abhidhammāvatāra
A.K.	Abhidhamma Kosa
AA.	Aṅguttara Commentary
Ap.	Apadana
Bdvm.	Buddhavaṃsa
BdvmA.	Buddhavaṃsa Commentary
D.	Dīgha Nikāya
DhA.	Dhammapada Commentary
Dhp.	Dhammapada
Dial.	Long Discourses
DPPN.	Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names
Dpvm.	Dīpavaṃsa
Expos.	Expositor
Iti.	Itivuttaka
JPTS.	Journal of the Pali Text Society
Jā.	Jātaka
JāA.	Jātaka Commentary
Khp.	Khuddakapātha
Kvu.	Kathāvatthu
M.	Majjhima Nikāya
Mhvs.	Mahāvamsa
Mhvu.	Mahāvastu
Miln.	Milinda Pañha
Nd1.	Mahā Niddesa
Nd2.	Cūla Niddesa
Pts.	Patisambidhā
Pug.	Puggala Paññatti
Pv.	Petavatthu
Ṛg.	Ṛgveda
S.	Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sn.	Sutta Nipāta
SnA.	Sutta Nipāta Commentary
Sta.	Sutta
Thag.	Theragāthā
ThagA.	Theragāthā Commentary
Ud.	Udāna
Vbh.	Vibhaṅga
Vin.	Vinaya
Vism.	Visuddhimagga
Vkn.	Vimalakīrtinidde̊sa

CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

A first and elementary point to which attention must be called, if confusion is to be avoided in discussing Buddhism, is that Buddha was not the personal name of the founder of Buddhism. Buddha, meaning 'The Enlightened One' was the descriptive name given by others to Prince Siddhārtha Gautama, when he attained the state of enlightenment which lies at the heart and is the whole aim of his teaching. To attain to this sublime state he had to accomplish the 'Ten Perfections' in a series of previous lives. They are Charity *(dāna)*, Morality *(sīla)*, Wisdom *(paññā)*, Renunciation *(nekkhamma)*, Perseverance *(viriya)*, Patience *(khanti)*, Truthfulness *(sacca)*, Determination *(adhiṭṭhāna)*, Loving-kindness *(mettā)* and Equanimity *(upekkhā)*.

The teaching of the Lord Buddha has come to be known as 'Buddhism'. It began in the northern provinces of India and at one time prevailed throughout Asia. During 25 centuries it has mingled with the traditional beliefs and religions of many lands, enhancing them with the purity of its philosophy; thus in modern times there are well over 500 million Buddhists in the world to be found in India, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Indo-China, Malaysia, Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka, with evidence of ever-growing interest outside Asia such as in America, Europe and Africa. He who was later to be known as the Buddha, The Enlightened One, did not claim to be, at any time, other than a human being, and indeed, the essence of his teaching was that of the nature of human problems and human behaviour.

The Buddha was born in May, 563 B.C. on the day of the full-moon in a place called Lumbini Garden at Kapilavatthu, then the capital of the Sakyan clan, which stood in present day Nepal, close to the northern border of India. His father, Suddhodana, was absolute ruler of the Sakyan country at the foot of the Himalayas, which was composed of many clans. His mother was Queen Mahāmāyā The family name was Gotama (in Sanskrit Gautama) and his personal name was Siddhatta (Sanskrit, Siddhārtha). He is described as being of noble bearing and as combining the skill of an athlete with the brains of a scholar. As a prince he was brought up in the lap of royal

luxury which in India at that time meant a culture and opulence beyond the imagination of the modern mind. In his sixteenth year he married his cousin, a princess of great beauty named Yasodharā. During the next thirteen years he continued to live this life of wealth and grandeur in surroundings and conditions which may well appear to be ideal — yet there was present in him a great thoughtfulness, and discontent with his manner of life which he compared with the sufferings of the weak and the poor for whom he had always a great kindliness and pity.

On his way to the pleasure gardens, which he loved and visited regularly he occasionally saw sights that told of the deepest of human miseries, like old age, disease and death. First curiosity, then stirrings of pity were aroused in him and then he came to see that his own way of life was an empty one, that there must be more to human existence than anything he had yet experienced. He sought the advice of those who enjoyed a great reputation for wisdom, only to find that they had no adequate answers to his questions.

Thus finally, in his twenty-ninth year, almost immediately following the birth of Rāhula, his son, this great urge to renounce the world and its pleasures became too strong to deny and so, forsaking all claims to his palace, wealth, title, inheritance and everything that stood between him and utter poverty, he took leave of his family and went out in search of the true solution of all miseries of life which he was determined to find. In his farewell visit to his sleeping wife he pledged to return to her when he had found it. He donned the yellow robe of a wandering ascetic and, alone and penniless, set out to find the cause and cure of human discontent and fear. His quest was, therefore, to discover the source of human misery — the source of anxiety, tension, unhappiness. Already he had, by his birth, investigated the one extreme of complete luxury in the manner of his environment. He had experienced all those comforts and alleged 'securities' which are so often said to bring happiness. At first his approach was quite orthodox for he consulted the priests of the highest authority in the Brahminical religion of his people — yet none could enlighten him or instruct him to his satisfaction. At that time it was the custom to practise self-mortification *(attakilamathānuyoga)* in order to gain release from the ills of mind and body, and so he tried this method which was the antithesis of his previous life.

He became an ascetic and in the forest of Uruvelā near Gayā he practised the severest austerities for six years which finally brought

him near to the point of death. He submitted himself to the strictest austerities, to self-mortification and severe penances without finding in them the solution to his problem. But therein he learned the value of self-denial and in the end he came by his own efforts and the practice of contemplation to the enlightenment he had been seeking. In this way he realised that unhappiness and disease are the products of extremes and that the method which he must hence-forward follow should be the Middle Path *(majjhimā paṭipadā)* between the two. There is a point between the two extremes and indeed between any pair of opposites, which is a point of balance — where both aspects are clearly observed with equanimity. At the age of thirty-five, having rid himself of ignoble thoughts and all self-considerations, he attained that state of balance and became aware of the supreme truth. In meditation under the Bodhi-tree at Gayā he thus became the 'Completely Self-Enlightened One' *(sammāsambuddha)*. He had by then spent six years on the path of discovery.

With his wisdom based on a clear understanding of the nature of life and its ills, and with the compassion of unsurpassed experience, he began to teach by example. He spent the remaining forty-five years teaching his 'Middle Path' in the service of others.

As a teacher he addressed himself to the rich and powerful as much as to the poor and weak. Love and pity for humanity were his driving forces, while at the same time they were the aim towards which he worked to awaken his hearers. Distance did not deter him from going to help others or to preach his doctrine. He disregarded class distinctions, the caste system and helped people whether they were high-born or scavengers, and he admitted to his band of followers all without distinction who wished to listen to his teaching. On a larger scale, he reconciled quarrels between great landowners and between sovereign princes by making them understand the path to truth which he had discovered. It is important for the enquirer into Buddhism to bear in mind from the very beginning that he was neither a god nor a superhuman being, nor did he set out to create a new religion. He became, by his own efforts, as perfect as a man can be. Others too can become Buddhas, their progress rendered less difficult by the fact that all Buddhist teaching is based on the law of Cause and Effect.

The man who has become Buddha has attained the qualities of charity, self-discipline, self-denial, patience, wisdom, truthfulness and serenity. He has learned the difference between material and mental

life and purged himself of the imperfections of ill-will, anger, greed and passion and of lack of self-knowledge. He has gained freedom from the pursuit of pleasures of the senses, even from attachment to life itself. His teaching began at Benares, the holy city of the Hindus, to which place he had come immediately following his enlightenment. Just outside the city, in the deer park at Sarnath, his first discourse was given — it is known as 'The Turning of the Wheel of the Law' *(Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta)*. In it was set down in simple terms the fourfold structure of his teaching, known as the 'Four Noble Truths' *(Cattāri ariyasaccāni)*. They are:

1. The fact that unhappiness exists *(dukkha)*.
2. The cause of that unhappiness *(samudaya)*.
3. The fact that unhappiness may cease *(nirodha)*.
4. The Way leading to the cessation of unhappiness *(magga)*.

The realisation of the cause, and the way to the cessation of all discontent — all bewilderment — are contained in the extension of the last of the Four Noble Truths into eight factors.

1. Right Understanding *(Sammā Diṭṭhi)*.
2. Right Thought *(Sammā Saṅkappa)*.
3. Right Speech *(Sammā Vācā)*.
4. Right Action *(Sammā Kammanta)*.
5. Right Livelihood *(Sammā Ājīva)*.
6. Right Effort *(Sammā Vāyāma)*.
7. Right Mindfulness *(Sammā Sati)*.
8. Right Concentration *(Sammā Samādhi)*.

It goes without saying that not everyone will achieve this state, but even those who fall short of full achievement will become better human beings on the way; and, being better human beings than they were before, they will keep on striving towards further progress. Those who tread the path of the Buddha will lead pure lives and attain to a state of happiness made lasting and more intense by the fact that it is due to their own effort; they will also have gained deep knowledge and insight into humanity's shortcomings and troubles.

He taught that craving, possessiveness and envy were the cause of personal and social ills. Man should not put final value on the desires of the senses, nor yet in objects — for these are insecure and without permanence, and therefore productive of unhappiness. He advised that Man should, **by his own efforts**, endeavour to realise the

many illusions in life and by becoming free from desire for possessions thus attain to peace of mind or ***nibbāna***.

This word *nibbāna* is often wrongly translated as heaven, which whilst it is not suggested that peace of mind is not an attribute of heaven, the word is not intended in the sense normally known in Christian terminology.

The Buddha was the first teacher to denounce cruelty to animals, he taught that many of the practices previously recommended as 'holy' were in fact cruel and stupid. He preached against animal sacrifice, cruelty to children, slavery, asceticism, war, the manufacture of destructive weapons, hedonism and indulgence in intoxicants. He was the first to speak of the equality of the sexes. His expositions included a specific explanation of the Law of Causality, of the principles of evolution, of Relativity and of the changeable nature of cosmic organisms. The system of caste distinction, a dogma of Brahminical priests, he denounced as unjust and instead taught that there is no difference between man and man — save that of character and belief. For the first time the ethic of a spiritual democracy was proclaimed. This was, however, not merely a negative philosophy of "Thou Shalt Not"; at no time did he suggest any more than the results of his experience in search of the cessation of suffering. He advised that this state of peace could be attained and fully realised here, in this very life — not by sacrifices to gods or by praying to them for material benefit, but in ceaseless striving towards selflessness. His ethic was "Love for all" whether animal or human — and the method of morality and diligence advocated "a boundless goodwill for all things great or small — known or unknown."[1]

Buddhism is, therefore, not a religion in the modern sense for it possesses none of the characteristics of a religion and none of the activity of religions. It would be more correct to describe it as a progressive scheme of self-discipline and self-purification. The fundamental difference may be put in a nutshell by saying that a religion is to be accepted and believed, whereas Buddhism is to be understood and practised. The Buddha said, "O monks, accept my words only after you have examined them for yourselves, do not accept them simply due to the reverence you hold towards me."[2] In this instruction the Buddha denounces blind faith and his continued emphasis was that one should only believe in a doctrine after one has

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[1] Sn. 243ff; Khp. 8ff.

[2] *cf.* A. i. 189.

understood and practised it. Nor will anyone who has followed this preliminary explanation of Buddhism so far, have any difficulty now in understanding that, though it has become a religion in the course of centuries, its originator did not put it forward as anything more than a way to wisdom and to a better individual as well as communal life. In so far as its religious aspect is concerned, it differs from all other cults by its modesty in abstaining from assertions of external superhuman power and by making its starting point the practical improvement, through self-effort and self-knowledge, of the individual.

Self-reliance and tolerance are, therefore, the keynotes of Buddhist thought. The Buddha said many times "You yourself must make the effort — Buddhas only point the way."[1] Obviously anyone with such beliefs will have a deep respect for other points of view. It is considered almost an insult to a person's intelligence to attempt to impose any kind of doctrine upon him, or to attempt to wean him from the beliefs resulting from his experience. Man's views change when experience changes — therefore, Buddhism advises experience of life and personal endeavour towards a purer understanding through morality and loving-kindness. So it is that a Buddhist's attitude to life is almost unique. He knows that the reason for his very existence is due to desire for existence. He knows that the physical and mental 'components' which come together to form a human being are the results of previous existence, in the same way that his actions and desires will dictate the manner and characteristics of his next birth. Until he has the realisation that it is his attachments and cravings and selfishness which bind him to the Wheel of Life, then dissatisfaction and unhappiness will be his lot. If he is wise, he will follow the eight-fold advice of the Middle Path which leads to liberation.

The morality of Buddhism has a logical reason, for it seeks to prevent unwholesome results (unwanted results) by changing or removing the cause. In practice it is similar to most religions — but not identical. Lay Buddhists are expected to adhere to five basic precepts:

1. To refrain from taking life *(pāṇātipātā)*.
2. To refrain from taking that which is not given *(adiṇṇadānā)*.
3. To refrain from vulgar, lustful or illicit relationships *(kāmesu micchācārā)*.

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[1] Dhp. v 276: *Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātāppaṃ, akhātāro Tathāgatā.*

4. To refrain from lying, gossip and loose or hurtful speech *(musāvādā).*
5. To refrain from drugs and intoxicants *(surāmerayamajja-pamādaṭṭhānā).*

Twice a month, on the *Uposatha* days, the earnest Buddhist will observe three extra precepts. He (or she) will not take food after mid-day, will refrain from any form of entertainment either actively or passively, and will not use perfumes, cosmetics and jewellery to make themselves more attractive. They will also refrain from using luxurious beds and seats. As may be seen, these precepts take the form of disciplines, and of a gradual training towards renunciation of the fleeting desires of the senses. They are not commandments but guides as to conduct for leading a moral life. They represent only a preliminary training in discipline before commencing the meditation which is so important in Buddhist practice.

The Dhamma — the name of the Buddha's teaching — or the Law, is not an inert instruction. The essence of the Dhamma is the practice of it. Although to Western eyes, Buddhism may sometimes appear to be highly ritualistic, it must be remembered that the offering of flowers, incense, and lighted candles at the Buddha's shrines is not worship and is not expected to have any power to divert the law of cause and effect. These are tokens of recognition for a great Teacher and his teachings, as also are the food, clothing and support given to the monks who perpetuate his Dhamma.

In many ways the word **Dhamma** more accurately describes the working out of the Buddha's teaching, for names ending in 'ism' tend to suggest separation and opposition. The Buddha said:

> "Use Dhamma as a raft to cross the stream [of life]
> but do not carry it as a burden."[1]

In these words he condemns the clinging to mere description often without adherence to the beliefs suggested by the description.

So many times in history there have been terrible acts of war and carnage in the name of religion; yet all religions teach love, peace and unity. This cruelty of man arises from clinging to the name of his religion and holding it to be dearer than the actual teachings of his religion. If people cared enough to practise love, peace and

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[1] D. i. 135.

unity then these evils could never have come to be in the name of religion.

We are in perfect agreement with those who think that the time must soon come when mankind as a whole will realise that humanity is really one large family; that we are dependent on each other to a very considerable extent. When this idea is grasped, much misunderstanding will automatically cease. Better education, the ever increasing supply of literature, and easy and swift transport are helping towards this end. The last words of the Buddha before he passed away (at the age of 80, at Kusinārā, northern India) were these:

"Abide in heedfulness."[1]

To abide in heedfulness is to see the world clearly and to see our fellow human beings clearly — without prejudice, without envy, without hatred. To be able to do this we must know ourselves intimately and know the sources of happiness and unhappiness that are within us.

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[1] D. ii. 120, 156; S. i. 158: *Appamādena sampādetha.*

CHAPTER TWO

ORIENTAL MYSTICISM FOR WESTERNERS[1]

PART I

Professor Ramiro A. Calle says: "For several hours I interviewed the Venerable Dr. Hammalawa Saddhātissa at the headquarters of the British Mahābodhi Society in London, of which he is the President. Always cordial and affable, he replied to all my questions with extraordinary clarity and penetration. Venerable Dr Saddhātissa was born in Sri Lanka. He was ordained in 1926 and has been Professor of Buddhism at the universities of Benares and Toronto. He is the author of several books on Buddhism."

Q What do you think has been the most important contribution made by Buddhism to humanity?

A I should reply to this question in some detail. The life of the Buddha has two aspects; great wisdom and great compassion. Through that wisdom he has shown the path to freedom and the entry into eternal peace, or *Nibbāna*. Because of his great compassion he worked for social reform. In the time of the Buddha there was widespread corruption in the name of God or religion. As a social reformer he criticized and endeavoured to eradicate such social evils. The Buddha therefore contributed to a greater humanity in the world. There was then great inequality against which he spoke out. For example, he pointed out that there is no difference between a man and a woman as regard innate intelligence. Of what use is it to be a man if he is a fool or an idiot? What is wrong with being a woman if she is wise and intelligent? The Buddha has always opted for equality in all senses. He tried to show the world that the highest state is intelligence and not race, nationality or things of that nature.

Let us consider that he was born a prince and could have been a king, living an easy and comfortable life, but despite that he sacrificed himself to save the world by renunciation, taught everyone

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[1] Translated by John Wilson from Mistica Oriental par Occidentales by Professor Ramiro A. Calle, published by Editorial Bruguera S.A. Barcelona, 1976.

that the purpose of life should be to attain salvation and not to legislate, conquer or amuse oneself. He imparted the teaching not merely through words or sermons but by his own example. Therefore, his other truly important contribution to the world was to show the world that the purpose of life must be to obtain deliverance. This was what he gave to humanity through his life.

Q Is Buddhism more a philosophy than a religion? Can we consider it as a religion without God?

A Buddhism has been accepted as one of the great religions but it is not a religion in the original sense of the word.

Religion derives from the Latin term ***religare*** which, as you will know better than I, means to unite. But as religion is generally known it is often tantamount to buying something with something else, that is buying one's being for something, to rely on (or worship) an external agent. In its original meaning, religion is the communication of man with God. In Buddhism we do not find the same characteristic. You discover your own purity, your salvation depends upon yourself. No one can purify you.[1] Therefore, the Buddha in his teaching gave man total freedom.

Inasmuch as theistic religions depend upon outside agents, that is the Divinity, Buddhism does not depend on anything external. For that reason, I repeat, Buddhism is not a religion in the original sense of the word. But if we take religion to be a way of life then Buddhism can be considered as a religion, because it is an ethical philosophy and a way of life. If Buddhism were only a mere philosophy or metaphysical speculation without practical application, it would have no objective. But it is really an ethical and practical philosophy. It contains not only theory, but the method of putting such theory into practice. In this sense Buddhism is a religion, distinct from the original meaning of the word. Due to the fact that people have forgotten the original meaning of the term, Buddhism has been accepted as a religion but we do not find in it any of the characteristics belonging to religions if we stick to the original meaning of these religions.

The whole Buddhist Canon has been divided into three sections. We call the Canon the *Tipiṭaka* or three baskets, since in ancient days

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[1] *cf.* Dhp. v 165.

people used to keep books in baskets. The first section deals with monastic rules and we find in it the norms for monks and nuns to live by. The second section is concerned with daily life, ethical sermons, morality and other good and humane policies. The third section deals with philosophy, psychology and metaphysics. Therefore, in Buddhism one finds all these elements which make it a philosophy and all those which make it, like other religions, a way of life.

Q There is known to be a controversy between *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna*. Do you believe a reconciliation is possible?

A It is perfectly possible. The principles which one finds in the *Mahāyāna* — like that of the Bodhisattva, for example — are also found in the orthodox *Theravāda* teaching. Each branch is in agreement in observing the fundamental teachings of the Buddha.

Each school accepts the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, the principles of Dependent Origination. These are basic points of the Buddhist doctrine. *Theravāda* equally with *Mahāyāna* observes faithfully such points. Do you know, it is surprising to discover that among Buddhists there are no different churches. Other religious systems have different churches, but with us this does not happen. We have Buddhist temples — *vihāras*. You, since you have been in India, must know many of these temples, such as at the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha. There are pilgrims from very different parts of the world. Some come from Japan, China, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, others from Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia or Laos. They can all go to pray and meditate in the same temple, without any sort of discrimination. If a pilgrim from Sri Lanka, Burma or Thailand — countries where *Theravāda* Buddhism is practised, goes to Japan — where *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is practised, he will pray and meditate in *Mahāyāna* temples. And if a Japanese, for example, visits Sri Lanka, he will pray and meditate in a *Theravāda* temple. That is to say, we always regard each other as brothers and we do not quarrel with each other. If a *Theravāda* Buddhist goes to Japan he is welcomed as a brother. You can see for yourself in this temple, where we have two Japanese monks.

As regards practice there is never any difficulty and in fact all Buddhists practise Buddhism as one religion. There exist some philosophical differences and some practices vary between the two schools, but we all agree on the same principles of unity, harmony and friendship. We are one; there are no important differences.

Q Did the Buddha keep an esoteric message for the initiated?

A The message was the same for all. He explained the Dhamma in all its profundity. He did not keep anything hidden in his hand and he did not keep any secret teaching for some favourites. His teachings were open to all. He did not have a secret or esoteric teaching. We consider that there was nothing in his teaching which could be called occult.

Q How should one define a good Buddhist?

A A good Buddhist should lean towards high precepts and he should meditate. He should observe the five precepts.

If one abstains from misconduct, from those practices which are harmful to oneself and to society; then one is a good person and a good Buddhist. In addition, one should practice meditation to further purify the mind. If one guides one's life towards inoffensive, good and useful actions, if one is useful to others, then one is the best Buddhist.

Q In your opinion, which country follows the most authentic Buddhism, most in agreement with the original teachings?

A That is a complex question to answer because Buddhism, like any other religion, has developed in each country according to the needs of the people.

When religions reach different countries they encounter various cultural and social customs etc. The people of that country do not want to relinquish their customs. That is why we find in various countries, forms of Buddhism which carry with them various practices which were not included in the Buddha's teachings. Even so, in any country there are those who practise the most authentic teachings.

In Sri Lanka, Buddhism is preserved in its original purity but it is clear that there is also an adaptation to the needs of its people. There are people who like to associate Buddhism with its social and cultural needs. Yes, in Sri Lanka there is a pure form of Buddhism as well as in Burma, Thailand and other countries.

Q In all discussions on Buddhism, one question inevitably arises. If there is no 'I' or permanent entity, what is it that reincarnates?

A It is very simple to comprehend if we understand the mental process as a flow.

We believe in cause and effect. Everything depends on that Law. If there is a cause, surely there must be an effect of similar nature. On our mental screen each momentary thought is conditioned by other thoughts and conditions, and in its turn, others follow it. In this way the thought process flows like a current, or a river. If you look at a river, for example, you will observe that it is flowing as such, but the same river is not always the same water, only the momentary passing of water pushed along by the other water that is coming down.

Similarly, a momentary thought conditions another momentary thought and these thoughts run onwards. For this reason we think of the process of consciousness as a current, like a river, a continuous flow. Although for us there is no soul, there exists a continuous flow.

The momentary thought ceases, but the process of thought continues. There is no death in any real sense. The moment of death consciousness gives birth to a new process which flows on endlessly. Our mind and body change constantly. Every moment we are changing. At the moment you and I are changing. Our thoughts are flowing although we are not conscious of it. Such are the facts that Buddhism comprehends.

Q Yoga is millenniums old and many yogis have existed before the Buddha. It has been said nevertheless that he was the first yogi who was not anonymous. Do you think this is so?

A Yes, he was in effect a yogi, although of course one cannot say he was the first. We could say that he was the yogi of yogis. the king of yogis.

He studied yoga before his enlightenment and had two great yoga teachers. They showed him how to concentrate his mind and the level he might aspire to by that method. He attained that level. that high level, in accordance with the instructions of his teachers. But he simply did not feel satisfied with these teachings because he sensed that there was a higher goal. He therefore meditated alone and attained supreme enlightenment. Those teachers were not enlightened so for that reason he left them. He practised by himself and advanced far beyond the former method until he attained to Buddhahood.

Q The Western mentality cannot easily assimilate the concept of *śūnyatā*. Should we understand it as an absolute vacuum?

A *Śūnyatā* means that there is no permanent entity in a human being nor in anything else, animate or inanimate.

We must of necessity distinguish between two languages; the conventional and the philosophical. Conventionally an entity is distinguished by a name according to the nationality and opinion of he who applies it. But despite the name we are nothing in the real sense. If we analyze a person into the aggregates of which he is made up we realise that we cannot find anything permanent, any eternal entity. That absence of any permanent entity is *śūnyatā*.

Q What can you tell us about meditation?

A I believe that meditation is indispensable to life. It is a very important practice.

We may say that a human being is composed of mind and body. If a person wishes to live a physically healthy life he should practise physical exercises and look after his body, since it will otherwise become infirm. One ought to practise physical exercise from childhood in order to maintain one's optimal health. The same can be said about the mind. Just as one should practise physical exercises to keep the body healthy, one should also practise meditation to obtain a healthy mind. Meditation or yoga in Buddhism means the cultivation of the mind. The mind is like a monkey which jumps constantly from here to there and never stays still. The mind runs after sensory perceptions. But if we wish to harness and make use of the mind it must be trained. It is the essential thing if we wish the mind to be of service to us. In order to utilize the mind, to control it and to concentrate on a stated object, the main thing is to practise meditation. In Buddhism we have several types of meditation. For example, meditation on breathing and upon universal love.

In order to obtain and develop mental awareness, there are different methods one of which is meditation. One who wishes to control his mind should cultivate positive qualities. If a person, for example, has an egoistic and intransigent character, he should cultivate universal love and tolerance by meditating upon them. In order to practise this elevated form of meditation, which aims towards cultivation of positive qualities, we should sit in a peaceful and

secluded place and cultivate good thoughts, well directed. Before doing so one can read an appropriate text which would assist one by stimulating positive thoughts. We must always bear in mind that if we do not offer our love to others we cannot expect them to offer love to us.

We should begin by directing loving thoughts towards the person we like best, but not one of the opposite sex since it might provoke sensual desire. This is the first phase of this type of meditation. Afterwards we should direct our thoughts towards a person we like second best. Then direct our thoughts towards neighbours and so extend it towards everyone we may know and ultimately to all beings in the world. We should likewise direct our loving thoughts towards our enemies. In this way we raise world spirituality. We should also direct our loving thoughts towards the insane, the ignorant and the infirm. That is, make our loving thoughts extend over the whole world. Any disagreeable thought that arises during this type of meditation can be overcome completely. That is how one meditates on universal love and this can be carried out during one's daily life.

During our work with other people, during our daily activities, we should never lose control over ourselves. We should likewise show kindness, since we have tried, through meditation, to direct loving thoughts towards all beings. And this meditation should be brought into our daily life. One should avoid all anger, violence and apathy. Thus one attains the real object of meditation; putting into practice the essence of our meditation.

Meditation in any of its forms allows us to obtain a higher level of concentration and one-pointedness of mind, which is advantageous in attaining the highest states and the highest goals. Meditation should always be carried into daily life, that is we should not remain with the mere meditation exercises. In this way the object of meditation becomes crystallized. If a person concentrates on not getting angry, thinking and cultivating his mind thus, and obtaining control over himself, and afterwards when he re-enters society, he is capable of remaining absolutely calm, he has truly practised meditation.

In the beginning it is advisable to have silence in order to practise meditation. Because in the early phases, if the mind does not encounter a suitable environment, it will jump around frequently. One should avoid interruptions. But when the practitioner has attained total concentration of mind, then whatever may happen and however much noise goes on around him, his mind is not disturbed.

Q What do you think of self-awareness, that is, careful observation of everything composing our being? Also being aware of everything we do and of that which surrounds us?

A It is very essential. It is essential for life and also it is a form of meditation.

When we do something we should do it consciously. We should be aware of what is happening within ourselves. Observing yourself, the conscious being, develops your mind. A man should develop his consciousness and be aware even of the most trivial things.

For example, in eating we should be aware of what we are eating and be aware of having eaten sufficient. If we are seated we should be aware of how and where we are sitting. If we are standing, we should be aware that we are standing. Also that we are going to sleep and on awakening we should simply be aware that we are awake. We should try to alert our consciousness in our daily life. If you are reading, be aware that you are reading and if writing, that you are writing. One must concentrate on that which one is doing, avoiding doing several things at once, because one cannot remain attentive of any of them in that way. A person who reads whilst eating, for example, is not truly attentive to the reading nor to the food. When we become simply conscious of something the memory becomes considerably more active.

Meditation is not only a way of life, but is the very fact of controlling life. One meditates in order to discover a useful purpose of life.

Q There is a very useful means of concentration, which is that of using breathing as a support for the mind. Can we talk about that?

A We are living beings. We are alive, not dead. To maintain life we must breathe. If it were not for the respiration process we would die. But we are not usually conscious that we are breathing.

We are all breathing but we do not meditate on breathing. We are simply not aware that we are alive. We do not know that we are breathing, only that we are talking to each other.

Concentration upon inhalation is an excellent means to obtain one-pointedness of mind. It is an excellent support for concentration. On trying to find out that we are breathing, all our mental awareness is channelled towards respiration and, little by little, through several

sessions of practice, the mind becomes calm, attaining a high level of concentration.

Q What message can you give to present-day man?

A I wish to stress that all terminology is noxious. The profusion of labels has given rise to great prejudice. Sadly, man remembers the words but forgets what they really mean.

For example, we sometimes pay excessive attention to such labels as Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism but none or very little to the teachings which they impart. Therein lies the root of the trouble. We should not pay excessive attention to labels. We should accept that those teachings are for all humanity. The great teachers came into the world to improve it. Christ, for example, came into the world to preach to all. That is to say that a teaching is not designed for some and not for others, but is intended for all. The great teachers wish for a better world and for that reason they offer their teaching to all. That was the wish of the Buddha, Christ and all great teachers. It was their followers who classified themselves as Buddhists, Christians etc., but the great initiates preached to everyone.

I stress that the basic desire of the great teachers was to make a better world and that they had no interest at all in labels. Anyone can avail themselves of their teachings and so, for example, meditation on universal love, on higher thoughts and on breathing, all can be used by all human beings and not solely by Buddhists. These meditation practices make possible control over the mind and the overcoming of aggression, confusion, selfishness and evil desires. All these enemies can be overcome and one can cultivate, on the other hand, compassion and universal love, friendliness, generosity and positive qualities in general.

My humble prayer is that it be understood that any Christian, without labelling himself, can practise these methods of meditation or yoga, for their benefit, and these need not cause any conflict with their own rituals; there would be no reason to do so. There is no value in labels. Whatever you label yourself — Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, etc. — because the essential thing is to carry out the meditation practices taught by the Buddha or by other great yogis without any sort of religious discrimination.

One can follow his own religion fruitfully and also carry out meditation practice perfectly. I would say that the only use for labels

is for filling in bureaucratic forms. When we learn a great teaching we should forget about all labels. This we should do on learning meditation or yoga for our benefit. All religions should co-exist in complete harmony since the purpose of the teachers of these religions was to make the world better. This is a common purpose which tends to reaffirm positive qualities. For that reason, without discrimination, human beings should avail themselves of whatever method or religious practice they may find useful whatever its religious origin, without any need for a change of labels.

Q Would you like to give some words of advice to the aspiring Buddhist?

A There is no baptism in Buddhism, nor any conversion ritual. In Buddhist terms conversion occurs within the individual.

If I tried to convert you to my way of thinking it would be as if I called you an idiot and insulted your intelligence. There is no conversion, only that one converts oneself. Beginners should practise meditation assiduously to increase their understanding to the maximum. The ideal means is meditation practice. From the elementary stages of meditation one ascends to the highest states. During meditation we can radiate our loving thoughts to all, arising from the kindness of our hearts. We can radiate to others our best thoughts, since thoughts possess great power. I want to invoke the blessings of the Buddha, his teachings and his disciples in order to send my own blessings in his name. In the name of the Buddha, his teachings and his disciples which is the Triple Jewel, I send my blessings to my Spanish friends in this way: May all blessings be yours by the power of the Buddha, may happiness always be with you, may all blessings be yours by the power of the Dhamma, his teachings, in its name may happiness ever be yours, may all blessings be with you by the power of the Saṅgha, the community of his disciples.

Q Humanity passes through difficult times. Everywhere hatred and violence arises. What can we do in such circumstances.

A One of the universal principles shown by the Buddha is that hatred cannot be overcome by hatred, only by love.[1]

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[1] *cf.* Dhp. v 5.

We ought to try to inculcate this teaching amongst the world leaders. They should understand that anger, hatred and evil cannot cease through anger, hatred and evil. Vengeance does not resolve anything; only love can fight these negative qualities. This is the teaching of the Buddha.

Q What do you think about Tibetan Buddhism?

A Some Tibetan schools are nearer than others to the Buddha's doctrine and their practice is more in agreement with the original Buddhist doctrine.

Now, if we analyze history we will realise that when Buddhism entered Tibet it met up with the Bon religion,[1] which was an ancestral cult. With the passage of time those beliefs and practices became associated in some way with the Buddhist teaching. There is no doubt that in Tibet the Buddhist teaching has been influenced by those practices. However, it is not difficult to admit that there are many interpolations, mixtures and additions. Therefore, in Buddhism such as exists in Tibet we find a part which is in agreement with the original Buddhism and another part completely separate from it.

With great insight and a sincere desire to help, Ven. Saddhātissa replied to all the questions I asked him. We talked to each other about Buddhism in different countries, especially in Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka. Afterwards, always with the cordiality which characterizes him, he showed me the shrine with the great image of the Buddha, the meditation and lecture room and the library, always talking about various aspects of Buddhism. On taking leave of each other, after presenting me with some Buddhist works, he added: "Meditation raises the moral level of humanity. Everyone should meditate and make use of their life to obtain wisdom, because wisdom liberates us from all pain and suffering, caused by ignorance."

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[1] For detailed study read: "The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon", ed. tr. by Samten G. Karmay, London, 1972.

PART II

Months after having the previous interview with Ven. Saddhātissa, we returned to interview him again in order that he could explain meditation in more depth. His authoritative views are of great value since he is one of the most outstanding modern scholars on Buddhism.

Q Could you explain meditation in more depth?

A Perhaps the term meditation might not be the most appropriate to give an idea of all that is hidden behind it in Buddhism.

Terms such as mental culture or mental development illustrate the objective better. Buddhist meditation is not affected at ordinary levels of thought process nor is it aimed directly at the stopping of thought. Its basic objective is to improve receptivity, to perfect perception and to develop consciousness. Through the application of Right Attention, confusion of mind is avoided. The loose reins of our mind can be tightened and the wild horses of our senses and desires can be controlled. Our mental energy can be channelled and therefore its nature improved and perfected. By means of this type of meditation the mind can be trained to arrive at a state of one-pointed attention. It is important to understand that this concentration of attention does not consist of an adding process, but a process of elimination of disturbance and interference. Meditation teaches us the subtle distinction between thinking and having thoughts. One seeks intuitive knowledge and not mere analytical constructions. Knowledge can arise with an intuitive spontaneity, and such knowledge can only be expressed with difficulty in everyday thought. In the Buddha's discourse called the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*[1] four types of contemplation are given: upon the body, sensations, the mind and states of mind. In this discourse the Buddha declares that this bare attention is the only way to free the mind from the impurities (anger, ill-will, illusion, desire, envy, hatred etc.)

Regular physiological practices combined with mental exercises are very beneficial; there exists a close relationship between body and mind. I myself practised yoga exercises in my youth and it always

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[1] D. ii. 290–315; M. i. 55–63.

attracted me greatly, although I do not now practise because of my age. Buddhist meditation is concerned in a very special way with the mind. The mind is the most important factor, because when it is maintained strong and healthy, its power over other factors is notable. Many illnesses — of the skin, the heart, arteries; headaches, nervous tension, etc. — are the result of an unhealthy mental state. Quite a high percentage (about 80%) of the complaints mentioned are caused by mental illnesses.

The mind, however, has to be trained and cultivated by means of hard work and constant effort. There are no short cuts. It is surprising to discover how many people are ignorant of the fact that they possess a mind which can be trained in much the same way that the muscles of the body can be trained; and which through suitable skills can develop as much in strength as in flexibility.

One of the mental awareness exercises that I highly recommend is that of consciousness of in-breathing and out-breathing during respiration. This exercise not only purifies and improve the whole organism, but also leads above all to concentration of the mind, to one-pointedness. We focus our attention on one activity that is generally unconscious and mechanical. We must practise assiduously observing the processes and the contents of the mind; observing the emotions, desires and feelings, and observing the body, all as they are in reality. We should also become skilled in observing all our actions since these have their origin in the mind. Through these techniques of observation the negative and positive factors are revealed to us. The negative ones are; luxury and sensuality, hatred and anger, apathy and sloth, tension and nervousness, and worry and doubt. If these factors arise during meditation and disturb us we should overcome them by concentrating on the positive factors, which are; friendliness, love, understanding, effort, calm, confidence, well-being, happiness and vigour.

A large majority of human beings today are afflicted by worry of one sort or another. In fact, to worry is a useless weakness, and a highly negative activity, since it is hardly ever concerned with the present moment of time in which we are living. Worry is insubstantial because it is based upon mental projection into the past or the future and implies not living and concentrating in the present. If we have a problem we can do something about now, we immediately exert ourselves in order to solve it. During this exertion we shall not worry at all if we concentrate all our attention on the process requiring our immediate attention which is what we should do.

On the other hand, if we are confronted by a problem we can do nothing about right now, then, since it is unavoidable and unsolvable, we should concentrate all our attention on the present, the real situation, and not project our minds sideways, nor along avenues of thought which are fruitless, unreal and weakening.

Q What therapeutic possibilities can we attribute to the Buddhist type of meditation?

A Meditation can be practised successfully when the mind and body are healthy. If a person is suffering from infection or disease he should be cured first. That is essential.

It is wrong to think that serious illnesses can easily be cured by means of meditation. In the case of physical ailments one should consult a specialist, and in the case of mental disturbance one should consult a psychiatrist. One must be cured first and then practise meditation, with the assurance that the illness will not recur. I myself, after having suffered a myocardial infraction, a stroke, following influenza contracted some time ago, was in control of my convalescence, improving and hastening it through a combination of a medical course, and through meditation I regained my perfect health. I am convinced that many illnesses, such as previously mentioned, can be avoided through diligent practice of meditation.

Meditation leads to delight and joy, to friendliness and truth, to beauty and health. Meditation promotes a close control over the mind and improvement of character. The practice even helps us to sleep soundly and to banish unpleasant dreams, replacing them with pleasant ones. Evil dreams, negative in nature are eliminated little by little as we improve the quality of our meditation. When negative dreams, containing conflict, supervene, who are we confronting? With whom are we arguing? Whom do we fear? From whom do we flee? Such questions we can ask ourselves during meditation and we can come to see clearly that we have been arguing and confronting aspects of ourselves, frightened by and running away from those aspects, personified in various dream images. This truth is so simple that it has been overlooked by modern psychoanalysis, which looks frequently for external explanations to problems without realising that all solutions to problems are controlled from within.

Little by little, through meditation, we obtain a greater understanding of ourselves. Meditation, without doubt, leads to a broadening of understanding.

Q Why are human beings so deficient within themselves? Are they are born like that?

A They are very often born pure in mind, but later become contaminated by an impure and imperfect surrounding environment. The human surrounding medium is manifested as a result of ignorance and this produces contamination.

We should bear in mind that wisdom does not consist in an accumulation of knowledge, but in getting rid of ignorance, in the same way that health is not an accumulation of strength, but is the elimination of all illnesses and weaknesses. Clear thought eliminates mental fog.

I contend, it is very difficult for a human being to escape from contamination, although we are well able to eliminate it from within us by means of clear and correct reasoning acquired through Right Attention and meditation. To be successful in this undertaking, the most important thing is to know how to distinguish between ordinary reasoning and clear reasoning. Wisdom arises through direct experience, practice and Right Understanding. It requires discipline, hard work, patience and sacrifice in order to produce true results. I say emphatically that there are no short cuts. Just as a man cannot become a doctor or a musician in one day, neither can one become pure and wise in a very short time. It is amazing to discover that there are outstandingly erudite people who have accumulated great knowledge, but do not understand anything and lack wisdom. They do not even understand the meaning of the word understand, since understanding does not only consist of knowing but of being.

Q From what you have said, it is easy to deduce that you do not accept the idea of sudden enlightenment. Is that so?

A Patience, hard work and meditation bring gradual realisation and true understanding.

We understand progressively nature and the forces which control our lives, the nature of mind and matter and also the nature of all the elements which make up the body and the world.

Enlightenment represents clear understanding **in perspective with relativity**. The greater the enlightenment, the greater the understanding of the **relativity** of all things and the greater the detachment. The more detachment is increased the more is the freedom from all desires. The Buddhist believes in the realisation of the impermanence

in all things. The Buddhist does not believe that beneath ever changing shapes and appearances there is an unchanging essence, although he believes in a karmic force which leads to rebirth. Reincarnation is an incorrect term because it connotes that the same person takes repeated births.

Q What is it within us which makes us distinguish between good and evil, beauty and ugliness etc?

A In real life the distinction takes place through the process of association.

Morality and ethics are based upon the accumulation of personal experiences, upon tradition and custom. We associate pain with evil; pleasure with good; ugliness which leads to ill-luck, we equate with evil; beauty which leads to happiness and pleasure, we equate with good etc. Things are either good or bad, beautiful or ugly in relation to one another. Beyond the plane of relativity, where there is not duality, only unity, such concepts do not have any meaning.

Q What can you tell us about inner joy?

A The deeper the understanding, the greater the joy. Joy is freedom from ignorance, which is in turn freedom from desires and from all other negative factors.

We have to return to being rather like small children delighting in their toys. All true teachings are similar in spirit. The Bible tells us to become like children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. The differences lie only in the forms and appearances which produce the different cultures, languages and civilizations. Unfortunately, man forgets the reality contained in the true teachings and remembers only the words, the rites, the symbols and the rituals, not being conscious that through those things arises confusion, ignorance, darkness and wretchedness.

Right understanding of the true teaching
leads to truth, wisdom, light and joy.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT THE BUDDHA DID FOR HUMANITY

What contribution did the Buddha make to the spiritual wealth and social welfare of humanity?

Through his great compassion and all-seeing wisdom the Buddha's service to humanity was, and indeed still is, many faceted and immeasurable. He taught men that in order to reach the highest attainable happiness there is no need for them to rely on anyone supposedly superior to themselves for help or grace. He taught that men could be self-reliant and strong enough to achieve deliverance by themselves and for themselves; deliverance from selfish craving, ill-will and delusion. He expected them to stand on their own two feet and admonished them to strive to attain the goal by their own efforts; he merely pointed the way.

> "Oneself, indeed, is one's own refuge, for what other refuge could there be? With oneself well controlled one obtains a refuge difficult to find."[1]

Consistent with this proclamation of self-help being the only true way to deliverance the Buddha condemned all sacrifices performed in the name of religion, particularly those involving the killing of animals. You are, perhaps, aware that according to some religious beliefs 'sin' or evil can be atoned for, or done away with by killing animals such as cows, horses or goats in the name of God. In India at the time of the Buddha and before, there were animal sacrifices. A great horse sacrifice is specifically mentioned in the texts and even now such cruel practices are still prevalent. The Buddha exposed such practices as being futile as well as cruel and barbaric. He taught that a much more beneficial sacrifice was to give up the taking of life and other misdeeds and by so doing men would be elevated above such primitive gods. All such cruel practices were the antithesis of all that religion means. The followers of Buddhism should regard all living beings as sharing the wonderful gift of life and as deserving of protection rather than exploitation.

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[1] Dhp. v 160.

> "Let him not destroy life nor cause others to kill, nor approve of others' killing. Let him refrain from oppressing all living beings in the world, whether strong or weak."[1]

The Buddha adjures men to practise active loving-kindness towards all living beings, including animals. Inscriptions on stone pillars in India dating from the time of Emperor Asoka reveal that that great Emperor ordered the establishment of hospitals for both men and beasts in his great domain, and advised his subjects to practise kindly and considerate behaviour towards all living beings. Not only to abstain from hunting and killing animals but to tend them when ill and guard them from danger.

Another great contribution that the Buddha made to humanity was his condemnation of the slave trade. 2,500 years ago, long before the time of William Wilberforce, the Buddha had laid down a rule for his followers that they should abstain from all trade in human beings. Human beings might be engaged for domestic service or as labourers but without infringing on their personal rights. An employer was expected to take care of his servants by:

1. assigning them work according to their ability,
2. by supplying them with food and wages,
3. by tending them in sickness,
4. by sharing with them extraordinary delicacies (windfalls etc.),
5. by allowing them leave at times.

In return, it should be noted, the employees were expected:

1. to rise before him,
2. to sleep after him,
3. to take only what was given,
4. perform their duties satisfactorily,
5. to spread his good name.[2]

The Buddha was also a pioneer in the art of peace-making. The scriptures tell us of a case where the two armies of the Sakyans and Koliyans were on the verge of war over the right to take water from the river Rohinī dividing their countries. They were preparing to do battle when the Buddha appeared on the scene and asked the reason for the dispute. They told him it was about the right to take water

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[1] Sn. v 384.

[2] D. iii. 191.

for irrigation. The Buddha asked them which was more precious, blood or water. Of course they replied 'blood'. "So then," he said "you are going to lose what is precious for the sake of what is relatively worthless, is that the action of sensible men? Go away and see if you can settle this dispute in a more reasonable way than this." That war was thus prevented by the Buddha's good advice and influence.[1]

The Buddha did not admire the conqueror. He said:

> "Victory breeds hatred. The defeated live in pain. Happily the peaceful live, giving up both victory and defeat."[2]

The conqueror oppresses his victims so they scheme to rise and overthrow their oppressors. The cycle of revenge and counter-plots ensures that no one gets any peace. The Buddha warned men against following their base instincts and showed them how to settle their disputes by discussion and mediation.

The temperance movement of the present day has its predecessor in the word of the Buddha. He enjoined his followers to abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs, warning that it made the user susceptible to disease, mental disorder and many other dangers to his family and property due to his heedlessness.

> "The householder who delights in self-control, knowing that intoxicants result in loss, should not indulge in taking intoxicants nor should he cause others to do so nor approve of them doing so."[3]

> "Fools commit evil deeds as a result of drunkenness and cause other people, who are negligent, to act accordingly; this delusion, this delight of fools."[4]

> "One should not be a drinker."[5]

It has already been mentioned that Emperor Asoka set up hospitals for the sick and even for animals, inspired by the compassionate words of the Buddha.

During the life-time of the Buddha there was a monk called Pūtigatta Tissa who was very sick but not attended to by his fellow

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[1] SnA. i. 358; *cf.* Jā. v. 412; DhA. iii. 254ff.
[2] Dhp. v 201.
[3] Sn. v 398.
[4] *Ibid.* v 399.
[5] *Ibid.* v 400.

monks. The Buddha found him while touring the monastery and asked the monks why they did not attend him. They replied that it was because he had not looked after anyone himself. The Buddha sent Ānanda for some water and tended the sick monk himself while Ānanda washed his dirty robes. Afterwards he admonished the monks to take care of each other and said:

"Whosoever would serve me should serve the sick."[1]

It is also noteworthy that the Buddha made special provisions for the benefit of sick monks, such as hot baths and medicinal herbs, thus setting a standard of compassion and moderation rather than extreme severity and self-mortification.

The Buddha was also a great benefactor and liberator of women. In pre-Buddhistic India the status of women was, in general, extremely low. The birth of a daughter was often regarded as a source of anxiety for the parents; they had to expect great expense when she came to be married and face disgrace if they could not find a suitable husband for her. A women's life was one of subservience to her husband and his parents. She was allowed little authority at home and no part in public activities. If widowed, she became the possession of her father again, or of her son. During the Buddhist Epoch there was a dramatic change. Women came to enjoy more equality, greater respect and authority than ever before. The exclusive supremacy of men began to give way before the increasing emancipation of women. This change was accelerated by the innate intelligence of the women who showed that they were responsible, rational beings with intelligence and will and for the men, being steeped in the Buddha's tolerant teachings, it was impossible not to respond to the constant daily evidence of the women's powers of devotion, sacrifice, courage and endurance. They ceased to regard women as inferior to themselves, being more aware of the similarities between men and women and less obsessed by the differences.

The Buddha taught both householders and their wives. The women set fine examples in conduct and intelligence. The men, for their part, appreciated the widening of the field of women's activities. Thus, the tide of public opinion turned, and the position of women became not only bearable but honourable. At last, women were acknowledged to be capable of working as a constructive force in the

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[1] DhA. i. 319ff.

society of the day. The birth of girls was no longer met with disappointment, since girls had ceased to be despised or regarded as burdens. They were now allowed a good deal of liberty. Matrimony was not held before them as the end and aim of their existence and hence it was no longer a disgrace if they did not marry; but if they did, they were not pushed into an early child-marriage nor forced to accept the man of their parents' choice. As a wife, no longer was she regarded as a servant of all but had considerable authority in the home; ranking as her husband's help-mate, companion and guardian, and in matters temporal and spiritual was regarded as his equal and worthy of respect. As a mother her position was one of honour and unassailable. As a widow she could continue her role without loss of honour, free from suspicion of ill-omen and was capable of inheriting property. More than ever before she was an individual in command of her own life. Whether as a spinster, wife or widow, she had rights and duties not limited to child bearing and became an integral part of society.

Another great service to humanity was his condemnation of distinctions between men based solely on birth or racial origins. In India at the time and even today to a lesser extent, such distinctions were the foundations of the social system. Every Hindu had his lot determined by his father's caste. From birth he was restricted to his father's profession whether priest, warrior, trader or menial labourer with no chance of social progress. The Buddha tore apart the hypocrisies of the day and made many enemies in so doing by asserting that all men are equal in their right to an open path to the highest truth they could all attain. He taught that men become noble by virtuous conduct and charitable deeds and they become outcastes only by misconduct and miserliness not by any accident of birth. Although the Buddha himself was a prince by birth and hence of the highest caste he made no distinctions whatsoever on account of caste. On one occasion he asked for water from a peasant. Seeing his noble features, the peasant said, "Sir, I cannot give you anything to eat or drink; I am not of high caste." The Buddha replied:

"Friend, I don't ask you for caste,
I ask you for water."

So you can see that Buddhism is a religion based on understanding and acting in accordance with that understanding. We have to understand what course of action leads to true happiness of ourselves and others and what course of action leads to our misery and the misery of others. With right understanding who would choose the wrong course?

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MIDDLE WAY FOR THE WEST

Buddhism has come to the West in various guises. From the scientific Buddhism of the late 19th century to the Beat Zen of the mid 20th century, there have been as many different presentations of the teaching as there have been 'gurus' presenting it. Freud said of religion that it is a collective neurosis; a few years ago in England, Buddhism was tending to become a collective psychosis, a socially acceptable schizophrenia. It might be of value here to study briefly this strange phenomenon, for if we are to be successful in our search for a vital interpretation of Buddhism, it is as well to know some of the peculiarly Western pitfalls into which one may be drawn.

In the tense, racking climate of European or North American civilisation, it is easy for the 'Way' to become a systematic, unrelieved clinical observation of the body and mind as intricate mechanisms devoid of 'soul'. With diabolical persistence, the devotee can shatter his own being into a myriad objective 'its' — impersonal functions and complex patterns of behaviour. Eagerly he will submit himself to long periods of rigorous discipline, maintaining a minimum of twenty hours meditation a day for weeks or even months. While engaged in this practice, once the initial wrench with the world has been made, one is cool and clear, one is omnipotent and impregnable; one lives and moves and has one's being in the isolated safety of the ascetic's padded cell. This isolation and schizoid depersonalization contrasts violently with the warmth and humanity that pervades much of the scriptures. The early monks were exhorted to strive earnestly, to meditate ceaselessly, to work out their own salvation with diligence; but their life was not as an isolated robot in an ivory tower; they trudged through mud and filth begging their food from door to door; they came together to talk and argue with each other — and with monks of different faiths; they are portrayed as individual beings with individual virtues and vices, talents and foibles; they laughed and cried; they squabbled and schemed; and when the day of enlightenment dawned they emerged from the experience, not with awful solemnity, but with whoops of joy and warm-hearted gratitude.

At the other extreme from the over-earnest striver is the drug happy hippie. Revolted by the hypocrisy and bureaucracy of a society

'they never made', thousands of young people are rejecting any kind of conformity or discipline and throwing themselves into the arms of the nearest 'Zen master'. Instead of the rigours of Zen they there find the solace and the exuberant 'reality' of the psychedelic world. That youth is appalled at the prospect of being swamped by a technocratic society is not in itself an unhealthy sign but to escape therefrom into the realms of drug-induced visions is neither healthy nor Buddhist — Zen or otherwise.

The Buddha spoke frequently of the various states of existence — the world of spirits, blissful or tormented, the world of unhappy ghosts, the world of animals, the world of men. The Buddha himself is often referred to as one who has vision into the various worlds of existence. Yet repeatedly he taught that it is on the human plane that the long path of liberation is to be undertaken. Other planes may be more blissful, they may indeed be a temporary 'heavenly reward' for meritorious behaviour, but they do not afford the right soil in which the seeds of enlightenment can grow. The conflicts and confusion, the constant, never-satisfied striving for peace and security, the existential anguish that characterizes human life are the very stuff of which liberation is made. To escape from this conflict into the LSD experience is but a temporary suspension of our human status. When the trip is over — whether it was to the *deva* world of unsurpassed joy or to the dreary wastes of the *peta* realm, whether it was a fleeting visit or a life-long habit — when the trip is over, back we must come to the human world to work out our salvation in the midst of the nuclear arms race and surrounded by our bingo-crazy relations.

The Buddha said:

> "I teach but two things — suffering and the release from suffering."[1]

For the child, to be hungry is suffering, to be fed is the release. For the saint, all compounded things are suffering, the uncompounded alone is free from suffering. The Buddhist way of life consists in the gradual maturing and refining of our experience and knowledge of what pleasure and pain, happiness and distress, security and insecurity are.

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[1] M. i. 130. *Pubbe cāhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañ c'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ.*

Buddhism is a gradual path of maturity, leading away from the infantile dependence on the 'father' to adult integration and inter-dependence. The emphasis is on the process of adolescence, on the gradual passing through each stage on the way to adulthood. It is with these intermediary stages that we are concerned in our practice of the path, and great care must be taken not to imagine that we are further ahead than we really are.

A German *bhikkhu* once remarked: "One must strengthen the ego before one can get rid of it." Too often we are tempted to adopt the theories and ideals of Buddhism, or of any religion, as a defence against the slow, painful process of adolescence. Christ has said that unless one becomes as a little child one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.[1] But this rebirth as a child comes out of the maturity of adulthood and not out of a failure to attain that maturity. So too with the fundamental Buddhist virtue of non-attachment. If we begin with a state of hatred, rejection and despair, we cannot pass immediately from this extreme and begin to cultivate the highest virtue of non-attachment. We should merely pass from an active neurotic state to a passive one. There is a necessary intermediary stage where love replaces hatred, acceptance replaces rejection, and confidence replaces fear.

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[1] Matthew Ch 18 v 3; Mark Ch 9 vv 33–37; Luke Ch 9 vv 46–48.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TO FOOD

In a Buddhist Canonical text, arranged in a numerical form for ease of learning, it is asked, "What is the one principle of life?" And the answer is made, "Food is the sustenance of all beings."[1] And elsewhere it is stated, "All that lives subsists on nourishment."[2] Again it is the one thing that must be thoroughly understood.[3]

Thus from the outset, Buddhism recognises the fact that edible food is the vital nutriment sustaining life, in whatever form it may take. Indeed, health is considered the greatest wealth.[4] Unless we can satisfactorily resolve this problem we can never lead useful and healthy lives or prove of much benefit to the society in which we live.

As food is the main pre-requisite for existence the Buddha therefore rightly says:

> "Monks, in giving a meal, a giver gives five things to the receiver. What five? He gives longevity, beauty, comfort, strength and the power of understanding."[5]

Since long before the time of the Buddha, Brahmins, the hereditary priests of their religion, wastefully sacrificed foodstuffs like wheat, corn, butter, milk etc., in the sacrificial fire in the form of offerings to the gods and thereby exploited all producers of food. The Buddha rightly condemned such wasteful and futile practices. Besides these baneful practices they hoarded large quantities of foodstuffs for themselves. In the *Jātaka* it says:

> "If he wins merit who to feed the flame
> Piles wood and straw, the merit is the same
> When cooks light fires or blacksmiths at their trade,
> Or those who burn the corpses of the dead.

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[1] Khp. 2.
[2] D. iii. 211; A. v. 50.
[3] D. iii. 273.
[4] Dhp. v 204.
[5] A. iii. 42.

"Some worship as a god the breasted flame,
Barbarians give to water that high name:
But both alike have wandered from their road
Neither is worthy to be called a god.

"These greedy liars propagate deceit,
And fools believe the fictions they repeat;
Why do fraud, lies, ignorance prevail?
Why triumphs falsehood — truth and justice fail?"[1]

Through the influence of Buddhism, Indian society largely adopted vegetarianism. However, although many Buddhists, even now, refrain from eating meat, it must be clearly stressed that no prohibitive decree was ever promulgated, doubtless, based on the pragmatic principle that in certain areas of the world people would be compelled to eat meat due to various reasons such as the infertility of the soil. Also the principle of choice must be left to each individual and not be violated with trifling lists of "do's" and "don'ts" on issues of secondary importance. The most important issue being one's intention. Buddhism did, for instance, condemn the killing and selling of animals for food.

It is of vital importance that we should understand the necessity of food based solely on its values to health and well-being if we are to keep free from sickness and live long. Without proper food one cannot lead a healthy life. Many people are susceptible to various diseases mainly due to the lack of nourishing food. Hunger leads to death. Therefore hunger is the greatest illness. One anecdote will illustrate the importance the Buddha himself attached to the importance of food.

The Buddha went to Ālavī to preach the Dhamma to a certain poor man. On that very day the man had gone to seek an ox which he had lost and the Buddha waited for him to return. When he returned, the Buddha, observing that he was hungry, saw to it that he was well served with food. As soon as the poor man's physical suffering had been relieved, his mind became tranquil.[2] Then the Buddha taught him the Dhamma. At the conclusion of his teaching he said:

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[1] Selected verses from Jā. vi. 206–208.

[2] DhA. iii. 261.

"Hunger is the greatest disease.
The aggregates of being are the greatest suffering.
If a man thoroughly understands this,
He has attained *nibbāna*, supreme bliss."[1]

From the above anecdote we should understand that the hunger-stricken devotee should not be inflicted with a sermon. One will not benefit so much from any teaching of religion if one's attention is disturbed by an empty stomach. We must remember the golden saying, "First things first."

Health embraces both body and mind. It is composed not only of resistance to diseases; not only of physiological endurance and the capacity for effort; it consists also in moral strength, mental equilibrium and wisdom. It is therefore useless to teach the Dhamma on the three main Buddhist tenets; morality, concentration and wisdom; if the devotees are afflicted with hunger.

Although food is the main pre-requisite for survival, good health and long life, if one eats too much it paves the way to temptation, craving, disease, ugliness and untimely death. The Buddha advised people to be moderate in food.[2] The Buddha asked one to live with a light stomach, moderate in food, easily satisfied and not gluttonous.[3]

The following anecdote will illustrate the virtues of moderation in eating. One day King Pasenadi of Kosala visited the Buddha while still suffering from the effects of his enormous meal. The Buddha, having noticed the king's uneasiness, instructed the king on the evils of over-eating. He also asked the king's nephew, Suddassana to memorize the following admonition and recite it before the king at meal times.[4]

"If a man gives way to indolence, eats overmuch, spends his time in sleep, and rolls about like a great hog fed on grain,
Such a simpleton enters the womb again and again."[5]

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[1] Dhp. v 203.
[2] S. i. 172; Sn. v 78. *Ahare udare yato.*
[3] *Ūnūdaro, mitāhāro, appicch'ss alolupo.*
[4] DhA. iv. 16; *cf.* S. i. 81.
[5] Dhp. v 325.

"If a man be ever mindful,
If he observes moderation in food,
His suffering will be slight;
He will grow slowly, preserving his life."[1]

The king gradually reduced his meals and found the practice more healthy. His body became light and agile. Later he visited the Buddha and told him that his health had improved considerably.

It is clearly stated that a person who is immoderate as regards his food and who takes it thoughtlessly and unwisely just for the sake of amusement, pride, etc., will have to bear the consequences.[2] It is for reasons of health and general well-being that Buddhist monks have been advised to take only one meal a day before noon and thereafter to drink some kind of fruit juice to slake their thirst.

Buddhism constitutes the Middle Path between the two extremes of self-indulgence *(kāmasukhallikānuyoga)* and self-mortification *(attakilamathānuyoga)*. Today we see these two extremes in practice in certain parts of the world. On the one hand we see in the affluent societies, people over-eating and drinking while in some parts of the world people do not have the wherewithal to keep themselves alive. They live on the borderline of starvation. This is potentially a very explosive situation. If not corrected it could lead to bloody revolutions endangering the lives or economic stability of millions. Therefore it is of prime importance to ponder over this matter and use the food resources of the world to solve this very urgent problem.

More than a third of the world is desperately poor. In the slums around such cities as Rio de Janeiro, Caracas, Massawa, Calcutta and Ho Chi Minh City, many thousands of people live in tiny shacks made out of tin and old wooden crates and exist on the few coins they can earn each day by cleaning the cars of the wealthy. The great powers should realise that spiritual development far outweighs material prosperity which is here today and gone tomorrow. Supply and demand fluctuate — when there is a lot of grain in the West, demand falls and prices fall too. So in the E.E.C. we have 'butter mountains' and 'wine lakes' and farmers burn their crops because they are too cheap to harvest profitably; whilst in parts of Asia, Africa, India and South America, the people starve. Greed is a great

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[1] DhA. iv. 15.

[2] Pug. 21.

evil. Buddhism teaches compassion for those in need and sympathetic-joy for those who are prosperous.

"Thus as a result of goods not accruing to those who are destitute, poverty becomes rife; from poverty becoming rife, stealing increases; from the spread of stealing, violence grows apace; from the growth of violence the destruction of life becomes commonplace; from the frequency of murder both the span of life in those beings and their beauty wastes away. Thus as a result of goods not accruing to those who were destitute, poverty becomes rife: from poverty becoming rife; stealing, violence, murder, lying, evil speech, adultery, abusive and idle talk, covetousness and ill-will, false views, incest, wanton greed and perverted lust, until finally lack of filial and religious piety and lack of regard for the head of the clan grows great[1]."

We cannot possibly expect society to be good if the people are poor and destitute. Each individual in any society contributes to the whole. If people are helped through aid programmes to help themselves, even the poorest countries in the world will grow rich. Wealth should be given to those who are poor by training them to make a living, by building hospitals and creating welfare services and above all by teaching the poorest among them a trade. Christian Aid in India and Africa runs schemes whereby boys and girls in the villages are taught how to grow crops apart from the traditional ones of jute and rice. Weaving and basket-making are taught and schools have been started to teach literacy. There is a sponsorship scheme whereby people in more affluent countries can sponsor children from poorer countries by buying their books and contributing towards the cost of their education. This is a very good form of help. When the children leave the villages they can support themselves with their skills and earn for their families. Many now go on to further or even Higher Education. Some train as doctors and dentists, as teachers and welfare workers and so actively help their fellow countrymen. Everyone and everything is interdependent.

Religious leaders of the world should concentrate on this pressing problem and not spend vast sums on building religious edifices which are not in keeping with the surroundings. Social workers too, should seriously view this matter and pool all their

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[1] D. iii. 66ff.

abilities to find ways and means of solving this very urgent problem. In the *Kūtadanta Sutta* it is said:

> "Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and farming, to them let his majesty the king give food and seed-corn."[1]

In the light of this advice it is clear that the Government should help farmers with subsidies, machinery etc., when and wherever necessary. Scientists and politicians, before embarking on spectacular conquests of other planets, let alone other nations, should urgently confer and ensure a just and equitable distribution of the world's natural resources for the welfare of all humanity.

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[1] D. i. 135.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MODERN WORLD

The man of today is basically the same as his brother of yesterday; he has always asked questions about life and the living of it. Yet, in spite of this constant questioning over the centuries, the majority of men are unable to find a satisfactory answer to their queries. Numerous theories have been put forward for consideration, each one in time being rejected, or modified to afford the infiltration of other ideas. This has led to endless discussion of the theories themselves, as to what is meant by this proposition, whether or not that proposition is based on logical reasoning and so on. In other words, man has been beguiled by theories, whether philosophical or religious, and thus he finds himself no nearer to the answer of this puzzle called life.

What are these questions asked by successive generations of men? Sometimes man is prompted to ask questions about the meaning of life by his observation of things about him, the actions of other people, the beauty of nature, the so-called cruelty of nature, but usually it is brought about by his own suffering or unhappiness, and following upon this, his consequent asking, "Why must man suffer? Why must he endure pain? Why can't he be happy at all times?"

On reflection one finds that the number of calamities possible to befall man are limited, in spite of innumerable variations, to the fundamental facts of his being deprived of that which he wishes to keep, being forced to retain what he would prefer to discard or, with some people, the fact that nothing at all appears to happen. It may be argued that these are effects of calamities, not misfortune themselves, but a disaster is such only in the manner in which it is experienced. To the tenants watching a fire destroy their dwelling it is indeed a calamity, but to the owner, who has his own reasons for wanting both the tenants and the building out of the way, it is a stroke of good fortune. It would not be presumptuous to assume that happiness is the one state sought by all people of all times. The nature of this elusive goal is, however, the object of much discussion, people wish to be happy, but most of them do not know what happiness is, nor where to find it. To some it does not really matter if an answer is found, as time passes by and things manage to sort

themselves out. There are, however, those who begin to wonder if perhaps happiness and suffering are not confined to events and possessions, those who begin to think about themselves and their relationship to their surroundings in a new light. The possession of some delicate and costly material article may be very pleasing to the eye, and we can appreciate the beauty and artistry of its design, but it does not give lasting happiness. Having arrived at this point of self-awareness man is not content to leave it at that, the very nature of this problem will not permit him to ignore it. He begins to observe with a wider perception, to read and think about the opinions of others, and he may make a study of philosophy and the world's religions, but still the nature of happiness eludes him. During the course of his quest he will come across the teaching called Buddhism.

In this age it is possible for anyone to study a great number of subjects, including Buddhism. This has not always been so. As far as Buddhism is concerned, it is only in recent years that publications in any number have been available to the general public, and that this is so, is thanks to the dedicated few who have opened up, by their translations of the sacred texts, an avenue of Eastern wisdom little known to the Western world. Over the last century increasing numbers of people have found this signpost, called the Dhamma, which points the way to happiness; what they do after reading it is up to them. We find therein a spirit of enquiry that does not call for unquestioning belief, or the acceptance of events as being the will of an all-controlling higher being. The man of today is living in a questioning age in which theories and events are examined and discussed by more people than was ever previously possible because of the ease with which one is able to obtain information. Examination and discussion of the theory are not sufficient however, if one is to leave the signpost and set forth along the way. They must be allied with awareness and observation of oneself, and this is the beauty of the Dhamma, or Buddhism, for here we ourselves have the opportunity of experiencing the teaching of the Buddha. We can test these statements and we are free to reject them or accept them, according to our own experiences and capabilities, becoming more confident as our knowledge penetrates deeper into the darkness of uncertainty.

It is not possible for man to run away from the world, for outside of himself there is no world; he is the world, he is responsible for his own suffering and his own happiness. The Buddha makes no promise of salvation for those who merely believe what he

teaches. He teaches a method and what is more, he tells us what we may expect to find at various stages of this method, but we cannot know these stages unless we experience them. He teaches with words, - as we see them today, only ink on paper — which can have no meaning without a corresponding knowledge.

We know that our new car, our house, a beautiful painting pleases us, but we do not always want to be driving the car, in the house or looking at the painting; so we seek other pleasures and so it goes on. If we look behind us we will see a long line of discarded wrecks, once so dear to us, and yet still this insatiable thirst for pleasures is within us. Until man understands the very nature of this restlessness or suffering and the cause of it, he will go on grasping at new experiences in the hope of obtaining lasting happiness. Always it appears to be that happiness is thought of as 'something' which will be presented to us, as something outside of ourselves, and therefore to be sought after. Since man wishes for happiness it follows that he must be unhappy or dissatisfied with life as he finds it. What is the reason for this? In Buddhism we are given four statements to consider, the Four Noble Truths, set forth by the Buddha in his first discourse.[1] These are the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of its Cause, the Truth of its Cessation and the Truth of the Eightfold Noble Path leading to its cessation. Here we have a doorway to a new world, breathtaking in its wisdom, and it is by the study of these truths that man sees the necessity for a completely different outlook if he truly wishes to find the answer to his questions. His present outlook does not change overnight, and there are times when he may not see the necessity for changing it on certain points, but always he has the liberty to progress and learn according to his own ability. His means of study and research are always with him, for he himself is the subject. From these observations he finds that suffering, or more precisely, the unsatisfactory state of affairs as he finds them, lies within his own conception of himself and the value and function of his possessions which are but pillars supporting the notion of his own worth. When his desires are thwarted he suffers, when they are satisfied there is always the possibility that what he has gained may in the future be taken from him. This is indeed the Truth of Suffering. He feels he has put his heart into these things making them his own, whereas in fact, he has

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[1] Vin. i. 10; S. iv. 330, v. 421; Pts. ii. 147.

but laid hands upon them, hugging them to himself in an agony of greed, ever seeking to increase the armful. This unhappy sequence of desiring, grasping and discontent seems endless, with no possibility of cessation. In the Third Noble Truth, however, the Buddha has informed us that it is indeed possible to break free from this bond. We find that this freedom is not to be gained by the finding and clinging to some object we have not yet discovered, but by the cessation of this very craving and clinging which is rooted in ignorance of the true nature of things.

In our observations we discover that nothing can escape from change, nothing stands still, so to speak. How then is it possible to attain to happiness if the object of our desire is based on impermanence. Then we may realise that our idea of happiness itself undergoes a new evaluation, that it may lie not in the wanting, but in the non-wanting of a definite article or state, not in the possession, but in the absence of possession. We may also realise the impossibility of possession, for how can a person possess an object, he does but handle things, use them for a purpose that once achieved ceases to find necessary the very desire that brought them into being, his attitude towards them has changed. Having arrived at this point of observation through his own experience, that suffering is ever present either obviously or in possibility, which is in itself a most unsatisfactory condition, and that this state is linked inseparably with a craving for new experiences and possessions, man realises that his conception of life is based on ignorance, a surface view ever changing with fleeting experiences of sunlight and shadow to lift him up and cast him down at every turn. It would seem then that the way out of this endless running from one experience to another, with its anxiety and unhappiness, is to lessen and finally to eliminate craving, the fuel-gatherer, with its false hopes of eternal satisfaction. How is this to be achieved?

In the Fourth Noble Truth we are shown the Eightfold Noble Path, a way of life in which living is based on Right Understanding of the nature of existence, Right Intention as to actions devoid of self, Right Speech in truthfulness and gentleness, Right Action in freedom from selfish desires, Right Livelihood in that others do not suffer by it, Right Effort in the preventing and overcoming of unworthiness and in the developing and maintaining of worthiness, Right Mindfulness in the observing of bodily actions and of the functions we call mind, Right Concentration in the tranquillity of mind. These are here but

briefly presented, and it is only by the living of them that man will discover their meaning.

We will have discovered by this time that our conception of self is undergoing a change, that we are not thinking in terms of possessing happiness, or of being happy, but that we are questioning this idea of self, and this is the key to the understanding of our problems which we ourselves create by our ignorance. We have been preparing ourselves for a deeper understanding into the nature of our reactions to given circumstances, for we will have discovered by now that the study of the Four Noble Truths has opened up a hitherto unknown field of knowledge. This understanding, however, comes about by a process of preparation, or discipline, not by reading alone, but moral implications are presented, not solely for the purpose of virtue and the leading of a socially accepted moral life, but for the important purpose of affording a sound basis for meditation and wisdom. Strictly speaking moral discipline is control over one's own wishes so that a right decision may be made without reference to oneself as a deciding factor. There is no sense of a judgement being made as to whether a certain action is against the will of a deity outside of ourselves, it is knowing the right thing to do in the sense that the decision will bring about the best results either immediately or in the future. This discipline naturally embraces consideration of other people, generosity, and other virtues. To live contrary to virtue is not evil merely because we are told it is bad, but because such a way of life is based on ignorance and greed, fleeting desires and the idea that the self must be satisfied. It is necessary to get to the roots of these desires and to see that their gratification does not lead to lasting peace.

It is obvious that a distracted mind will not be able to ascertain the cause of the arising of these desires, and to overcome this state of restlessness we find that the practice of meditation, by calming the mind also aids us in achieving a diminishing of the corruptive hindrances that beset us, and thus we are enabled to reach a state of clarity and purity. Thus with purity and meditation our range of vision expands, and with this development of wisdom we are able to discriminate with confidence between the outward appearance and the inner reality.

Man is now placed in a position of responsibility towards himself and towards his fellows, not only on a personal level but on a community level which penetrates further into matters than a mere

following of rules and regulations regarding social behaviour. It is based on a real understanding of the desires that move men to certain actions, and this understanding is made a living force by the warmth and strength of compassion. From this he sees that the following of the Eightfold Noble Path, with its implication of purity, concentration and wisdom penetrates much deeper than the observance of set rules. The meaning of each point must be grasped, even if at first only superficially, so that the inner potential may eventually be realised. These are not steps to be developed one by one in sequence but as a balanced whole so that previous intellectual understanding gradually makes way for the certainty of direct experience.

It will be obvious that throughout this voluntary journey there is the vital force of enquiry, and the choice as to whether or not man undertakes this journey is left entirely to himself. Once embarked, however, he finds that the disciplines of the Eightfold Noble Path are called for, but the further he goes the more he finds that he himself enforces them, in other words, they have now become part of himself, and to go against them would cause him much anguish. They have in fact ceased to be restrictive disciplines. Man is now striving for enlightenment, wisdom, perfection; not happiness as a selfish cure to relieve suffering. The object of his search has changed, and this has come about not by studying words, but by actually applying the advice of the Buddha, by living it.

We have been told that this is a scientific age. The man of today has more knowledge of scientific works than ever before. He also has an idea of the methods used by scientists in their quest for knowledge, and when he examines the teaching called Buddhism he finds that here is a method with which he is familiar in his everyday life. A method of enquiry based on his own observations, his experience of facts as he finds them. He is not pursuing random ideas or playing with theories, some of which are conceptual imaginings of much beauty, but which cannot be proved to be factual. If man can use this scientific method as a means of enabling him to obtain knowledge into the true state of affairs, he will learn much about himself as opposed to what he thinks himself to be. This enquiry is based on the method of mindfulness, which is not complicated by a long process of study or by the need of most men of today for more time, but it can be practised right from this very moment, now. Mindfulness itself, however, is neither analytical nor compassionate, it is simply the observing of events as they occur, physically or mentally without the

cloud of conceptions and imaginings. The teaching of the Buddha has been called the Teaching of the Middle Path, a way in which extremes are not encouraged, and with this constantly in mind, man thus avoids the temptation to develop one aspect of the Dhamma to the detriment of others, resulting in distortion. He sees the value of the analytical scientific method being tempered by the warmth of compassion, and an understanding of the weakness of both himself and others, without condemnation, for it is important to remember that it was after all, his very human experiences of suffering, bewilderment and doubt that prompted him to follow this path in the first place, not the desire for scientific method in itself.

The man of today, if he is of a thoughtful or searching nature, finds in Buddhism a teaching of clarity and directness that appeals to his mind, and a teaching of compassion, without sentimentality, which appeals to his emotional life. Here he has a balanced unity which he can begin to experience from the very moment he himself decides to experience it. He will find that it calls for a full-scale effort. Its very simplicity is its difficulty. The need for constancy can be extremely tiring, and man likes to put up his feet sometimes and forget about it. There is nothing to stop him forgetting about it, as long as he knows the result will be commensurate with the effort, and that if the results are meagre, there is but one way to increase the yield of knowledge.

The teaching of the Buddha is as a flame of beauty in the darkness of grasping, ill-will and ignorance which man calls life. It gives to him who chooses the way, the dignity of responsibility for his own spiritual future. It deepens his knowledge of man, his thoughts and his actions, which together constitute life. For the man who wishes to find the reason for life being the unsatisfactory state of affairs he has discovered it to be, religions of faith have been found wanting. It is surely not possible to accept the ignorance of man as being the will of an omnipotent deity. It is surely equally impossible to claim that man is not ignorant, that he is living to the full extent of his capabilities, and that his life is an example of love and understanding. The experiences of one day, of any week, of any year, will tell us otherwise. It would be foolish to say that men do not experience happiness, but the deciding point of this happiness is based on its roots, on the cause of its arising. If it is based on fleeting emotions it will sooner or later die and give way to discontent. If it is based on knowledge of the nature of mind and the senses

it will eventually result in a tranquillity beyond happiness as a pleasurable state, the depth and stability of which increases according to the depth of understanding. The Buddha made no wild claims. He himself experienced and observed the sorrows of the world and resolved, through his own efforts, to find the cause of this tangle of self. That he succeeded is accepted by a vast number of people today as being sufficient evidence that they too, with due application, can do likewise. Man is now realising the necessity for action, for he sees all around him the forces of ill-will leading to violence and destruction. He turns his gaze to the Dhamma, the teaching of peace and enlightenment. He has discovered that blind belief in the will of an unseen deity is not sufficient to explain away the ignorance and fear by which he is surrounded. He views with respect the doctrines of other teachers, but the man of today wishes to discover truth, he is not content with promises of better things to come, for he knows that enlightenment is not a gift, or a reward for believing in a power outside of himself. He looks to the Dhamma and makes his decision. The journey has commenced.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM

The essential point about the Buddha and his teaching is that the Enlightened One never claimed any connection with a god or a godhead. He was just a human being. The essence of his teaching is the universal question of suffering and the way to its eradication.[1] It can be overcome by individual effort — we cannot rely on any superhuman or external agency. One of the Buddha's attributes is that he is *'Sammāsambuddha'*; that is to say enlightened or awakened **by his own effort alone.**

The Enlightened One began teaching in the Deer Park at Sarnath, near Benares, and the Four Noble Truths are the central points of his doctrine. The first of these is that unhappiness exists everywhere; the second, that the cause for this unhappiness is craving, born of ignorance; the third states that there can be an end to unhappiness; the fourth, that this is to be achieved by following the Middle Path to *nibbāna.*

The Buddha denounced all sacrifices, human or animal, and addressed himself beyond the priesthood to all classes of society. He admitted everyone who wished to join his Order of Monks, and later to his Order of Nuns also. He taught the Law of Cause and Effect in order to help man to see how to overcome undesired effects. The summation of his teaching is to refrain from all evil, to do good and to purify the mind.[2] Evil refers to unwholesome deeds of body, speech and mind. Bodily demerit includes: 1) killing living beings, 2) stealing, 3) sexual misconduct. Verbal wrong actions are: 1) lying, 2) back-biting, 3) harsh speech, and 4) frivolous talk. "Tongue has no bones but breaketh many" the proverb runs. Wrong mental actions include: 1) covetousness, 2) ill-will, and 3) wrong views. The roots of all these wrong actions are greed, hatred and delusion.

Because of ignorance, fear, greed and hatred; wars are fought; man exploits his environment and threatens to ruin the balance of nature for his own ends. Poorer countries are exploited for cheap labour, or its products. Just as a river in flood bears away everything it touches, so do our unwholesome desires and emotions sweep

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[1] M. i. 140.

[2] Dhp. v 183.

through us. One thought can change the world. Such is the power of the mind.

While we are unenlightened 'worldlings', we are subject to all kinds of desires. Neighbour competes with neighbour, politician with politician, nation with nation. Desire is insatiable and merely fuels more desires. The rich man is not satisfied with what he has and envies the one even richer. We become depressed for fear of losing our possessions and at the same time resent anyone having more than we do. Even when we do get more, what we so desired then tends to lose its value for us. Often we get our enjoyment at the expense of others. All over the world the greedy try to snatch the most and by manipulating others to obtain what they desire. The result of all this is yet more suffering, more dissatisfaction and more destruction.

The second current in conjunction with which greed may lead men astray is a combination of anger, hatred, provocation and ill-will. This is also an instinct to try to dominate others. We want them to obey our will but are not prepared to suppress our own! We can be irritated in many ways and the resulting anger may at first be slight, but if it is allowed to go on day after day it grows into deep hatred. When a man is in a rage he is 'beside himself', swept along in the flood of his hatred. Out of this inner anger proceed disputes. "Hatred ceases not by hatred but by love",[1] says the Buddha, but man ungoverned flies in the face of this universal law. Armed conflicts between nations are the result. There can be no hope of universal peace in a 'New Age' unless man changes himself radically. War remains as the greatest relic of barbarism in the midst of modern civilisation, where the findings of science and technology are applied to yet more powerful and sophisticated instruments for the destruction of human life and property. Not even the fact that there is already the capacity to destroy the earth many times over puts a stop to the dangerous and spiteful 'march of progress'. And while we wait helplessly in the shadow of the final Armageddon, we beguile the times by reading in the papers, almost with tolerance, of what has come to be known as 'conventional war'. Conscription is still widespread in the world today and the younger members of almost every family are compelled to serve in the armed forces.

Under these circumstances war spreads wider desolation than when it is waged between limited numbers of men who have

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[1] Dhp. v 5.

voluntarily adopted the profession of arms. In every war, a large number of families are reduced to destitution equally by the destruction of their property as by the loss of those on whom they depend for support. This is the result of anger.

The third current which carries us to misery is delusion or ignorance, which is the primary root of evil. It is more subtle than its companions and when a man is hypnotised by it he cannot distinguish right from wrong; good from bad. Nothing is safe from his scoffs and sneers, not a sense of filial love nor self-sacrifice in any form. No word of praise passes his lips. Instead he feels hurt that his own worth is not sufficiently appreciated. Thinking much of himself, he continually plans to feed his ambitions for personal happiness. But the more they succeed, the more happiness eludes him and any spirit of loving-kindness fades. He loses all feelings of duty towards his fellow men and is deaf to prayers and appeals for mercy. If he helps others, he does so only to increase his gains or sense of self-esteem. He may be of advantage to those who cannot avoid coming into contact with him and who fear to provoke his resentment, but it is conferred without goodwill. Those who can do so, prefer to avoid his company. Perhaps there comes a day when all men turn against him and the world yearns to be rid of him. Then he blames them saying, "What I have done is perfectly right, but people are too ignorant to realise it or too wicked to agree". He is incapable of seeing that it is the poison in himself which has upset the world.

The Buddhist technique to overcome these raging torrents is a careful self-culture known as the development of proper mindfulness *(satipaṭṭhāna)*. "Save yourself, by yourself",[1] are the words of the Buddha. This mindfulness, the guard at the gates of the sense doors, is mastered through the practice of the Eightfold Noble Path. By knowing that the Dhamma can be tested by ourselves, we can realise the Truth and achieve our deliverance, for practice makes perfect.

To plan our meritorious action, we should first understand what merit is and the root of merit. There are bodily skills or wholesome actions *(kusala kamma)*: to abstain from violence and instead devote oneself to loving-kindness; to abstain from sensual misconduct and devote oneself to morality and self-discipline. There are also verbal skills: to abstain from dishonesty and uphold truth; to abstain from harsh language and malicious gossip in order to promote peace and

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[1] Dhp. v 157.

concord; and, by always keeping in mind what is right and of profit to others, to abstain from frivolous chatter. The three mental skills approximate to Right Thought or Intention, the second factor of the Path. They are: 1) thoughts of renunciation, 2) thoughts of loving-kindness to quell anger, and 3) the cultivation of insight in order to uproot delusion. These three skills are called the seeds of nobility within us, seeds that with careful, determined cultivation will grow into sublime powers. Indeed, they have lain latent within us all this time, only waiting for the sun of wisdom to break through the clouds of ignorance, and for the bed of the heart to be softened by love in order for them to grow.

We must forget this 'I' that stands between the world and ourselves. There is no evil in wanting universal happiness and peace. The evil arises when our desires are only for ourselves and not for others, or not in the sacred interests of truth. When we desire such things as we can share with others, our desires become wiser and more unselfish.

Unselfishness includes not only a feeling in the heart, but also the performance of those outward actions by which the feeling is manifested. But the internal feeling is an essential first step. It is the desire to put others perfectly at ease, to save them from every kind of discomfort and to do all we can to promote their happiness. An unselfish man regrets his unwholesome acts or the good he has omitted to do with the motive to do better in future and to make amends for the wrong he has committed. Rather than make himself a burden on his fellow men, he desires to be a blessing to them by making them happy. His unselfish disposition promotes social intercourse and adds to the pleasure of others. He appreciates benefits conferred on him and feels joy at the kindness of his benefactor, for whose sake he has a great desire to pass on those benefits or to give something more when possible.

By being unselfish we develop within ourselves the sense of sympathy. We cannot enjoy happiness worthy of the name without being in sympathy with our fellow men. In every case, happiness is rendered more intense, more lasting, by its being shared with friends. Therefore the best way to be happy is to make others so. To promote the spirit of fellowship, the unselfish man puts himself in the position of others and tries to identify himself with all. His spirit is like that of the trees which bear fruit for all with no sense of discrimination. In short, whatever deed we do, whatever word we utter, whatever

thought we think, should be for the good, peace, happiness and joy, not of ourselves only, but of others in company with ourselves. The result of this is freedom from those roots which have been causing unhappiness, frustration and turmoil.

To promote the spirit of world-fellowship, we must cultivate the seeds of loving-kindness in our hearts and minds until we grow to be all love. To love one another, we should realise that all that have life are brothers. But brotherhood must be applied with justice, for justice is also a natural law. If we do any harm to others, we shall be paid back in like kind. If you throw a stone into a pond, the first effect is that widening rings spread out from its point of contact with the water, but when these rings reach the bank they rebound until the stone is washed by the ripples it first created. In the same way, the effect of our actions come back to us. If they are good, we shall have good effects; likewise bad for bad. To produce good actions, love is essential and so we love everyone, no matter what the colour of his skin, whether he be rich or poor, wise or foolish, good or bad. We should love not only human beings but all beings in the world. In the *Karaṇīyamettā Sutta,* his discourse on love, the Buddha said:

> "As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her child, her only child, so let (the upright man) cultivate goodwill without measure among all beings. Let him cultivate goodwill without measure towards the whole world above, below, around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing or of opposing interests. Let a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind, while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting or lying down. This state of heart is the best in the world."[1]

Most of us have not yet learned this lesson and therefore the sense of unity has faded from our minds, the world of pain and cruelty goes on, and all wild animals flee from us. But there are a few who have learned the lesson. They love everything. No wild animal flees from them and even a tiger will roll at their feet as a pet cat does at our's. Why do our pet animals love us? Because we love them. If we take this lesson to heart, our enemies will become our friends and wild animals our companions.

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[1] Sn. vv 149–151.

Wisdom is the power of seeing things as they truly are, and how to act rightly when the problems of life come to us. The seeds of wisdom are latent in us and when our heart is softened and warm with love it grows in its powers. When a man has stilled greed, hate and delusion, he becomes conscientious, full of sympathy, and is anxious for the welfare of all living beings. "He abstains from stealing and sexual misconduct. He refrains from back-biting; what he has heard in one place he does not repeat to another so as to cause dissention. He unites those who are divided and encourages those who are united. He abstains from harsh speech and uses only such words as are gently, soothing to the ear and which go to the heart. He abstains from empty talk. He speaks what is useful at the right time and what is according to the facts."[1] It is when his mind is purified and his heart tamed by being equipped with morality *(sīla)* that this very morality grows, and sublime wisdom *(paññā)* comes and grows likewise. Knowledge of the properties of the magnetic needle enables the mariner to see the right direction in mid-ocean on the darkest night when no stars are visible; even so, wisdom enables a man to see things as they truly are and to perceive the right way to real peace and happiness, *nibbāna.*

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[1] D. i. 4.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE APPROACH TO THE BUDDHA'S PATH

In Buddhism a unique feature is the omission of any ceremony akin to that of baptism as found in Christianity. However, no importance should be attached to such a ceremony as it is only comparable to the completion of an application form for official purposes; in other words, it signifies no more than the registering of one's acceptance of unrealised tenets of belief. Indeed, it should be well-known that those who follow a religion by conviction, who adjust their lives through self-conversion are, generally speaking, more conscientious than those who have merely been born into that religion.

Of course, strictly speaking, Buddhism is not a religion in the generally accepted sense of the word and it would be more accurate to describe it as an ethico-philosophy to be practised by each follower. And it is only by practice, by a hard, uphill spiritual struggle, that the goal of *nibbāna* can possibly be attained.

Music and similar arts are enjoyed in order to gratify one's emotional desires. Morality *(sīla),* on the other hand, is indispensable to the spiritual life which cannot conceivably be fulfilled by sense pleasures and is therefore, an essential factor by which we may determine a truly cultured individual.

What then, marks one's entry into Buddhism? The quality required is ***saddhā***, meaning confidence based on knowledge but often mistranslated as faith. The Buddha said, "Confidence is the companion to the person and wisdom issues commands to him."[1] In the same connection, the great *Mahāyānist* philosopher, Nāgārjuna — the founder of the *Mādhyamika* School — says in a section of the voluminous ***Prajñāpāramitā*** literature, "Confidence is the entrance to the ocean of the Laws of the Buddha and knowledge is the ship in which one can sail on it." *Saddhā* is occasionally interpreted as faith, meaning putting one's trust in something external to oneself, for example, the belief in God. But Buddhist *saddhā* does not identify itself with any such concept which is unrelated to normal everyday human experience.

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[1] S. i. 38.

The *Yogācārin* philosopher, Asanga, says, "As ether is all-pervading, so also is the Buddha all-pervading in the world of living beings. The reflection of the moon cannot be seen in a broken water-vessel, so also the reflection of the Buddha cannot be seen in a soiled mind."[1]

Briefly then, in order to be a good Buddhist one must be ethical, that is to say, one must live in accordance with a minimum of five moral precepts or rules of training *(sikkhāpada)* so as to lessen the grip which sense desires have over the mind. Formal ceremonial in accepting them is considered quite unnecessary, the prime object being that, through their influence, one may become one's own master; to be able to examine one's state of inner life and direct one's thoughts and desires so as to fulfil a rational, meaningful existence. Meditation is the main means whereby one may gain mastery over oneself, leading inevitably to ***paññā*** or a knowledge of things 'as they really are'. The Buddha categorically points out how one should tread the path, as follows:

> "By confidence, by morality, by energy, by meditation, by discernment of the law, put aside this great dissatisfaction, endowed with knowledge, good behaviour and mindfulness."[2]

Hak-Rak-Ten, a 13th century Chinese poet, author and statesman, once visited an eminent monk and asked for instruction in the essentials of Buddhism. Expecting some abstruse, philosophical answer, he was taken aback when the monk replied:

> "Abstention from all evil, Perfecting of good deeds,
> Purifying of one's mind, This is the teaching of the Buddhas."[3]

The poet retorted, "But every child of three summers knows this stanza."

"Every child of three summers may know this stanza," replied the monk, "but even a silvery-haired man of eighty years fails to put it into practice."[4]

Hence, as is apparent, this single simple stanza covers the whole field of the Buddha's teaching which is threefold: morality *(sīla)*,

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[1] *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* CH IX, pp 15, 16.
[2] Dhp. v 144.
[3] Dhp. v 183.
[4] 'Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot' 69, 70.

concentration *(samādhi)* and wisdom *(paññā)*. In a succinct manner this verse illustrates exactly what is good or bad or, more accurately, what is skilful or wholesome *(kusala)* and what is unskilful or unwholesome *(akusala)*.

Morality consists of the abstention from ten unwholesome deeds:

1. Killing *(pāṇātipātā)*,
2. Stealing *(adiṇṇadānā)*,
3. Sexual misconduct *(kāmesu micchācārā)*,
4. Lying *(musāvādā)*,
5. Back-biting *(pisunāvācā)*,
6. Abusive speech *(pharusāvācā)*,
7. Gossiping *(samphappalāpā)*,
8. Covetousness *(abhijjhā)*,
9. Ill-will *(vyāpāda)*,
10. Holding false views *(micchādiṭṭhi)*.[1]

These are the negative aspects of Buddhist ethics. For the positive aspect we have the ten perfections. (See pages 1, 129).

Summed up, therefore, the above advise one to cease from wrong-doing to promote well-being and to enlighten the ignorant. There are four ways by which one may serve or help other beings: by charitable acts *(dāna)*, by loving words *(piyavacana)*, by sharing one's possessions *(atthacariyā)* and by treating everybody equally *(samānattatā)*.[2]

Dāna — This should be practised without expecting any reward. In this way, one's acts will not be soiled by craving *(taṇhā)*, conceit *(māna)* and false view *(diṭṭhi)* but will be accompanied by compassion *(karuṇā)* and wisdom *(paññā)*. Giving should always be free and open, not limiting the amount nor restricting the circle of recipients to those who are one's friends or co-religionists.

Piyavacana — Kindly and pleasant speech should be addressed to all sentient beings. All beings should be included when one meditates on *mettā* which has the power to transform the hearts of those who are ill-disposed towards oneself. Just as flowers can only blossom with the aid of the sun's rays, so also the heart can only open itself to others with the power of the rays of *mettā*.

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[1] A. ii. 59, 219.

[2] A. ii. 32.

Atthacariyā — The supreme example of this ideal is that of the Buddha when he appeared amongst his fellow human beings and shared his Enlightenment with them by always caring for their welfare and holding out the opportunity of attaining his exalted achievement in the same manner.

Samānattatā — By serving others, one serves oneself. Hence, the spiritual law demands that one identifies oneself with others. As the *Dhammapada* says:

> "Likening others to oneself, one should
> neither kill nor cause to kill."[1]

The approach to the Buddha's path, therefore, does not require prayers or worship, nor does the path contain anything of an esoteric nature, but consists simply in a day-to-day life of love and sympathy with all that breathes.

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[1] Dhp. v 129. Cp. *Bhagavadgītā* vi. 32; *Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparva,* 113, 6,8; *Hitopadeśa, Analects,* iv. 15; xv. 2.

CHAPTER NINE

THE THREE REFUGES

There is only one way to become a Buddhist and that is to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and put his teaching into practice in one's life. Buddhist philosophy recognises certain 'fetters' which hamper an individual's growth towards liberation. One of these is 'the belief in rites and rituals', the mistaken assumption that by going through a special ceremony or by following some religious duty, one can be saved. Little wonder then that there is no Baptismal service in Buddhism.

What, then, marks one's entry into Buddhism? The required quality is ***saddhā*** which is 'confidence based on knowledge'. Another interesting translation is 'the confidence that there is a goal to be reached'. Before one can begin to seriously follow the Buddha's path, there must arise within one — however falteringly — the confidence that there is a path to be trodden and a goal to be reached. This initial confidence may then be strengthened gradually, as experience teaches us that it was well founded. Yet always, throughout one's long journey, this response of the heart, this awakening of confidence, will precede, enabling one to take each new step in the dark.

It is no doubt in recognition of this repeated pattern — initial confidence leading to a willingness to experiment, which in its turn brings confirmation of the original vision and provides the basis from which a further step can be envisaged — that the Buddhist custom of ***saraṇāgamana*** was instituted and developed.

Every religion worthy of the name has certain articles in which its followers have confidence. It is these articles of belief which awaken the religious impulse in man and inspire him to lead the religious life. They give concrete shape as it were to abstract principles around which the followers of a religion rally. It may thus be said that it is these articles of belief which give rise to the institutional forms of religion. The organised form of a religion cannot exist without them, in fact no movement whatsoever can be operative and successful unless organised in the institutional form. Buddhism is no exception; the Three Refuges are the articles in which its followers show their confidence.

The Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, also known as the *Tiratana* or the Triple Gem, form the Three Refuges *(tisaraṇa)*. The Buddha is the one who has attained to full enlightenment after fulfilling the Ten Perfections. The Dhamma is the doctrine preached by a Buddha. The Saṅgha is the Order of the Noble disciples who have practised the teachings and realised the Dhamma to varying degrees. For the same reason they are known as the *Ariya Saṅgha* or community of Noble Ones (as opposed to the community of ordained monks).

Some early Buddhist scholars have referred to another interpretation of *Saraṇa* and for that matter *Tisarana* based on the following saying of the Buddha:

> "O young man, living beings have **kamma** as their property, their inheritance, progenitor, relative and refuge."[1]

In this passage emphasis is on ***paṭisaraṇa*** or ***saraṇa***. Kamma in the present context refers to the *kusala dhammas* or skilful states. Now the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha can be objects of wholesome thoughts *(kusala cittāni)* so while *saraṇa* has a direct reference to kamma it would have only an indirect reference to the Triple Gem. For the same reason, according to this interpretation, *saraṇa* in its primary sense means *kusala,* but has a secondary, meaning the Triple Gem. This interpretation of *saraṇa* is too wide and also too superficial in nature. Many other things both relevant and irrelevant could be included within such a definition, therefore, we reject it and keep within the bounds of the traditional interpretation. Accordingly, by *saraṇa* one has to understand *tisaraṇa* or the Three Refuges.

Saraṇāgamana, or the taking of the Refuges, is as old as Buddhism itself, it being on record that shortly after the enlightenment of the Master two merchants named Tapassu and Bhalluka, of Ukkalā, who, while on their way to Rājagaha, happened to come to the place of enlightenment, offered him cakes and honey and they expressed their complete confidence in the Buddha and Dhamma.[2] The question of taking refuge in the Saṅgha could not at that time arise, for the Saṅgha had not yet come into existence. It may be

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[1] M. iii. 203–6; A. v. 288, 291. *Kammassaka, manava, sattā kammadāyāda kammayoni kammabandhu kammapaṭisaraṇo.*

[2] Vin. i. 3f; A. i. 26; UdA. 54; Jā. i. 80.

remarked here that by their taking of refuge, the foundation of the institutional form of the religion was laid.

The five ascetics[1] to whom the Buddha preached the first discourse formed the nucleus of the Saṅgha. Yasa of Benares was the next to be admitted to the Order. His parents and wife were the first lay devotees to profess their confidence in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.

The taking of the three refuges involves the three-fold repetition of the following Pali formula:

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi	To the Buddha I go for refuge.
Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi	To the Dhamma (teaching) I go for refuge.
Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi	To the Saṅgha (Order of monks) I go for refuge.

To the sceptical westerner, such incantation no doubt smacks of idolatry, superstition and 'oriental passiveness'. Yet taking refuge in the Buddha implies no personal guarantee that he himself will effect the arrival at the goal of any of his followers. On the contrary, he says,

> "Surely by oneself is evil done, by oneself one becomes pure; by oneself is evil avoided, by oneself one becomes pure. Purity and impurity are of the individual. No one can purify another."[2]

When referring to progress towards the goal he frequently used the expression "Having thoroughly understood and experienced for himself".[3]

Indeed the *Tisaraṇa* would probably be more acceptable to the western mind if, instead of the time-honoured 'refuge' the word 'guide' were used. The first refuge might then be translated as "I seek to rely on the Buddha to guide me in my search."

According to the doctrine of kamma, future happiness is a direct result or continuation of maintaining a satisfactory standard of conduct in the present. But there was wrong action in the past which must produce its effect in the present and in the future. If, inevitably, one

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[1] *'Pañcavaggiya'*, Jā. i. 65f; AA. i. 78–84; ThA. ii. 1ff. [2] Dhp. v 165.
[3] Vin. i. 9, 35; D. i. 12; M. i. 35, Sn. p 16; *passim: Sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā.*

reaps the results of one's actions, good or bad, and there is no means of avoiding the results on the strength of the moral excellence of another person, the best that can be done to gain secure and lasting happiness is to cut down the evil actions and increase the good ones. There is freedom of will in making a choice, but clearly there must be cultivation of vision and discernment to detect which choice should be made. Of cultivation of will-power and cultivation of discernment the Buddha's teaching stresses the latter more than the former, for, since blind obedience is not encouraged, unless a person is convinced that he is pursuing a wrong course he is unlikely to abandon it if it seems attractive. We find in the *Dhammapada:*

> "If, by renouncing a relatively small happiness, one sees a greater happiness; the wise man abandons the small happiness in consideration of the greater happiness."[1]

It is therefore necessary that one should be willing to discern a possible comparison and be able to draw it.

Such matters, are, however, not evident in the devotion and pageantry associated with Buddhism in the Buddhist countries, and the mental attitude of persons participating in these must be made clear. The central tangible object of a ceremonial display consists, almost always, in a *Buddha-rūpa,* or image of the Buddha, though such images were unknown until the first century B.C. Previously, scenes which included the Buddha, were depicted with a bodhi tree, wheel, lotus or footprint representing the Buddha. It is generally considered that non-Indian influences, notably perhaps the Greek, brought about the representation of the Buddha in the manner of a human figure. But a Buddhist goes before an image and offers flowers or incense not to the model but to the Buddha, recollecting his virtues such as Enlightenment; he goes as a mark of gratitude and reflects on the perfection of the Buddha, meditating on the transiency of the fading flowers. As he offers the flowers the Buddhist recites:

> *"Pūjemi Buddhaṃ kusumena 'nena*
> *Puññenam etena labhāmi mokkhaṃ;*
> *Pupphaṃ milāyāti yathā idam me,*
> *Kāyo tathā yāti vināsabhāvaṃ."*

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[1] Dhp. 290.

> "With diverse flowers I do homage to the Buddha and through this merit may there be release. Even as these flowers fade, so does my body approach dissolution."[1]

This is not a canonical text but is a very old traditional verse.

Though an image or some such symbol is useful to the ordinary person in the matter of helping him to concentrate his attention, an intellectual could dispense with it since he would direct his thoughts, probably concentrating on a passage such as the following:

> *"Iti pi so bhagavā, arahaṃ, sammāsambuddho, vijjācaraṇa-sampanno, sugato lokavidū, anuttaro, purisadammasārathī satthādevamanussānaṃ, buddho bhagavā" ti*
>
> "Such indeed is the Exalted One, an *Arahant,* Fully Enlightened, complete in special wisdom and virtue, happy, knower of the worlds, an incomparable guide of trainable men, a teacher of gods and men, a Buddha."[2]

But genuine reverence for the Buddha is to be measured only by the extent to which one follows his teachings.

> "He who, having entered on the course, practises in conformity with the Dhamma, pays reverence to the Tathāgata."[3]

How does this attitude affect the moral outlook of the Buddhist? In contrast to the theistic religions where man is a subservient creature, for ever below God or gods until he or they should feel inclined to raise his status, the Buddhist has it in his power to rise as high as he likes provided he is willing to make the effort. The Buddhist's mentality is never enslaved; he does not sacrifice freedom of thought or freedom of will. Here is the advantage of *saddhā,* confidence born of knowledge, over blind faith. The Buddhist pilgrim starts out on a worthwhile journey in happy expectancy, with plenty of equipment and a good chance of success; he is never a "miserable sinner".

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[1] For this and other similar verses see the *"Handbook of Buddhists'*, Hammalawa Saddhātissa, publ. Mahābodhi Society of India, Benares 1956.
[2] Vin. iii. 8; M. i. 335; S. i. 155; A. v. 65; *passim:*
[3] S. iii. 85; A. ii. 33.

The second guide is the Dhamma, the teaching. The example of the Buddha's own life is a great help to those wishing to attain a similar goal, just as the life of Christ affords a pattern to inspire and guide the sincere Christian. The Buddhist has a second guide in the detailed teaching handed down through the ages, just as the Christian has a guide in the sermons and parables of Christ recorded in the gospels. The Buddhist, however, is yet more fortunate in that the Buddha lived for many years after his enlightenment and had the time to develop and perfect a detailed philosophy, a code of discipline and a careful step by step analysis of the path to be taken and the various states to be achieved and transcended. In the course of his teaching life the Buddha encountered thousands of people, with differing educational, social, moral and religious backgrounds. He adapted and refined his message to suit the needs and capabilities of kings and beggars, prostitutes and ascetics. The modern-day Buddhist can, therefore, turn confidently to the Dhamma for support, knowing that this teaching has been developed to incorporate all sorts and conditions of men. As he begins to put the teaching into practice, however, the follower of the Buddha comes to have a much more sure and intimate reason for relying on the Dhamma: he comes to realise the truth of it by his own personal experience. Though he still may know only a little he no longer relies on hearsay but has confidence based on knowledge. He reaffirms his 'going for refuge in the Dhamma' because he finds that it is in accordance with his own, probably painfully acquired, experience.

The third refuge is the Saṅgha, the Community of Noble Ones; past, present and future. The realisation that millions of men and women have followed the Buddha's teaching, have decided to devote their whole energy and attention to it, and have found it a valid and satisfying way of life — this is the third guide for the Buddhist. Saṅgha often refers in particular to the monks but strictly speaking it refers to those who have walked in the footsteps of the Buddha and reaped the fruit of their labours.

Here it has to be noted that *Tisaraṇāgamana* has a significance not only to the lay devotee but to the members of the monastic order as well. It is evident from the books of discipline *(vinaya)* that in the beginning the going forth *(pabbajjā)* and higher ordination *(upasampadā)* were performed by taking *Tisaraṇa* and it was only at a later stage that rules and regulations were introduced so *Tisaraṇa* occupies a very important place in the institutional form of the religion.

CHAPTER TEN

THE SADDHĀ CONCEPT IN BUDDHISM[1]

In Buddhism the concept of confidence is referred to in Pali as ***saddhā*** and in Sanskrit as ***śraddhā***. *Saddhā* is not faith, as usually translated, but is confidence born out of conviction. According to Buddhist philosophy it is a purifying mental factor in the mind and has a deeper philosophical meaning than that of mere confidence. Firstly, it is a confidence born out of understanding or conviction of the Four Noble Truths. Secondly, it is a feeling of reverence or esteem which a follower accords to a personality or a set of doctrines. Thirdly, it implies an earnest hope of execution and realises ethical principles of one's innate morality. Asanga, the well known Buddhist philosopher of the fourth century A.D., has pointed out three aspects of *saddhā;* i) full and firm conviction that a thing is; ii) serene joy and good qualities; and iii) aspiration or wish to achieve an object in view.[2] Buddhism places emphasis on seeing *(dassana)* things in their true perspective, not on the faith or selfish desire for self-survival which blinds man. If he sees clearly, even the so-called Self *(ātman)* does not and cannot exist. It is very important that one who wishes to obtain unfailing success in spiritual progress has confidence in the Dhamma because such development is based mainly on confidence. Because inner development is so based, one who lacks it is sure to fall from his virtue and practice of meditation. Confidence is the first of the seven treasures *(saddhādhana)* of the noble *(ariya).* It is the first mental power *(bala);* it is the first ethical faculty *(indriya)* of the mind. It has a great magnetic power which generates essential mental properties of energy, mindfulness, concentration, and right understanding. It also eliminates the mental hindrances of sensual desire *(kāmacchanda),* ill-will *(vyāpāda),* obduracy of mind and mental factors *(thīnamiddha),* restlessness and anxiety *(uddhacca kukkucca),* and uncertainty *(vicikicchā).* It maintains a brightness and clarity of mind.

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[1] This paper was originally read at a seminar of the Department of Buddhist Studies at Otani University, Kyoto, in the Autumn of 1978.

[2] *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* Ed. Pralhad Pradhan, Visva-Bhārati, Santinikelan, 1950, p 6.

Confidence in the Dhamma begins with a temporary conviction of a morally wholesome object, but gradually develops to a form of unshakeable trust in the Perfect One, his teaching, and his noble Order. The Buddha has denounced blind faith and pointed out that it cannot help his follower in any way in his self-purification. He always emphasised that one should believe in his teaching only after having understood it. He often praised the one who is endowed with confidence based on knowledge. This confidence is called *saddhā* in Buddhist terminology. The understanding on which it is based may sometimes be weak and sometimes strong. The Buddha compared *saddhā* to the confidence which a patient has in his doctor, or a student in his teacher. The more benefit the patient receives from his doctor's treatment and advice, the more *saddhā* he has in him. Similarly, the more easily the student learns his lessons and the more successful he is in his examinations, the more confidence he has in his teacher. If the doctor's prescription does his patient no good, the patient begins to lose his *saddhā*. In his own teaching the Buddha has said:

> "As a wise man tests gold on a touchstone, by heating and cutting, so you monks should test my words by practice, and not accept them simply due to reverence towards me."[1]

The Buddhist's confidence in the Buddha is just the kind one has in a good physician or teacher. They have substantial grounds for it. The teachings of the Buddha offer them what they can see and prove empirically as to the nature of the world. They know that his method is effective in putting an end to unhappy conditions. Lastly, it invites them to "come and see" *(ehipassiko)* for themselves. They are asked to suspend their doubts only until after they have clear proof by direct experience that the teaching is acceptable. This comes with the first attainment after which normal doubts arise no more.

In the Buddha's teaching the supreme power is the natural law of cause and effect from which comes the moral order of kamma or volitional actions *(cetanā)* and results *(vipāka)*. The ethical teaching of the Buddha is intrinsically a part of man's highest purpose, which is to gain his release from the painful condition of repeated births

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[1] *Tatvasaṅgraha,* vol. ii. v 3588.

which is called *saṃsāra*. The Buddha has said that he only points out the way exactly as the doctor advises treatment for his patient:

> "It is for you to exert and practise;
> Tathāgatas only point out the way."[1]

The Buddha is regarded as a teacher *(satthā)*. After realising the truth himself, he has taught it to the world. Buddhism is not a revelation but a path of deliverance discovered by the Buddha through his own efforts. Out of compassion he taught it to humanity. He asked them to test its validity in the light of their own reason, understanding, and experience. The Buddha most emphatically warned his disciples against putting blind faith in the authority of his Triple Canon *(tipiṭaka)* or tradition. This is clear in a formal discourse called the ***Kālāma Sutta***, — the Charter of Free Inquiry given by the Buddha. He said in it:

> "Come, O Kālāmas, do not go upon tradition; do not go upon hearsay; do not go upon correspondence with the scriptures; do not go upon supposition; do not go upon inference; do not go upon mere reasoning (logic); do not go upon your pre-conceived notions; do not go upon a person's seeming ability; do not go upon the thought that this ascetic is our teacher. But, Kālāmas, when you yourselves know (by observation, experience, and right judgement) 'Such things are bad; such things when undertaken and followed lead to harm and ill' — then you should not accept and follow such things. Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves 'These things are moral; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things when undertaken and performed, conduce to well-being and happiness' — then do you live acting accordingly."[2]

The Buddha never attempted to persuade his followers to have any submissive faith in him or his teaching. He trained his disciples in the ways of intelligent enquiry. The enquiring Kālāmas he answered saying:

> "It is proper for you, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful."[2]

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[1] Dhp. v 276.

[2] A. i. 189.

He does not want us to accept anything that does not accord with truth, without reasoning. He asks us to apprehend things as they really are *(yathābhūta)*.

On one occasion a millionaire named Upāli, a fervent follower of Niganṭha Nātaputta (i.e. Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism), approached the Buddha, and thoughtfully listened to his teaching; *saddhā* arose in him and forthwith he expressed his willingness to become a follower of the Buddha. But the Buddha said: "Of a truth, Upāli, make a thorough investigation." Then in his great delight Upāli said: "Had I manifested my readiness to become a follower of another creed they would have taken me around the city in procession and proclaimed that such and such a millionaire had embraced their faith. But, sir, your reverence counsels me to make further investigation. I feel the more delighted at this saying of yours." Upāli then sought refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.[1]

According to the Buddha one should not follow the teacher blindly nor seek refuge in the hope that he will be saved by personal salvation, saintliness or mere glimpses of the serene personality of the master. He should not aspire to be purified by the master's own purity.

Vakkali, a Brahmin who was proficient in the Vedas, became a monk. He never tired of glimpsing the Buddha and spent all his time following him about. The Buddha said to him:

> "O Vakkali, what is the use of seeing my foul body.
> One who sees the Dhamma sees me."[2]

The early Buddhist scriptures are contained in the Pali Canon *(tipiṭaka)* which the disciples of the Buddha compiled at Rājagaha in northern India under the patronage of King Ajātasattu after the passing away of the Buddha. It is quite possible that in the course of the twenty-five centuries which have elapsed since then some interpolation may have crept in here and there. Still, it can be said with full confidence that this collection of books is the nearest and most reliable source of the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddhists read these books in order to understand the teachings of the Buddha and to get inspiration to follow the path taught by him. They are

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[1] M. i. 371f.

[2] S. ii. 120; Iti. 90f.

regarded as the advice of the great teacher to his disciples. They are not to be accepted and believed, but to be understood and practised.

The Buddha likened his teaching to a raft: "The doctrine I teach you, O monks, is like a raft to be used to cross over *saṃsāra* (the stream of existence), not as something to be held fast to. If a man comes by a great stretch of water and sees no way of crossing to the opposite shore which is safe and secure so he fashions a raft out of sticks, branches, leaves, and grasses and lashings and uses it to cross over to the opposite bank. Suppose now, O monks, he were to say 'This raft has been of much use to me so I will put it on my head and carry it with me as I proceed on my journey' — will he be doing the correct thing with this raft?"[1]

The monks agreed this action was not correct and the Buddha added the obvious answer: "Even so, monks, the doctrine taught by me is for crossing over and not for holding fast to." Merely to hold fast means to adopt the 'labels' of the belief without taking the trouble to practise what the belief advises, implies or involves. In one of the discourses the Buddha warned a Brahmin not to rush to hasty conclusions about him or the path he has shown or his disciples who have reached that path. In respect to everything there are degrees and grades, and one should not think of anything as belonging to the highest state in the absence of sufficient evidence. He went on to explain this fact with the help of the elephant's footprint simile: "An ordinary man, on entering a forest, sees a large footprint and comes to the conclusion, 'Indeed, it is the footprint of the great royal elephant.' But the skilled elephant-tracker looking at the footprint would say: 'This is not necessarily the footprint of the royal elephant. There are stunted she-elephants who also have such large footprints.' The skilled elephant-tracker follows the footprints until he perceives the elephant's shoulder has knocked against the trees at a high level and has grazed off high things in the forest. Even then he does not come to the conclusion that one of them is the footprint of the royal elephant, as there are other elephants, too, who could cause the same signs as the great royal elephant himself. The skilled elephant-tracker only comes to the conclusion that it is the great royal elephant when he sees it with his own eyes. Just so, the individual should go through various stages in inner development, not counting any as the highest stage, but persevere until he ultimately realises the truth."[2]

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[1] M. i. 134f.

[2] *Ibid. cf. Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta* 175–84.

The Buddha said:

> "Confidence is an assistant to a person; actually understanding properly commands him."[1]

What does a Buddhist of *saddhā* do when he gets to the temple? In the temple one finds the image of the Buddha which serves as a token of inspiration. He finds it helpful in concentrating on his teachings. He also makes an offering to the shrine. The offering of flowers and incense express his homage and gratitude and indicate no intrinsic value. His offerings are his recognition of the Buddha's sublime qualities. They are an outward indication and expression that he takes the Buddha and Dhamma as his guide. He accepts the way of life as laid down by the Buddha. Almost all religions refer to confidence in terms of faith. The Buddha, however, urged his followers to see and to understand things for themselves.

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[1] S. i. 38: *Saddhā dutiyā purisassa hoti, Paññā c'enaṃ pasāsati.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE BUDDHIST MONK AND SOCIETY

In the very early days after the Buddha's enlightenment, before the formation of the Saṅgha, only two refuges could be taken; such a declaration was made by two tradesmen, Tapassu and Bhalluka. The circumstances were as follows. For seven weeks after his enlightenment, the Buddha remained in the neighbourhood of the Bodhi tree experiencing the bliss of *nibbāna;* at the close of the seventh week when he was at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, two merchants passed on the road from Ukkala.[1] A *deva* spoke to them, and, pointing out the tree where the Buddha sat, told them he had recently become enlightened and instructed them to offer him rice cakes and honey-comb as a sign of reverence. The Buddha accepted the food, and when he had removed his hand from the bowl they said, "We take our Refuge, Sir, in the Blessed One and in your Dhamma; may you receive us as lay devotees *(upāsakas)* who from this day on, while our life lasts, have taken their refuge." Tapassu and Bhalluka were the first lay-disciples of the Buddha, and since they could take only the two Refuges, were known as the ***dvevācika upāsakas***.[2]

Seven weeks after his enlightenment at Buddhagayā in Bihar, the Buddha came to the Deer Park near Benares. There he gave his first discourse to five ascetics who were his associates when he was endeavouring to attain enlightenment. They were the first to receive his teaching. Then the nucleus of the Order of *Bhikkhus* was constituted. The formation of the Saṅgha took place after the first declaration of the Dhamma but the term ***tevācika*** (Three-word formula) is used in Pali literature for the first time in connection with the parents of Yasa of Benares. During the Buddha's stay in the vicinity of that great city, his expositions attracted many people by

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[1] Ukkalā is a district in the region identified with modern Orissa (Cunningham's *'Ancient Geography of India'*, p. 733). They were on the way to Rājagaha in the middle country of India (Jā. i. 80). The *Mahāvastu* places Ukkalā in the Uttarāpatha or Northern district, (Mhvu. iii. 303). The *Mahābhārata* mentions Ukkalās in the lists of tribes (Mhbv. iv. 122; ix. 365). Some say that these two tradesmen were Burmese coming from Rangoon.

[2] Vin. i. 4.

reason of their originality, and one night he was visited by Yasa, the son of a wealthy gold-smith. Yasa, tired of the luxury and constant entertainment in which he had been brought up, came to Isipatana where the Buddha was staying, and was instructed by the Buddha who discoursed to him on the evils and vanity attendant on worldly desires, pointing out the path to deliverance. Yasa's father, missing his son from home, went in search of him; following his track to the Buddha. The Buddha comforted him and discoursed to him also, whereupon he took the Threefold Refuge *(tisaraṇa)* thereby becoming the first *tevācika upāsaka,* using the three-word formula. In the meantime Yasa, who had heard the instruction given to his father, attained to *Arahantship.* As he was free from all attachments and could not therefore return to the worldly life, he was ordained and became the seventh member of the Saṅgha. The first women to become lay-disciples *(upāsikās)* were Yasa's mother and wife, both of whom used the *tevācika* formula.[1]

Later, fifty more people heard his teaching and entered the Order. After the rainy season the Buddha sent them in different directions to teach the Dhamma to others. The Buddha set out from Benares eastwards — in the direction of the great cities of the time, first being the Magadhan capital, Rājagaha. In course of his travel the Buddha accepted a great number of followers and they were ordained into the Order by his senior disciples.

The word '***Saṅgha***' derives from ***saṃ*** plus ***hṛ,*** and means, literally: 'comprising'. In practice it signifies 'multitude' or 'assemblage', but in Buddhist terminology the Saṅgha is one assembly and one only, namely, the Order of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs.* This is without distinction of race, nationality, caste or age. Within the Saṅgha the only distinction is that of the ***Ariya Saṅgha,*** the 'Noble Ones' and the ***Sammuti Saṅgha.*** The former are sometimes referred to as saints but correctly described they are those who have 'entered the stream' *(sotāpatti),* or in other words, attained to the supramundane plane. The *Ariya Saṅgha* is represented conventionally by the *Sammuti Saṅgha,* but it is in the *Ariya Saṅgha* that the Buddhist takes refuge since it consists of those who have realised the Truth and are able to teach it from their own experience.

Here, however, we have something of an anomaly. Of the persons who have 'entered the stream', and who therefore belong to

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[1] Vin. i. 15–18.

the *Ariya Saṅgha,* some may be laymen and not, therefore, a member of the *Sammuti Saṅgha.* The Saṅgha, in the usual sense comprises exclusively *bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs* and novices; it does not include *upāsakas* and *upāsikās.* A term *'parisa'* meaning 'company' may be used correctly to include both lay and ordained disciples but the terms *'parisa'* and *'Saṅgha'* are not interchangeable. The ***Kaṅkhāvitaranī,*** a commentary on the Book of Discipline *(Pāṭimokkha),* categorically explains that an assembly of at least four *bhikkhus* is called a Saṅgha.

In practice, both lay disciples and monks assent to the doctrine and though the preaching of the Dhamma is an auxiliary activity for the *bhikkhu* he is not a 'missionary' in the modern sense of the term since he does not engage in proselytizing. Various definitions have been offered for the word *'bhikkhu'.* Buddhaghosa defines a *bhikkhu* as one who sees danger in the stream of existence *(saṃsāra).*[1] I therefore suggest '**seer**' as an alternative rendering for *bhikkhu.* The Sanskrit ***bhikṣu*** derives from ***bhikṣ,*** beggar, and long before the Buddha's day a Bhikṣu represented one of many types of ascetics, as did the wanderers *(paribbājaka),* finders of subsistence *(ajivaka)* and others; now the terms *'bhikkhu'* and *'bhikṣu'* are exclusively Buddhist and they are not beggars. Though they may make spontaneous requests to their parents or close relatives, and may also state a need to professed supporters who have previously requested them to ask for anything they want, the rules of a *bhikkhu* do not permit him to ask for anything from any other person though he may accept gifts of the four requisites, *viz.* robes, alms-food, shelter and medicine, if they are offered to him.

Nor is it correct to refer to the *bhikkhu* as a 'monk' since he is not bound by any vows; he may, in fact, leave the Order at any time he pleases. Most important in view of frequent mistranslation, he is not a 'priest'. Buddhism recognises no God, so there is no being on whose behalf the *bhikkhu* could act as intermediary with man, either for the asking of favours, or for any other reason. Moreover, no such intervention as the asking of pardon for misdeeds is possible since, automatically, one suffers or enjoys the results of one's kamma. Possibly the nearest translation of the word *'bhikkhu'* is 'monk'.

The Buddha was once asked by Mahālī the Liccavi if it was for the cultivation of *samādhi* that the *bhikkhus* led the religious life under him. He replied that it was not, but that there were "other

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[1] Vism. p 3.

things, higher and more excellent"[1] for which they did so. The form in which he proceeded to describe them, though considerably simpler than that adopted in many other places[2] brings forward clearly the continuity between the moralities side of his teaching and the conditions necessary to attain to the supramundane *(lokuttara)* state by the destruction of fetters and is therefore quoted here.

"First from the destruction of the three fetters, the *bhikkhu* becomes a *sotāpanna,* one who is sure to have done with all suffering and is sure of liberation at the final end. Further, the *bhikkhu,* from the destruction of the three fetters and from the reduction of the foolishness of sensuous craving and ill-will, becomes a *sakadāgāmi,* one who having come once more to this world, makes an end to suffering".[3]

Any senior qualified *bhikkhu* who has counted more than five years in the Order is empowered to ordain a candidate as a novice *(sāmaṇera).* No self-ordination is permissible. To be initiated into the higher Order there should be at least five *bhikkhus* at the ceremony, one of whom must be of at least ten years standing. A newly ordained *bhikkhu* is obliged to remain under a competent teacher for a period of not less than five years, studying and practising the Dhamma, until the teacher considers it advisable for him to live by himself. According to his temperament a *bhikkhu* may choose either the duty of study and teaching *(ganthadhura)* or that of meditation *(vipassanādhura).* Those who adopt the former course, study and practise the Dhamma and may travel from place to place teaching the doctrine to others throughout the year except during the rainy season. Those who prefer the latter course, retire to a place of solitude and engage in meditation.

Having renounced everything worldly the *bhikkhu* claims no property, does not regret his past, and does not worry about the future; he lives essentially for the present, free from responsibilities and the trammels of the world.[4] He clings to no abode and in all vicissitudes maintains a balanced mind. The energy at his command is directed to the activities that tend to universal happiness. Clearly the *bhikkhu's* self-appointed mission is no easy one for he has no centralized authority in the shape of a governing body on which to

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[1] D. i. 156.
[2] D. iii. 234; M. i. 432.
[3] D. i. 156.
[4] See: S. i. 5; Jā. vi. 25; Sn. v 851; Nd1. 222.

base any claim or to which he can look for any support. Though the tradition of the Saṅgha, maintained over a period of some 2,500 years, must count for much in many countries, in the main it is by the example of his own life that he must achieve the good for others that he sets out to do.

Besides preaching, no social activities were formulated by the Buddha for the monks. But then according to many of the sermons of the Buddha it is possible to suggest that the Buddha and his early disciples were also doing a kind of social work needed for that period.

There are two vital aspects of the Buddha's life: great wisdom and compassion. Out of his great wisdom he showed the Middle Path to liberation from the sorrowful mundane world, and out of compassion he preached for social development. He sent out his disciples also for the same purpose. It is a fact well known to historians that there were evil practices at this time, i.e. in the 6th century B.C., either in the name of God, gods or religion: such as animal sacrifices, caste prejudices, slavery of womankind, wars between petty kingdoms. The Buddha, and his disciples, wandered far and wide in India, refuting those evils practices and did their best to reform the society.

During later centuries scholar monks were teaching both lay and ordained students. Then these monastic institutions developed as universities like Taxila, Nālandā, Vickramasilā, Odantapurī, Jagaddalā, Dhannyakaṭaka, etc.

It is interesting to study the way in which the Buddhist monkhood has existed for twenty-five centuries; how it has gained the support, respect and admiration of the people of many countries; how it has always held in its hands the education of the people. This brotherhood of monks is today as it was twenty-five centuries ago — a community of men seeking the truth. First of all we must dismiss from our minds any idea of priesthood or any idea of extra-human sanctity. I use 'monk', because it is the most appropriate English word I can find, but even that is not quite correct. I have often found this difficulty. They are trying to lift the people into another world — a world of people differing from ordinary man, not in habits alone, but in mind culture.

Besides being the ideal of the Buddhists, the monk is more: he is the teacher of all including devotees and their children. It must be remembered that it is a service apart from his meditative life. A monk need not necessarily teach secular subjects to children; the aim and

object of the monkhood is to lead a life of purity and detachment from the world. If the monk acts as such a teacher that is a thing apart. And yet before the Western domination in Asia all monasteries were Temple schools. All the monasteries were and are full of scholar monks and many monks taught and teach. Much the same reason has had influence in Buddhist Asia as in the western nations: the desire of parents that their children should learn religion in their childhood. The fact that the wisest and most honoured men entered the Order, the leisure of the monks giving them opportunity for such occupation. The faithful veneration pervades the mass of Buddhists. The laity admire and venerate the monks and voluntarily and cheerfully contribute to their maintenance and welfare. From its ranks the community is recruited. The members of the Order preserve the decorum of their life and the monastic rules. The life of the religious is one of restraint and perpetual control of the senses. He has forgone all sense pleasures and diversions. Such a system of self-denial is always maintained. It cannot be denied that human motives often influence both the laity and the religious. The monastic life is the example and the proof of how the people live and believe. Every man in Burma and Thailand follows a monastic life at least for some time and learns from the monks about his religion. During that period they learn a great deal of Buddhism and its practice. They have to get by heart certain portions of the sacred books. They have to recite them. Several times a day, at about nine o'clock at night, and again before dawn you will hear the young novices and boys intoning clearly and loudly some of the sacred teaching of the Buddha. It is one of the most inspiring sights to see monks and children kneeling on the bare ground reciting while the dawn comes. The Buddhist education in the monasteries is very good, very thorough, not only in precept but also in practice; for in the monastery they must live a pure and happy life, as monks live, even if they are but young boys.

When civilisation progresses and more education is required, are the monasteries able to provide it? The education given now is mostly a means to an end; to learning the precepts of religion. Whether the monks will provide an education beyond such a want, I doubt. The monk is, by his vows, by the whole tenor of his life, apart from the world; to pursue the search after knowledge and truth. Any kind of knowledge, I mean a secular knowledge, would rekindle in him the desires that the whole meaning of his life is to annihilate.

Besides, no knowledge, except mere theoretical knowledge, can be acquired without going about in the world. You cannot cut yourself off from the world and get knowledge of it. Yet the monk has no antagonism to science — he has every sympathy with, and respect for it. Buddhism will never try to block the progress of true knowledge, of light, secular or religious; but whether the monks will find it within their vows to provide that science, only time can prove. However it may be, it will not make any difference to the esteem in which the monks are held.

They are not honoured for their wisdom — though they often have it; nor for their industry — they are ever industrious; nor for their learning — they are usually learned; but because they are noble-minded men trying to live — nay, succeeding in living — a life devoid of evil deeds, words and thoughts. Up till now the education given by the monks has met the needs of the people; in the future it will do so less and less. But a community that has lived through twenty-five centuries of change, and is now of the vitality that the Buddhist monkhood is, cannot have fear from many changes. Still today, meditation and other practices are continuing: if they cease to be, perhaps the pattern and example of purity and piety may diminish.

At present there are hundreds of monastic colleges *(piriveṇas)* in Sri Lanka itself. In those colleges Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhalese with other subjects are being taught. But recently two big monastic institutions, Vidyodaya and Vidyālaṅkāra, were given University status by the Government. It was a tragedy: because the Government turned these Universities into the pattern of the other Universities in the world with the result that though education remains; much of the discipline maintained by the monks ceases to exist.

The Buddhist monks are supported by the laity. Therefore, it is a duty of the monks to see to their mundane welfare too. The Buddhist monks are doing a lot of social reformation work among the people. Many monks are dedicated to social service in rural areas. If such a monk lives in a village monastery the people of the village are well disciplined. There are no quarrels or crimes in that village.

The monks conduct meditation courses for the people who are in need of such retreats from time to time. During such courses they get an opportunity to verify their studies on the teaching of the Buddha. Monks give counsel and advice to the people for their household life whenever necessary. The monks are the people who reconcile rival groups in a town or village.

On the occasion of sorrowful as well as happy events, the good Buddhist expects monks to come and chant *Suttas*[1] and invoke the blessings of the Triple Gem — the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. Often they come to the temple to receive blessings from the monks, who conduct services especially on Buddhist *Uposatha*[2] days, i.e. full-moon days, new-moon days, and half-moon days. Buddhist services are always followed by sermons given by the monks. It is the monks who lead the people to righteous and religious lives.

Between Buddhists and the members of the Order there is an important relationship. This relationship is set out formally in a discourse of the Buddha called the *Sigālovāda Sutta*.[3] This discourse remains today one of the best known portions of Buddhist literature among the Buddhists of South-East Asia. In this discourse nothing of the duties of the householder is left unmentioned. Among other duties, the reciprocal duties of householders and members of the Order are set out. The good householder ministers to the monks by showing reverential affection for them in his actions, in his speech and in his thoughts, by giving them a warm welcome and ample hospitality and by providing generally for their material needs. In return, the members of the Order are to show their affection for householders by restraining them from evil courses of action, by exhorting them to do what is honourable, by entertaining kindly feelings towards them, by imparting knowledge to them, by dealing with their difficulties and doubts, and revealing to them the spiritual way. Those who have been acquainted with the life of a country like Burma, where Buddhist culture is still a living force, will know how true these reciprocal duties are among the householders and the monks.

The duties there envisaged for the monk in relation with the householder require constant, day-to-day contacts between the two. That is why I mentioned that the word 'monk', if it means a person who lives apart from the world, is inappropriate as a translation for *'bhikkhu'*. He has to exhort the householder, restrain him when necessary, instruct him, clear up his doubts, and constantly direct his attention to the right path. This is followed by him most effectively and he is providing an example and an inspiration to the householder.

The life of the Buddhist monk who has given up the comforts of household life thus has an important social function.

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[1] These *Suttas* are collectively called *Paritta*. See Chapter 24.

[2] Equivalent of sabbath.

[3] D. iii. 180–193.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PUṆṆA
THE EXEMPLARY DHAMMADŪTA[1]

The teaching and preaching of the Buddha's sublime message is one of the noblest missions in the world. The person who undertakes this noble mission should be patient and absolutely detached from worldly pleasures. He should be ready to sacrifice even his life for this good cause. He should not expect name, fame or gains from the people. He should not mix with unworthy people who indulge in evil deeds and speech. He should be wary of frivolity, gossip and harsh words. He should be satisfied with whatever food he receives and devote himself entirely to his noble work. He should not condemn other teachings in a bitter or intolerant spirit. He should not quarrel with the teachers of other sects or religions and should not enter into unnecessary controversy with them. Such a preacher needs four other qualities to complete success in his mission. They are: i) generosity, ii) pleasant speech, iii) sagacious conduct, and iv) impartiality. In Buddhist literature we find such an exemplary *dhammadūta* by the name of Puṇṇa who set an example to others.

> "One should first establish oneself in proper conduct, with himself fully controlled the wise man will not be defiled."[2]

Puṇṇa was a Buddhist apostle in the time of the Buddha. His story is related in the *Pali Tipiṭaka* as well as in the ***Divyāvadāna*** and ***Avadānakalpalatā***. He was born in a wealthy family of Suppāraka in the Suṇāparanta district.[3] When he was a young man,

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[1] Missionary is not a satisfactory translation of *Dhammadūta* since the Buddhist monk does not proselytize.

[2] Dhp. v 158: *Attānam eva paṭhamaṃ patirūpe nivesaye*
atthaññam anusāseyya nakilisseyya paṇḍito.

[3] A district of India where the seaport of Suppāraka was. There was a regular trade between Bhārukaccha, Suppāraka and Suvaṇṇabhūmi. Vijaya and his followers landed at Suppāraka on their way to Sri Lanka but had to leave because the people were incensed by their behaviour (Mhvs. vi. 46; Dpvm. ix. 15f). Suṇāparanta (Skt. Sroṇāpranta) is identified with the modern Sopāra in the Thāna district, to the north of Bombay (Imperial Gazetteer of India).

he went to Sāvatthi with a great caravan of merchandise. There he visited the Buddha and requested him to teach him Dhamma. The Buddha taught him to avoid finding delight in the pleasures of the senses. Having understood the Dhamma, Puṇṇa joined the Order. He won favour by his attention to his duties. He resolved to go back as a *dhammadūta* to Suṇāparanta which was inhabited by wild, barbarous tribes. He asked permission of the Buddha who tried to dissuade him from his risky enterprise.

The Buddha said, "The people of Suṇāparanta are fierce, violent and cruel. They are given to abusing, reviling and annoying others. If they abuse, revile and annoy you with evil, harsh and false words, what will you think?"

Puṇṇa replied, "In that case, I would think that the people of Suṇāparanta are really good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with their hands or with clods."

The Buddha: "But if they strike you with their hands or with clods, what would you think?"

Puṇṇa: "In that case, I would think that the people of Suṇāparanta are really good and gentle folk, as they do not strike me with sticks or weapons."

The Buddha: "But if they strike you with sticks or weapons, what would you think?"

Puṇṇa: "In that case, I would think that the people of Suṇāparanta are really good and gentle folk, as they do not kill me."

The Buddha: "But if they kill you Puṇṇa, what would you think?"

Puṇṇa: "In that case, I would think that the people of Suṇāparanta are really good and gentle folk, as they release me from this rotten carcass of a body without much difficulty. I know that there are some monks who are ashamed of the body and disenchanted and disgusted with it, and who slay themselves with weapons, take poison, hang themselves with ropes or throw themselves down from precipices. So I would thank them for rendering me a service."

The Buddha: "Puṇṇa, you are endowed with the greatest gentleness and forbearance. You can live and stay in the country of Suṇāparanta. Go and teach them how to be free, as you yourself are free."

Then Venerable Puṇṇa, having rejoiced in what the Buddha had said and greeted him, set out on tour for the Suṇāparanta district. While teaching and preaching he stayed there among the people of

Suṇāparanta. During the rainy season Venerable Puṇṇa established as many as five hundred men and as many women as followers of Dhamma.

A number of monks later approached the Buddha and reported thus: "Venerable Puṇṇa, who was exhorted by the Lord in brief, has died. What is his bourn, what is his future state?"

The Buddha: "Puṇṇa, the young man who followed the Dhamma, has gained final *nibbāna,* O monks."

Delighted, those monks rejoiced in what the Buddha had said.[1]

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[1] *Puṇṇovāda Sutta,* M. ii. 267–270.

CHAPTER 13

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

Saraṇāgamana, the taking of the Threefold Refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, is not a mere formal act; it is a profound undertaking to attain the goal represented by the Triple Gem. This goal is not easily attained and the devotee has to reach it by treading the path gradually.[1] The path leading to *nibbāna* out of unhappiness is three-fold: morality, meditation and wisdom.

SĪLA — Morality, the first step, includes all the virtues of the honest respectable person. It has been identified with virtues in general, and many admirable qualities have been interpreted in relation to the ideals of purification and restraint as they are realised with the body, speech and mind. It is usually understood as referring to the five moral precepts which constitute the layman's definitive code of practical ethics. He has to begin the spiritual journey by taking the five precepts and every lay devotee is expected to observe these five elementary rules of conduct.

Man is a social being and develops his character in relation to the society in which he belongs, so whatever he does, leaves its impression not only on himself but also on that society. The observance of the moral precepts must, therefore, also leave their impression.

It is in keeping with the Buddhist spirit that its observance should be based on experience and reason. Buddhism is supramundane, but it is always down to earth and in the observance of the five precepts the Buddhist is kept in close touch with reality. In Buddhism no intercessor between God and man calls forth a divine blessing; instead, man, exercising his will, reason and experience has shown that by taking a certain path he will contribute not only to his own welfare but also to the welfare of the human race. He wills to take that path. Here is the recognition of manhood, of man's own power

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[1] M. i.479: *Na bhikkhave ādiken' eva aññārādhanaṃ vadāmi api ca anupubbasikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapaṭipadā aññārādhanaṃ hoti.*

"I, monks, do not say that the attainment of profound knowledge comes straightaway; nevertheless, monks, the attainment of profound knowledge comes by a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course."

and responsibility. Blind faith is entirely absent but it is a confidence ***(saddhā)*** closely linked to the world of experience; it is just such a confidence, based on observation and knowledge as is necessary for any right action or study. Men have confidence in the Buddha and go to him for refuge, not because he is said to be this or that but because his teaching corresponds to what they personally know of the actual world.

The five precepts ***(pañca sīla)*** apply to all Buddhists and are as follows:

1. I undertake the precept to abstain from the taking of life.
2. I undertake the precept to abstain from taking what is not given.
3 I undertake the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. I undertake the precept to abstain from false speech.
5. I undertake the precept to abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs.

When we take precepts, we should learn the meaning and the practical application which would lead to the experience of purifying the mind and of establishing a certain harmless way of life, a different attitude towards life, seen intelligently and compassionately. Having acquired this attitude these simple precepts when applied daily will diminish the suffering for us and for others. The significance of the precepts is of wide social significance. We should try to keep them at all times. We should reflect that the first precept will awaken and increase the sentiments of loving-kindness. It will, certainly, establish friendliness between men. In this precept is embodied the principle of all-embracing compassion and good-will which alone could save humanity from destruction.

The five precepts do not represent the main teachings of Buddhism, they represent a course of action based on that teaching. For the man who has come to the knowledge of the **Dhamma**, they are the rudiments of how to behave in the external world. In these precepts is expressed the foundation of civilisation and it is for this reason that there is, for Buddhists, no ceremony so profound and so exalted and so vast in meaning as that of repeating them. History shows that Buddhism was the first religion in which the moral element was emphasised. In reciting these precepts, man is asserting his emergence from the savage state. He is taking upon himself a

new character and helping to establish a cultured civilisation; where these precepts are broken, civilisation degenerates.

Twenty five centuries ago the Buddha gave these precepts; not to kill or steal. Today the world is perceiving the necessity of enjoining these two precepts upon nations and their enforcement has been attempted through such organisations as the League of Nations and the U.N. In general, however, they are only applied to human beings whereas the Buddha forbad the taking of **all** life. Incidentally, his religion was the first to establish hospitals for both men and animals. Thus the first precept refers not only to human beings but to all living beings without exception, and acknowledges the universal desire for self-preservation. Explaining this instinct of all beings the Buddha said:

> "All tremble before punishment; all fear death. Comparing others to oneself, one should not kill nor cause to kill. All tremble before punishment; to all life is dear. Comparing others with oneself, one should not kill nor cause to kill."[1]

> "Comparing oneself to others in such terms as 'Just as I am so are they, just as they are so am I', he should neither kill nor cause others to kill."[2]

As regards the second precept, on the one hand it inculcates respect for the property of others, and on the other it exercises control over the acquisitive instincts of the individual. Then again, the second precept affirms the necessity of fair play. It renounces greed and grasping, unfair competition, that at any cost, leads one to acquire and accumulate riches by ruining others, as well as by flagrant thieving. One should, in fact, respect the rights of others. One should not steal even a leaf or a blade of grass. One should not commit any sort of dishonesty.

> "Then because the disciple knows that it belongs to others, stealing anything from any place should be avoided. Let him not cause to steal, nor approve of others' stealing. All stealing should be avoided."[3]

These two precepts in particular have a markedly double aspect in that they are subjective as well as objective. It is worse to have

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[1] Dhp. vv 129, 130.

[2] Sn. v 705. Trnsln. Hammalawa Saddhātissa.

[3] *Ibid.* v 395.

the nature of a killer and a thief, than to be killed and robbed. A woman killing flies may have murder in her heart; if a person who has been in the habit of killing will refrain from taking the life of any living creature, he will find his consciousness gaining a new quality which will repay the effort. Killing, stealing, and also lying are obstructions which prevent a man from knowing his true self. Through them he imposes upon others but even more he imposes upon himself; in this matter virtue is surely its own reward.

The third precept is of great social importance; in the first place it preserves the integrity of family life, which is the basic unit of human society, and in the second place it exercises control within reasonable limits over the libido. By observance of this precept mankind would achieve that control over his sexual appetite by which individual and social welfare can be gained. On the observance of this precept the Buddha admonishes thus:

> "The wise man should avoid non-celibate life as if it were a burning charcoal pit. If he is unable to lead a celibate life fully, let him not transgress with another's wife."[1]

The fourth precept affirms the necessity of care in speech. Who would deny that lying leads to corruption of one's own mind as well as hurting others. Like the other precepts, it is for the good of both the individual and the community. A man who can be trusted will prosper and so will a nation, but the greatest value of the precept is in its subjective effect. A dishonest person can no more see clearly than a muddy pool can reflect distinctly. This honesty is more difficult to attain than it at first appears to be, but truthfulness is progressive like all the virtues. Each truthful act and word creates an aptitude for further truth. It is the search for truth that has produced the greatest literature. Abusing and slandering others are forms of cheating. Maligning a man's good character may be more harmful than stealing his wallet. When nations fail to keep treaties with other nations, we can understand the social catastrophe of dissimulation. One's actions should be in harmony with one's words. Truth is great and prevails over all the powers of evil. Again, one's speech should have some worthwhile purpose; if it is only for the sake of passing time or amusing others it is better left unsaid. With regards to this precept the Buddha says:

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[1] *Ibid.* v 396.

"Whether he is in an assembly or in a public place let him not tell lies to another. Let him not cause others to tell lies nor approve of others' telling lies."[1]

"For one who transgresses the truth and is given to lying, and who is unconcerned with the life hereafter, there is no evil he dare not do."[2]

The Buddha did not base his religion on speculation and imagination, or on what he would have liked to be true; he based it on the facts of observation, most carefully and accurately studied. The Buddhist, following him, tries to see things 'as they really are'.[3] He has been taught the folly of trying to deal with problems which are by their very nature outside the possibility of finite comprehension. Einstein was acting in the spirit of Buddhism when he refused to recognise the Absolute; the Buddha refused to consider such contradictions in thought as a First Cause and an Absolute. He saw that there is relative knowledge to which men can attain. They know how they themselves respond to the world about them; they know that they suffer and they perceive that, in proportion as they tread the path taught by the Buddha, this suffering ceases. These are facts which can be and have been verified; such is the honesty of Buddhism, which gives special weight to the fourth precept.

The habit of drinking or taking drugs weakens the moral and physical stamina of a man and society at large also suffers because of his degeneration. The fifth precept forbids the use of intoxicating liquors and drugs. It is one which mankind, outside the Buddhist and Mohammedan worlds has been slow to follow, though attempts have been made in the United States and in France to enforce it through their Constitutions. The ideals embodied in the Buddhist religion so many years ago are those which the nations of the world are still struggling to realise. It has been said that Buddhism is opposed to social progress and ignores sociological problems; this is the direct opposite of the truth. The fourth and fifth precepts — not to tell lies and not to take intoxicants — have their bearing both on society and on the individual. The moral culture of the individual leaves its influence on society also. In the very heart of Buddhism, and constituting its most important and constantly repeated observance, are these five precepts — a social code which rescues man from barbarism.

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[1] *Ibid.* v 397. [2] Dhp. v 176. [3] A. iii. 419.

> "He who destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given, commits adultery and takes intoxicating drinks, digs up his own roots even in this very life."[1]

Some minds are so austere as to rebel even against so simple an observance as this, but human nature is prone to sloth and ignorance and relapses all too readily without some form of observance to keep it in mind of those ideals to which it would attain. Coué perceived the value of repetition, seeing how a word can thereby be stamped on our subconscious, and used it in his treatment of physical illness. He advised the patient to repeat certain formulae twenty times, twice a day, and the body was forced, in certain ways at least, to respond to the suggestive statements made about it. When rightly used and understood, religious formulae undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the mind.

It can easily be seen that the misery of the world comes very largely from the breaking of these five precepts. The world today stands more in need of Buddhism than ever before; there is no other religion to which it could so well turn for succour. Showing the way to peace, closely in harmony with scientific and psychological research and frankly agnostic where man must be agnostic, Buddhism offers a teaching which the modern man can follow without doing violence to his reason.

The observance of the five precepts themselves mark the difference between barbarism and civilisation and in them abides the secret of future evolution. In following them the Buddhist is ensuring a continuance of the civilising process and securing for the world a better future and he will, in a later life, participate in that better future. Here in these precepts, therefore, is the beginning of the path which will eventually lead to the complete liberation of *nibbāna.*

The devotee should not rest satisfied with the observance of these five precepts. From time to time, especially on full-moon or new-moon days, he should also observe the eight or ten precepts, thereby taking another step forward on the path.

SAMĀDHI — Meditation is the second step. In order to maintain a good standard of moral conduct, it is also essential to practise meditation, which is called *samādhi. Samādhi* is the fixed or tranquil

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[1] Dhp. vv 246, 247.

state of the mind. The undisciplined mind is in the habit of wandering here and there and is difficult to control. It may follow any harmful idea, or imagination. In order to prevent this unhealthy tendency the mind should be concentrated on a selected object of meditation. In the course of practice, the mind will gradually become more restrained and remain obediently fixed on the object to which it is directed. By choosing suitable objects we can counteract specific mental weaknesses. For example, by meditating on loving-kindness we can assuage the traits of enmity, wrath and envy. By meditating on the repulsive aspects of the body we can diminish lust and infatuation. By contemplating the inevitability and unpredictability of death we can dispel complacency and apathy. By recollecting the special qualities of the Buddha we can overcome depression, anxiety and negativity. By the development of compassion one forgets one's own troubles and realises the omnipresence of suffering.

By repeated practice of meditative absorption the Buddha and his disciples came to possess psychic powers. Although such powers are only developed by very deep concentration they are not considered, by most schools of Buddhism, to be essential to the attainment of the main goal of Buddhism, *nibbāna. Nibbāna* is the extinction of desire, hatred and delusion.

There are, however, other advantages to be gained from secluded meditation: in the *Milindapañha,* 'The Questions of King Milinda', the monk, Nāgasena, enumerates the benefits of seclusion:

"There are, O king, twenty-eight virtues of these vows on account of which the Buddhas have a high regard for them. The keeping of the vows is a pure mode of livelihood, its fruit is blissful, it is blameless, it brings no suffering to others, it gives confidence,[1] it doesn't oppress,[2] it is certain to bring growth in good qualities, it prevents back-sliding, it doesn't delude, it is a protection, it fulfils one's desires, it tames all beings, it is good for self-discipline, it is proper for a recluse, he is independent,[3] he is free,[4] it destroys greed, it destroys hatred, it destroys delusion, it humbles pride, it cuts of discursive thoughts and makes the mind one-pointed, it overcomes doubts, it drives away sloth, it banishes discontent, it makes him

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[1] A user of rag-robes is unafraid of robbers.
[2] He is not oppressed by the need to protect property.
[3] He is unattached to dwellings.
[4] And free to go anywhere.

tolerant, it is incalculable, it is beyond measure, and it leads to the destruction of all suffering."[1]

Meditation is not only a remedy for mental imperfections but also for physical ailments.

PAÑÑĀ — Wisdom is the third and last stage of the path. After undertaking the observance of morality, the aspirant practises meditation. When the mind is well-concentrated, he is able to understand the true nature of things. Wisdom is the right understanding of the world in the light of its transience, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. Knowledge is of three kinds: 1) that acquired by learning, 2) that acquired by thinking, and 3) that acquired by meditation. This wisdom is the apex of the three-fold training which leads to *nibbāna.*

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[1] Miln. p 351.

CHAPTER 14

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ETHICS

If a careful and far-reaching survey were to be made of the ways of life and social systems of the civilised world, it would reveal that the ethical aspect of the Dhamma, in part at least if not in its entirety, was the moral code of all civilised people. It is observed in specific ways by various communities and even by the most blatant sceptics, who boast that they believe in no moral obligations, and who may succeed in blinding themselves to the truth, but contradict their assertions in act and word. Those extremists who remain desperately true to their convictions can find no place in society for themselves and are forced to lead a life of self-inflicted loneliness. In the words of the *Dhammapada:*

> "Those who mistake the false for the true, and the true for the false, they who abide in the pasture ground of wrong thoughts, never arrive at the real. They who know the true as the true and the false as false, who abide in right mindedness, they arrive at the real."[1]

Neither the animist nor the sceptic is prepared to accept the Dhamma. To the animist it appears to be a moral code which lacks the one and only incentive to right living; namely, it fails to include faith in God. The average animist, whether cultured or not, is a sentimentalist whose thoughts are under the influence of his emotions. On the other hand, the sceptic may be a thorough hedonist or materialist who does not value ethics at all; he may be an aesthetic dilettante who considers himself to be an intellectual, who dismisses the Dhamma as trite and stale; or he may be a commonplace, mediocre worldling who is guided by traditional ideals of decent behaviour who adheres to the tradition without understanding it and the Dhamma seems to him a mere imperfect repetition of tradition but lacking the sentimental appeal to which he is accustomed.

Among the different civilised nations of the world there is in fact no difference or separation in the fundamental ideas of ethics and there is really no such thing as a system of Buddhist ethics or Christian ethics. It is one and the same all over the world; such epithets as 'Buddhist' and 'Christian' merely denote certain specific modes of comprehension, approach, observance and purpose.

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[1] Dhp. vv 11, 12.

Apart from Buddhists, individuals can, generally speaking, be divided into two groups; each with its own conception of ethics and their relation to life. The first group are followers of a revealed religion and the second group are unbelievers or sceptics. All religions with the exception of Buddhism are revealed religions. Their adherence depends wholly on extraneous aid, that being a divine agency, which is omnipotent and eternal. Such religions are of necessity animistic; and in them greater reliance is placed upon the value of simple faith and ceremonial observances than upon the following of precepts.

It is held that an arbitrary creator laid down the necessary and indispensable moral laws, the neglect of which must needs be detrimental to any civilised society, but nevertheless, to live in accordance with them is deemed useless and unprofitable unless certain ritualism is observed. Ethics are thus related to an idea which exists only in the adherent's mind and which has no direct connection either with the application of ethics or with life as it really is.

In revealed religions there is an element of mystery which no adherent dares attempt honestly to unravel for fear that a detached and penetrating investigation of such facts as could be fully attained would confront his intelligence with conclusions directly opposed to his animistic beliefs; these beliefs, implicitly and unquestionably accepted by the followers of revealed religions, would appear to the Buddhist as mere consoling delusions. He would be inclined to dispense with all of them as unnecessary to the interpretation of life; he would see them as positive encumbrances, irrelevant to life and therefore essential only to revealed religions. Such 'interpretation' is, for this reason, never undertaken but always shelved by the misguided, though well-meaning, exponents of animistic creeds. As a result of this confusion of ethical principles with subjective ideas, their application to life is, in the opinion of Buddhists, very haphazard.

Even where there is careful and strict observance of moral precepts together with ascetic practices, it is mistakenly assumed that such observances must necessarily be painful. To suffer this pain bravely causes the 'martyr' to cherish the spirit of endurance no nobler than that of those Jain and Hindu ascetics who voluntarily go through the most ghastly extremes of self-inflicted bodily torture.

> "Not nakedness, nor matted hair, nor filth, nor fasting long, nor lying on the ground, nor dust and dirt, nor squatting on the heels; can cleanse a man that is full of doubt. But one that lives a calm and tranquil life, though gaily decked, if tamed, restrained he lives; walking the holy path of right-

eousness, laying aside all harm to living things — true mendicant, ascetic, Brahman is he."[1]

Animists attempt to live in a state of optimism in the belief that everything is ordered for the best, but in the eyes of the Buddhist these attempts are of little value. Among animists, the ethical side is inevitably distorted. It is like a tree which is hemmed in on every side and compelled to grow into an unnatural shape and retains that shape because the peculiarities of an existing phase of civilisation give rise to certain rules of conduct from which it is injurious to deviate. The tree, however, is liable to change its shape if the obstacle were to be removed. In the same way a civilisation can relapse into a state of barbarism and, under the pressure of the new conditions, what was held to be right may come to be classed as wrong. The ethic is never divorced from its communal aspect and observed for its own intrinsic worth.

The thorough-going sceptic is to some extent saner than the animist in his idea of ethics. At the very least he accepts nothing on the authority of some popular sage whose assumptions are not veiled. Nevertheless, owing to his narrow definition of 'reality', he too, falls short of the truth. Both are, however, the victims of illusion, the difference between them being that the 'revealed religionist', because of the apparent mystery of things, imagines the self to be something divine, glorious and wonderful, whilst the sceptic, turning away from the idea of mystery, has too limited a vision of things. The former, perhaps unconsciously, seeks to justify the maintenance of self-hood and the latter carelessly continues to gratify the senses.

The sceptic's behaviour conforms to a recognised code only because a certain degree of conformity is part of the means whereby, without thinking very much about it, he sustains himself. Pure ethics have little place in his life, and it is only by chance that they have any place at all; his motive for acting in accordance with them is an unacknowledged selfishness. He is simply following the line of least resistance. He abstains from certain wrong doing for the sake of indulgence as others do that which appears to him to be right.

The Buddha-Dhamma rests upon no other foundation than the doctrines of ***anicca*** (mutability), ***dukkha*** (unsatisfactoriness), and ***anatta*** (absence of an eternal ego either within or outside the body).

It may be paradoxical, both to the revealed religionist and to the sceptic that such a code should instil into its adherents the most clearly elucidated, the most lofty and completely evolved ethics in the world. Yet the reason is not far to seek, for the first thing about the

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[1] Dhp. vv 141, 142.

Dhamma which strikes the unbiased and earnest seeker after truth is its perfect relevance to life. The Dhamma may be very vast and very profound when we come to examine its fundamental teaching in detail but it contains nothing which fails to harmonise with the personal experience of the genuine thinker who is striving diligently to apprehend the actual. All its cogent and comprehensive expositions combine to make it more evident to him that, far from being mere personal sentiments or tribal taboos, it is the most satisfactory and necessary stepping stone to the attainment of that perfect security, that only true happiness, which is emancipation of mind.

> "Better than a hundred years lived not perceiving the rise and fall of things, is a single day lived in the perception of how all things arise only to pass away again."
>
> "Better than a hundred years lived without seeing the deathless goal, is a single day of lived beholding the deathless goal."[1]

Knowing the world to be but the individual, the Buddha did not base the ethical system of the Dhamma on an observation of all the material artificialities of the civilisations around him. Such things were manners, modes and physical conveniences which are commonly regarded as making up of the 'World' but are ever liable to break up and assume quite different forms, and a pre-occupation with them tends to support the delusion of self; they are the carefully spun-out threads of the spider — the life-thirst, *taṇhā* (craving) — craving for the past, present and future which binds us to the wheel of birth and death as with a silken thread yet its strength is like steel and as difficult to break.

The Buddha with his supreme knowledge saw this and as he enquired into the causes that gave rise to this constant becoming, there could not but come to his mind the exact course of action that should be pursued in order that sorrow might be definitely overcome. The Buddha's ethical system depends chiefly upon the ***anatta*** doctrine which teaches that since there can be no actor apart from the action, it follows that there can be no extraneous aid. Blind faith is no use since it leads nowhere and is strongly repudiated in the Buddha-Dhamma; we must do away with the props and act on life's stage alone, for:

> "You yourselves must make the effort.
> Tathāgatas only point the way."[2]

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[1] Dhp. vv 113, 114.

[2] Dhp. v 276: *Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro Tathāgatā.*

CHAPTER 15

ETHICS OF THE BUDDHIST

The word 'ethics', by its derivation from the Greek, signifies "that which pertains to character."[1] In general, the term is applied to the science of moral philosophy, but in the narrower sense the study of ethics deals with the notion of duty, the seeking of a definition of the good or the ultimate end of action. Following from this principle, stated in the abstract, is evolved a scheme of concrete duties. In the wider sense the study covers a scientific psychology involving investigation of the sociological sciences; such a psychology including matters relating to the origin and development of moral ideas, the nature of the moral faculty, as for example moral sense, freedom of will, and so on. Yet the concept of duty must of necessity relate ethics to philosophy since a theory of obligation is, in the last instance, inseparable from a study of that which is known popularly as 'individual personality' and from the ultimate problems and principles behind all being and knowledge. In the present consideration, although it will be possible only to touch on the many ramifications entailed, the term 'ethics' will not be confined to the narrower sense, more particularly since Buddhist ethics can be taken as both deriving from the Buddha's philosophy and as basic to the building up of that philosophy.

BUDDHISM IS ETHICAL

It is clear, therefore, that the Buddha's teaching not only forms the foundation for philosophical thought but is at the same time the basis on which it is possible to build a system of true morality. Ethics is applied philosophy, and if pure philosophy has led us to the discovery that an individual is not an entity remaining unchanged under externally changing appearances, but is a mere selfless process, then the morality based on and deriving from such a philosophy must be a 'selfless' morality.

Generally speaking there are two ideas of morality: 1) to be good, and 2) to do good. The first is the real morality whereas the

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[1] Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol IX-X. 808.

second may be only a means to an end. One can be good in order to do good, but this is rare. People do good actions which appear entirely altruistic yet fundamentally they are egoistic, motivated by acquisitiveness, desire for merit, bliss, heaven, reward or motivated by fear of resulting punishment or hell. All such so-called 'good' actions are inspired by selfishness and to the Buddhist the idea of 'being' good is the only true morality.

THE BUDDHA'S LAY FOLLOWERS

The Buddha cannot be said to have issued an ethical code independently of any other considerations or in the sense that he issued any commandments. A follower of the Buddha lives according to the Buddha's teaching and declares his intention of so doing in the uttering of the formula of guidance known as ***tisaraṇa***, "I follow the Buddha as my guide; I follow the Dhamma as my guide, I follow the Saṅgha as my guide."[1] One notes the terms 'follow' and 'guide'. Of the two classes of followers, the lay members ***(upāsakas)*** take the five precepts, corresponding to the components of the ethical codes mentioned above, while the ordained monks ***(bhikkhus)*** renounce the world completely and regulate their lives according to the rules laid down in the collection of canonical works known as the ***Vinaya Piṭaka***.

In the beginning of the *Vinaya* text, the ***Mahāvagga*** explains how the arising of lay followers occurred. The story runs that two merchants, Tapassu and Bhalluka, having offered the Buddha rice cakes and honey, afterwards became the first lay members by taking refuge in the Buddha and his doctrine.[2]

After hearing the Buddha's first discourse, Yasa of Benares, having forsaken a life of great luxury, entered the Deer Park in Benares at night where the Buddha preached to him and was afterwards admitted to the Order. His father, who had come to seek his son, was also captivated by the Buddha's teaching and was the first person to become a lay disciple by reciting the formula of the holy triad, taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. The mother and wife of Yasa became the first female lay members.[3]

Gradually, in the course of his ministry, thousands of people became lay followers of the Buddha. Lay members can continue their

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[1] Khp. 1. [2] Vin. i. 4. [3] Vin. i. 17ff.

secular duties at home or in public life, whilst observing the practical precepts prescribed for the laity.

As there are no commandments, there is no law-giver too, but there is an appeal to common-sense and to social sense also. One should always act in such a way that if all others acted similarly, life in this world would be a happier one. It therefore follows that there must be mental control over our actions, words and thoughts. For it is only by mental control that we can avoid the extremes of the purely mechanical reaction of determinism, of the blind submission of fatalism and of the dangerous guidance of emotionalism. Ideas of right and wrong are not in-born, nor are they instinctive inclinations, but are the result of intellectual developments. It is this right understanding which must be the guide for the practice of morality.

On the other hand, the ethics of Buddhism are autonomous and independent. Moral problems are basically human problems. The universal moral law is its own foundation. Obligation to one's family or one's neighbours together with such virtues as truthfulness and honesty remain objective tasks in all circumstances; they remain obligatory whether one moulds one's life upon them or not. The moral law is identical alike for individuals, societies and nations.

Conflict, suffering and sorrow are the result of a great delusion, the delusion of believing in a separate ego-entity, a self or soul independent of individual action. There is no such thing, according to Buddhism, as an individual apart from his activities, just as there is no life apart from the process of living. This denial of the individual as a separate entity apart from its activities and its relationship is not a denial of the life and reality of the individual. It is the sense of separateness that has to be overcome, because separateness leads to attachment, to craving, to grasping. The goal is selflessness, and the way to this goal is the steadfast practice in learning to see that what we call evil is always tied to some particular want. As long as we want something, we create the evil of being frustrated by not obtaining what we want. Man cannot realise his supreme fulfilment because of his inveterate tendency to identify himself in some way or another with the specific possessions of the world. Thus, the human being left to himself is always overtaken sooner or later by the defeat of self-annihilation. In order to find happiness, man must alter the direction of his living. When this is done, the oppression and miseries of life will be overcome and there

is introduced into human life the greatest possible good that man can ever experience.

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

In order to achieve this end, the mind must be disciplined and for that purpose the Buddha suggested that a beginning should be made by following certain 'rules' of conduct which are to be undertaken voluntarily by the seeker after harmony and happiness. These rules are formulated as vows and are stated, not positively, but negatively as abstinences and are known as the five precepts *(pañca sīla)*. They apply to all Buddhists. They are, however, the barest statements of precepts which are, by implication, far reaching to the Buddhist in all forms of life, high and low. By non-injury to life is meant all forms of hurt and harm; all cruelty and oppression; all deprecation; for the Buddhist concept of non-injury is not confined strictly to the observance of the letter of the first precept.

That the Buddha knew well the precepts are not easy to keep is clear from a very early record of a conversation he had with a well-known Brahman of the day, Kūtadanta. Kūtadanta wanted to perform a sacrifice, the elaborate nature of which should be in keeping with his gratitude for gifts and possessions variously acquired. Unfamiliar with all the details of a suitable ceremony, he sought the Buddha's advice. The Buddha, having remarked on the cruelty and suffering involved in the usual type of sacrifice, suggested better means whereby gratitude might be expressed. There were possible, he said, open largesse, perpetual alms such as would guarantee the upkeep of a number of monks, the building of a dwelling place for them, but, he continued, a sacrifice bearing greater fruit and advantage is that of one who, with devoted mind, takes upon himself the precepts; abstinence from taking life etc.[1]

The first precept is intimately linked with the second precept also. It embraces ethical conduct in its entirety.

Non-injury also has its positive counterpart. It demands not only abstaining from injury but also the practice of friendliness *(mettā)* that is, helping every living being on its onward way. *Mettā* begins with oneself; a man who is not his own friend will not act as the friend of another.

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[1] D. i. 146.

Inasmuch as the goal of the good life is one of complete freedom, the third and fifth precepts are meant to help in the achievement of that freedom, by gradually eliminating man's bondage to craving and delusion, greed and passion, confusion, false imagination and erroneous speculations, which are called ***micchādiṭṭhi,*** wrong views.

On the contrary, committing these five evils is conducive to great misery. The Buddha says, "Now just as one man who is committing these things produces present and future terrible misery and experiences mental pain and grief, so one who abstains from these things produces neither present nor future misery, nor does he experience mental pain and grief; such evil is extinguished in him." [1]

The morality of the Eightfold Noble Path is the true or 'natural' morality ***(pakati sīla),*** as compared with the prescribed rules ***(paññatti sīla).*** The *pakati sīla* is the state of volition and mind manifested in Right Action and Right Speech. That this type of morality is attained as contingent on a sound *paññatti sīla* is obvious enough, but that the components of *pakati sīla* should, any or all of them, develop from the cultivation of one or more of the *paññatti sīla* is less so. For example, if the precept not to take life is extended to its full meaning, that is not to harm in any manner whatsoever, then observing this precept to the extent that it becomes a continuous habit of thought will lay the foundation of at least the first three components of the Eightfold Noble Path. If control of the emotions is practised similarly, we have the foundations for Right Effort. Taking a general view, the mindfulness cultivated to attain the keeping of the precepts is the foundation of Right Mindfulness which must eventually lead to Right Concentration and therefore to insight which is the goal. The faultless mind can only be conducive to *samādhi,* that is, real mental development. Morality is, then, the stepping-stone to mental development; the door to the highest perfection; the unfailing path to peace and happiness.

Duties of a Layman

The duties of a layman are part and parcel of morality which should be observed in the spirit and in the letter; in this way there is

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[1] A. iii. 204.

peace and happiness. In the *Dhammika Sutta,*[1] *Parābhava Sutta,*[2] *Mahā Maṅgala Sutta,*[3] *Dhaniya Gopāla Sutta,*[4] *Āmagandha Sutta,*[5] *Nidhikanda Sutta,*[6] and in so many similar *suttas,* the virtues, duties and beatitudes of lay disciples are distinctly and clearly treasured.

The *Sigālovāda Sutta,*[7] shines pre-eminently among the numerous discourses delivered by the Buddha particularly to householders.

Sigāla was the son of a wealthy family in Rājagaha near Patna in Bihar. The parents were devout followers of the Buddha but the son could not be persuaded to accompany them to see the Buddha and listen to the Dhamma. Sigāla was concerned only with his material progress and to pay visits to the *bhikkhus* entailed for him a material loss. He complained further that paying the conventional respects to them would make his back ache and his knees stiff, and as he would have to invite the *bhikkhus* home and give them presents he would lose still more money. When, however, Sigāla's father lay dying, Sigāla consented to carry out any order his father might be pleased to give him and the father asked him to "salute the six quarters" every morning after his death. This was symbolic of the duty to protect one's parents, teachers, wife, children, friends and companions, servants and workers, and religious teachers and brahmans; each group being represented by the directions, east, south, west, north, nadir and zenith respectively.[8] The father's chief hope, however, lay in the possibility that the Buddha might at some time pass by and, seeing Sigāla so engaged might speak to him. This occurred and the Buddha asked Sigāla what he was doing. Sigāla replied that he was carrying out the order of his late father, whereupon the Buddha explained to him the whole duty of a layman, that such a person guarded the six quarters if he avoided the following evils:

1. The four vices of conduct; destruction of life, taking that which is not given, adultery and lying speech.
2. Committing any action from the motives of either partiality, enmity, stupidity or fear.
3. Pursuing the ways of dissipating wealth; taking intoxicants, frequenting streets at late hours, attending fairs, gambling, consorting with bad companions and idleness.[9]

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[1] Sn. vv 376–404.
[2] Sn. vv 91–115.
[3] Sn. vv 258–269.
[4] Sn. vv 18–34.
[5] Sn. vv 239–252.
[6] Khp. 7.
[7] D. iii. 180–193.
[8] D. iii. 188f.
[9] D. iii. 182.

As Mrs Rhys Davids says; "The Buddha's doctrine of love and goodwill between man and man is here set forth in 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 binding today and here as they were then at Rājagaha."[1]

"Happy would have been the village or the clan on the bank of the Ganges," says Dr T.W. Rhys Davids, commenting on the *Sigālovāda Sutta,* "where the people were full of the kindly spirit of fellow-feeling, the noble spirit of justice, which breathes through these naïve and simple sayings."[2] "Not less happy," adds Mrs Rhys Davids, "would be the village, or the family on the banks of the Thames today, of which this could be said."[3]

Commenting on this *sutta,* the Venerable Buddhaghosa says; "Nothing in the duties of the householder is left unmentioned. This *sutta* is called the *Vinaya* of the Householders. Hence in one who practises what he has been taught in it, growth is to be looked for and not decay."[4] But, as the Buddha often pointed out, it is necessary to have a clear understanding in order to be able to avoid the bad things in life; and understanding not only of the evil results they engender but also of the control of one's own mind which will enable one to recognise their causes and so counter them. Continuous mindfulness and awareness are outstanding features of the Buddha's teaching, but since these and similar features naturally form a part of his positive teaching, we must consider what that positive teaching is, taking as a particular case the well-being of the Buddhist laity.

Advice for the Layman

According to the *Byagghapajja Sutta,*[5] the Buddha was once visited by Dīghajānu who asked for his advice for laymen who lived with their families and enjoyed the pleasures of the world. The Buddha expounded to him four things conducive to their well-being

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[1] Dial. iii. 169f. PTS London 1907.

[2] Rhys Davids, 'Buddhism' p 148.

[3] Dial. op.cit. 169.

[4] *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* iii.

[5] A. iv. 280–283. The *Dīghajānu Sutta.* "This was no doubt his nickname (see Dial. i. 193); his family name was Byagghapajja (Tigerfoot)." Trnsln. E.M. Hare.

and happiness in this life and four things conducive to happiness hereafter. They were:

1. Accomplishment in alertness ***(utthāna-sampadā)***, i.e., dexterity and diligence accompanied with ingenuity in finding ways and means in the performance of duties connected with one's profession.
2. Accomplishment in caution ***(ārakkha-sampadā)*** by protecting one's property against thieves, floods, etc.
3. The keeping of good company ***(kalyāṇa-mittatā)*** with those who have confidence, virtue, charity and wisdom, and emulating them.
4. The leading of a regulated life in accordance with one's income ***(samajīvikatā)***. Here the four channels of dissipating wealth are enumerated as before.[1]

1. Accomplishment in confidence ***(saddhā-sampadā)***, knowing the nine good qualities of the Enlightened One.
2. Accomplishment in morality ***(sīla-sampadā)*** by keeping the five precepts.
3. Accomplishment in charity ***(cāga-sampadā)***, being free from meanness; generous, open-handed, easily approachable and cheerful in sharing.
4. Accomplishment in wisdom ***(paññā-sampadā)*** leading to spiritual growth, penetrating insight and so to the utter destruction of all ills.[2]

Of the foregoing eight, it is recognition of the development of the duties and conduct of ordinary life to the connection between the accomplishment in wisdom and insight that constitute a characteristic unique to Buddhism. The development and culture of the essential concomitant of our everyday consciousness bring one to a cultured consciousness where one sees ***"yathābhūta'***, according to the way things really are. As may be inferred from the preceding remarks, perfection in morality is not possible without culture of the mental faculties. Study and perfection in ethics lead also to the entire realisation of the philosophy which ends all ills. In other words, ethics constitute not only an applied philosophy but should, if they are to have more than passing value, lead to that philosophy.

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[1] A. iv. 281.

[2] A. iv. 283.

One recalls the words approved by the Buddha; "Just as one washes one hand with the other or one foot with the other, so morality is washed around with wisdom and wisdom with morality. The two together constitute the highest in the world."[1]

The Buddha repeatedly emphasised that an individual is not an entity remaining unchanged under changing external appearances, but consists in mere selfless processes. With this opinion, modern science and much modern Western philosophy are in complete agreement. One may stress the meaning of the term 'entity', a thing complete in itself, its actual existence as apart from its attributes. Modern scientific and biological theory sense there is no hard core of structure which can carry the whole life process. Correspondingly, there is no permanent hard core of a "self' in what may be called the sense of 'personality'. Here we have two of the three characteristics of things as taught by the Buddha; *anicca* (impermanence) and *anatta* (non-self).

Ethical ideas are the foundation for attaining a higher life either in this world or beyond it. Observance is a means to a higher goal and this is always good in every walk of life. By it, man becomes pure and calm. A mind tainted with defilements ***(kilesa)*** is always shaky and weak. To attain to the higher life, moral strength is equally essential. *Upāsakadhamma,* or discipline for lay disciples, brings nothing new but is a refined form of the *sīla* expounded for householders whose lives lie so largely in the material world. By observing these rules, lay disciples attain to a purer state of mind, lead a more peaceful life and progress to a better state of mind in subsequent births until they reach that unconditioned state we call *nibbāna.* But the Buddha delivered the perfect summary of his own teaching reaching out on the one hand to his philosophy and on the other to that character which is ethics, when he uttered his last words, "All conditioned things are impermanent, strive on with vigilance."[2] From this, we may deduce both the ethics and the philosophy of Buddhism.

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[1] D. i. 124.

[2] D. ii. 156: *"Vayadhammā saṅkhārā, appamādena sampādetha."*

CHAPTER 16

THE IDEAL INDIVIDUAL

Ethics are rules of conduct; the meaning of the word is the Science of Morals. The study of this science by the individual and the practise of its lessons by him or her, produce a truly good human being. The beauty of such a person's character and the extent of its influence for good, are expressed in the Buddhist scriptures. Once the Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Lord, there are three sorts of scents whose fragrance spreads along with the wind, but not against the wind; root-scent, heartwood-scent and the scent of flowers. Is there any sort of scent whose fragrance spreads with and against the wind?"

"There is Ānanda. In this connection, Ānanda, in whatsoever village or district there is a woman or a man who has taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, who abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, falsehood and from intoxicants; who is virtuous, of a lovely nature, who dwells at home with a heart free from the taint of stinginess, who is open-handed, pure-handed, delighting in giving up, one to ask a favour of, one who delights in sharing gifts with others — of such a one recluses and hermits sing the praises in all quarters. Moreover the gods *(devas)* and non-human beings sing his praises in like manner. This Ānanda is the sort of scent whose fragrance goes with and against the wind alike.

> "The scent of flowers goes not against the wind,
> Nor scent of sandal-wood, musk or jasmine.
> The good man's scent goes even against the wind:
> The fragrance of the saint goes everywhere."[1]

It is of particular interest that the Buddha speaks of 'glory' as the reward to be attained by humility and industry:

> "The wise and virtuous person,
> Gentle and of deep understanding,
> Humble and docile,
> Such a one to glory may attain,

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[1] A. i. 226.

"Energetic and not indolent,
In misfortune he is unshaken,
Humble in manners, and intelligent,
Such a one to glory may attain."[1]

Again the Buddha sketches a way of life which is in itself the highest blessing:

"To reside in a suitable locality,
Meritorious deeds done in the past,
To set oneself in the right course —
This is the highest blessing."

"Vast learning, perfect handicraft,
A highly trained discipline,
And pleasant speech —
This is the highest blessing."[2]

THE INDIVIDUAL

Two old Brahmins, who had reached life's end, one hundred and twenty years of age, once came to the Buddha and said, "We are Brahmins, master Gotama, aged, far gone in years, but we have done no noble deeds, no meritorious deeds, no deeds that can bring assurance to our fears. Let the worthy Gotama cheer us. Let the worthy Gotama comfort us, so that it may be a profit and blessing to us for a long time."

"Indeed Brahmins, this world is swept onwards by old age, by sickness and by death. Since this is so, self-restraint in body, speech and thought in this life; let this be a refuge, cave of shelter, island of defence, resting-place and support for him who has gone beyond."

"Life is swept onward; brief is our span of years.
One swept away by old age has no defence.
Then keep the fear of death before thine eyes,
And do good deeds that lead to happiness.
The self-restraint of body, speech and thought,
In this life practised, meritorious deeds,

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[1] D. iii. 192.
[2] Sn. vv 260–261.

The story of the two aged Brahmins emphasises the eternal quality of goodness; good deeds would have lived on after the period in which they were performed had passed into nothingness. Furthermore, the memory of such deeds is a positive necessity to the individual after death. The Blessed One does not comfort the two frightened men; he only gives them their own statement back again, "You have done no deeds that can bring assurance to your fears." Their own actions, their own practise of the virtue of self-restraint would have supported them; nothing else can do so.

Goodness is the only security after death; and, although it should be pursued simply because it is right, it is also frequently of great use in the affairs of the world. To be good is not necessarily to be impractical.

> "Who so, O monkey-king, like you combines
> Truth, foresight, fixed resolve, and fearless,
> Shall see his routed foemen turn and flee?"[1]

The king enlists four virtues in the defence of his country and they serve him well.

The two following passages, which are very similar in content, are identical in idea; the existence of a good man benefits all those who have anything to do with him, and it is well for such a person to be in a position of influence.

"Monks, when a worthy man is born into a family, it is for the good, benefit and happiness of his parents, of his wife and children, workmen and servants, of his friends and companions, of his departed forbearers, of the King, of the devas, and of recluses and godly men.

"Monks, just as abundance of rain brings to perfection all crops for the good, benefit and happiness of many folk; even so a worthy man is born into a family for the good, benefit and happiness of many folk."

> "Ah, well it is for many when within
> The home a wise man's born!
> Untiring, night and day,
> He honours mother, father, forebears,
> In fitting manner, mindful of their care
> In former days.

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[1] Jā. N° 57, i. 280.

"The homeless wanderers,
who live the godly life,
He honours firm in *saddhā,*
He knows therefore things proper, right.
He is the King's friend and favourite,
The friend of *devas,* kith and kin of all
Firm set in righteousness, with stain of stint
Put by, he wayfares to the world of bliss.

"For many let the good man wealth pursue.
Him Dhamma-warded doth a *deva* ward.
For him well taught, moral and dutiful,
Will honour never wane. On Dhamma standing,
Virtuous, truth-speaking, conscientious,
Of such a man who's fit to appraise the worth?
'Tis even like red gold from Jambu's stream.
Him *devas* praise, by *Brahmā* praised is he."

Benefits are exchanged by good men to the advantage of both parties. This mutual benefit is well illustrated by the story of Sigāla.

Sigāla was the son of a devout man, but he himself refused to have anything to do with religion; he was of the opinion that any association with monks would entail duties and expenses and bring him nothing worth having. His father, on his death-bed, gave him one last piece of advice which he did promise to carry out, "Dear son, after your morning bath salute the six quarters."

Sigāla obeyed this command literally, saluting with joined hands the various quarters; namely the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir and the Zenith. The story itself illustrates the place of ritual; the young man made his promise to please his father and kept it scrupulously. His motive was good as far as it went. The gestures were in themselves futile, but they symbolise important rules of life and it was through the symbols that Sigāla was to learn their true significance. Ritual, properly understood, is a reminder of what it signifies; but even if not understood, it can lead an intelligent man to ponder, investigate and find out its meaning. One reason for the ritual is to provoke questions, as it is said of the stones set up by the Jews to mark their entry into their Promised Land, "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to

come saying, 'What mean ye by these stones?' Then you shall answer them."[1]

The mutual benefit is shown, for example, in this passage from the *Sigālovāda Sutta:*

"In five ways should a master minister to servants and employees as the Nadir:

1. By assigning them work according to their ability.
2. By supplying them with goods and wages.
3. By tending them in sickness,
4. By sharing with them any extra profits.
5. By relieving them at times.

"The servants and employees who are thus ministered to as the Nadir by their master show their gratitude to him in five ways:

1. They rise before him.
2. They sleep after him.
3. They take only what is given.
4. They perform their duties to his satisfaction.
5. They spread his good name and fame.

"The servants and employees who are thus ministered to as the Nadir show their gratitude towards him in these five ways and thus is the Nadir covered by him and made safe and secure."[2]

The most forceful way of showing what is right is often by describing vividly what is wrong; the device is used here.

"There are, householder's son, these six evil consequences in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours, namely:

1. He himself is unprotected and unguarded.
2. His wife and children are unprotected and unguarded.
3. His property is unprotected and unguarded.
4. He is subject to suspicion with respect to evil deeds.
5. He becomes the subject of false allegations.
6. He is beset with misfortune."[3]

Certain duties are incumbent upon the man who means to live aright. There is that of kindness to others, a duty strongly urged by Judaism and Christianity; Jesus Christ quoted the Old Testament in

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[1] Joshua, iv. 6–7.

[2] D. iii. 191, 192.

[3] D. iii. 183.

thus summing up the law of man's conduct towards man, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] The principle is thought out in this story.

When the Buddha was once at Sāvatthi, the king, the Kosalan Pasenadi, happened to be upon the upper terrace of the palace with Mallikā, his queen. And he asked her, "Is there now anyone dearer, Mallikā, to you than yourself?"

"There is no one, sire, dearer than myself."

Then the king went down from the terrace, sought the Buddha and told him of this talk.

The Buddha, in reply, uttered this verse:

"The whole wide world we traverse with our thoughts,
And nothing find to man more dear than self.
Since e'er so dear the self to others is,
Let the self-lover harm no other man."[2]

This same duty of kindness, and that of gratitude for kindness done, is emphasised in the following saying of the Buddha.

"Monks, these two persons are hard to find in the world. What two? The one who is first to do a favour and he who is grateful for what is done. These are the two persons hard to find in the world."[3]

The value of gratitude is enhanced by its rarity; and ingratitude is as common as it is vile. Gratitude and ingratitude are shown below as standing for the worth or unworthiness of a person's whole character.

GRATITUDE

"Monks, I will teach you the condition of the unworthy *(asappurisa-bhūmiṃ)* and that of the worthy. Monks, the unworthy man is ungrateful, forgetful of benefit *(akatavediṃ)*. This ingratitude, this forgetfulness is congenial to mean people *(asabbhi)* and is altogether a feature of unworthy people.

"But monks, the worthy person is grateful and mindful of benefit done to him. This gratitude, this mindfulness, is congenial with the best people, and is altogether a feature of the best people."[4]

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[1] Leviticus, xix. 18.
[2] S. i. 75.
[3] A. i. 86.
[4] A. i. 61.

The following story demonstrates that it is man's duty to suit his actions to his words.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

On a certain occasion the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthi at the Jeta Grove in Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the Buddha addressed the monks:

"Monks, there are these four rain-clouds. What four? The thunderer that doesn't rain. The rainer that doesn't thunder. The neither thunderer nor rainer. The cloud that rains and thunders. These are the four.

"Likewise, monks, these four person resembling rain-clouds are to be found existing in the world. And how is a person a thunderer that doesn't rain. Thus he is one who speaks but acts not. And how is a person a rainer but no thunderer? In this case, monks, a person is one who acts but speaks not. And how is a person neither a thunderer nor a rainer? In this case a person neither speaks nor acts. And how is a person both a thunderer and a rainer? In this case a person both speaks and acts accordingly. So these are the four persons found in the world."[1]

The following discourse, which like the previous one is arranged under four headings, enlarges upon the discipline of fear.

"Monks, these are the four fears. What four? Fear of self-reproach, fear of others' reproach, fear of punishment and fear of rebirth in states of woe.

"And what is the fear of self-reproach? Herein, monks, a certain person reflects thus, 'If I were to practise evil conduct in body, speech and thought, it would be a source of self-reproach to me.' So, afraid of self-reproach, he abandons evil conduct and develops good conduct. This monks is called the fear of self-reproach.

"And what, monks, is the fear of others' reproach? Herein, monks, a certain person reflects thus, 'If I were to practise evil conduct in body, speech and thought, others would reproach me.' So, afraid of others' reproach he abandons evil conduct and develops good conduct. This, monks, is called the fear of others' reproach.

"And what, monks, is the fear of punishment? Herein, monks, a certain person sees the king seizing a bandit or miscreant and

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[1] A. ii. 100.

subjecting him to various forms of punishment. Then he reflects thus, 'If I were to practise evil conduct such as that for which the king has seized this bandit or miscreant and so punishes him they would surely treat me in like manner.' So, afraid of punishment he abandons evil conduct and develops good conduct. This, monks, is called the fear of punishment.

"And what is the fear of rebirth in states of woe? Herein, monks, a certain person reflects thus, 'If I were to practise evil conduct in body, speech and thought, I might be reborn in states of woe after my death. So, afraid of rebirth in states of woe he abandons evil conduct and develops good conduct.' This, monks, is called the fear of rebirth in states of woe. So these, monks, are the four fears."[1]

Inevitably there is something distasteful about the above passage. The discipline of fear may have good results if it is applied by virtuous authorities to young or ignorant subjects, because it may create a habit of doing right. There is, however, no moral virtue in fear, except in the case of fear of self-reproach. A man who is afraid of doing wrong solely for fear of good men's reproaches will lack the moral courage to do right in the face of evil men's derision. A man whose only restraint from crime is the dread of punishment will commit crimes under coercion. Even the fear of damnation can exist without any link with morality. A mistaken idea of religious duty can impel a man to cruelty, and it may be the most virtuous act of a man's life to disobey the dictates of such a duty. In Mark Twain's book, Huckleberry Finn, the incident occurs of a boy, good-hearted and simple, who genuinely believes that he will be damned eternally if he does not betray his negro friend into slavery, and it is only by defying that terrible belief, with a cry of, "All right then, I will go to hell", that he is able to do what is morally right and remain true to his friend.

It is better to be reminded of the courage which is needed to live a good life, than of the fear which may keep a coward from an actively evil one.

> "Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast;
> nor let thy courage flag and tire."[2]

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[1] A. ii. 121.

[2] Jā. N° 51, i. 267.

For the perseverance required for a growth in virtue, the Buddha says:

"Monks, growing in five ways of growth, the Ariyan disciple grows in Ariyan growth; he heeds what is essential and best for his whole being. In what five? He grows in confidence, virtue, learning, giving up and insight."[1]

Perfect goodness and enlightenment can only be attained by effort — such effort as is called out by an intense and sincere desire for the thing to be attained.

"Monks, these five sleep little by night, they are much awake. What five? A woman longing for a man sleeps little by night, is much awake. So too a man longing for a woman; a thief longing for booty; a minister bent on official business; and a monk longing for release from the bondage of defilements sleeps little at night, is much awake."[2]

The sheer longing of the monk is stressed by placing it beside other persons' longings for different and more base objects; one quality — whole-hearted desire — is isolated and emphasised.

Fear of self-reproach is the sure guide to right if the heart and mind are fully taught and trained. Training is important, for knowledge alone is inadequate; the two hapless old Brahmins knew what they should have done, but had failed to do it.

> "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,
> and not by faith alone."[3]

> "Goodwill and wisdom, mind by method trained,
> The highest conduct on good morals based,
> This maketh mortals pure, not rank or wealth.
> Hence, his own good discerning, let the wise
> Thoroughly examine how to train the mind."[4]

The aim of education is to perfect the pupil; ignorance hampers a man in every way.

"Monks, possessed of two qualities, the foolish, ignorant and evil man goes about like a lifeless uprooted thing, is blameworthy,

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[1] A. iii. 79.
[2] A. iii. 152.
[3] Epistle of James, ii. 24.
[4] S. i. 33.

censured by the intelligent and begets much demerit. What two things? Through lack of observation *(ananuvicca)* and penetration *(apariyogāhetvā)* he speaks in praise of him who does not deserve praise and for the same reason blames him who should be praised."[1]

Furthermore, ignorance is not only disadvantageous; it is reprehensible.

"Monks, there are these eight stains. What eight? Monks, non-recitation is the mantra's stain, not rising is the stain of households, sluggishness is the stain of beauty, carelessness is the stain of a watchman, misconduct is the stain of a woman, stint is the stain of a donor, evil and unrighteous states are stains in this world and the next; but there is a greater stain than these, ignorance is the greatest stain."[2]

The horror of ignorance is made vivid here, by its being presented as the culmination of besetting sins whose danger is obvious. The device is similar to that used in Proverbs where pages of comment upon the active spitefulness of a jealous spirit are compressed into one sentence, "Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"[3] .

Socrates agrees with the Buddha in naming ignorance as the supreme evil to be overcome; Christianity, on the other hand, makes pride the first and most pernicious of the Seven Deadly Sins, and its conquest is the prime essential for followers of that religion. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[4] The idea of this need to subdue pride exists already in the Old Testament, where it is the barrier which separates the Jews from their God. "It is a stiff-necked people",[5] is an often repeated accusation. Christianity, which has for its core submission to a personal God, abhors pride more than ignorance. According to Buddhism, however, the root of all evil in the world is ignorance *(avijjā)* synonymous with delusion *(moha)*.

From the Buddha's detestation of ignorance follows its exaltation of the character of the teacher. The pupil must respect him who must never fail the pupil.

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[1] A. i. 88.
[2] A. iv. 194.
[3] Proverbs, xxvii. 4.
[4] Matthew, v 3.
[5] Exodus, xxxii. 9.

"In five ways, householder's son, a pupil should minister to a teacher as the South:

1. By rising from his seat to show respect.
2. By attending upon him.
3. By listening attentively.
4. By personal service.
5. By respectfully receiving instruction.

"In five ways, householder's son, do teachers who are thus ministered to by pupils show their compassion:

1. They train them in the best discipline.
2. They make them receive that which is well held by them.
3. They teach them every suitable art and science.
4. They introduce them to their friends and associates.
5. They provide for their safety in every quarter."[1]

Even the Buddha is shown as wishing for some figure of a teacher to revere and obey:

On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Sāvatthi, at the Jeta Grove in Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the Exalted One addressed the monks, "On a certain occasion, monks, I myself was staying at Uruvelā, on the bank of the river Nerañjarā, under the Goatherd's banyan tree, just after I had become fully enlightened. To me then occurred this thought as I was meditating alone, 'Ill at ease dwells the man who has no one to revere and obey. What if I were to dwell doing honour and paying reverence to some recluse or Brahmin and serving him?' Then, monks, I had this thought, 'For perfection of the sum total of virtues still imperfect I would dwell doing honour, obeying and reverencing a recluse or Brahmin; but in this world with its *Devas* (gods), *Mārās* (evil beings) and Brahmins, among the hosts of recluses and Brahmins, in the whole world of gods and mankind I do not perceive any other recluse or Brahmin more perfect in virtue than myself, whom I could dwell reverencing, obeying and serving him.

'For the perfection of the sum total of concentration ... the sum total of wisdom ... the sum total of release still imperfect I would dwell doing honour ... but not in this world of gods and mankind do I perceive any other recluse or Brahmin more perfect in concentra-

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[1] D. iii. 190.

tion, wisdom, in release than myself, whom honouring I could dwell reverencing, obeying and serving him.

"Then, monks, I had this thought, 'Suppose I should dwell honouring this Dhamma by which I have become perfectly enlightened; suppose I should dwell reverencing, obeying and serving this very Dhamma'."[1]

This shows that humility has a very important place in Buddhism. There is no element of conceit in the Buddha's claim to supremacy; he is beyond personal pride and states the truth about himself as he would state it on any other subject. There is a sublime humility in his sense of needing an object of reverence.

This also shows that the perfection which is the aim of Buddhism is not a static, lifeless state. Even the Enlightened One speaks in terms of growth, hence, the individual can always learn from ethics.

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[1] A. ii. 20.

CHAPTER 17

THE DEBT TO OUR PARENTS

When a child is born into this world it has no ability to live even for a few days without the help of someone else. It is the parents who look after and foster it. The parents have to undergo a lot of troubles until it becomes a grown up boy or girl, who perhaps, would be in a position to live without others' help. The love of parents towards their children is beyond description. They do everything humanly possible to help their children. They nurse, feed, wash, clean and arrange comforts to the best of their ability. The parents are ready to sacrifice their every comfort for the sake of their children. They look after their children without proper sleep. When the child is ill they are willing to spend their entire wealth for the child's care.

They give their best to their children, they forget themselves and regard only the comfort, well-being and happiness of their children. Their main aim in life is to see that their children prosper and live happily. They consider their children as part and parcel of their lives. Their children's joy is their joy, their children's prosperity is their prosperity, their children are the main source of their delight and happiness. If their children fall into any difficulty they are depressed and miserable.

The assistance which is rendered by parents to their children is limitless. Explaining the greatness of parents the Buddha said:

"*Brahmā*, monks, is a term for mother and father. 'First teacher', monks, is a name for mother and father. 'Worthy of offerings', monks, is a term for mother and father. Because mother and father do much for their children; they bring them up, nourish and introduce them to the world."[1]

Why are these supreme terms given to parents? Four excellent qualities; loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy and equanimity; are the four *Brahmavihāras* or divine abidings. The parents maintain these four qualities towards their children. Therefore the parents are like *Brahmās* to their children.

Sons and daughters learn under various teachers as they grow up. But they learn the first, and most valuable, lessons from their

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[1] A. i. 131.

parents — the lessons like how to talk, how to eat, how to clean themselves, how to behave etc. Therefore they are 'First teachers'.

Wherever the parents may be in their old age the children should go and offer the necessary requirements and gifts. Therefore parents are worthy of gifts.

Children are deeply indebted to their parents. According to the Buddha they are so indebted to them that one could not repay them even if one were to minister to them with every possible service for a hundred years. Even if one were to establish one's parents in absolute sovereignty over the whole earth — not even thus could one repay one's parents. The Buddha points out that it is because parents do much for their children in bringing them up, nourishing them and introducing them to the world.

There are, however, some ways to repay the great debt to parents to some extent. That is by dissuading them from evil, inducing them to do good and be good, and by living as ideal children. They should, in brief, be provided not only with fleeting material pleasures but also with spiritual treasures like confidence, morality, wisdom etc.

Dutiful and loving children should always be obedient to their parents who bestow their unfailing love on them. They should revere them and respect their wishes. They should never anger nor provoke them nor hurt their feelings. They should always maintain their parents' honour and good name by their own excellent character, refined behaviour, charming manners and noble demeanour. In every way they should try to the best of their ability to be the worthy children of their parents and do nothing to bring discredit to their good name even after their death.

Most children do not realise the amount of affection and care their parents have towards them. Always the parental love is far greater than filial love. One cannot expect that children, who are less mature, to be grateful and dutiful. But it is very wrong for them to be ungrateful and stubborn when they are grown up.

Three types of children have been enumerated in the Buddhist scriptures. Firstly, those who are inferior to their parents in every respect *(avajāta)*. Second, those who are on the same level with their parents *(anujāta)*, and thirdly, those who excel their parents in every way *(atijāta)*. All parents without exception want their children to excel them in learning, virtue and social position etc. Therefore every child must endeavour to be such.

Parents' one and only hope is to see their children grow up as good and ideal people. They would be happy if they surpass them. They would surely be unhappy if they fall below their expected standard. In order to lead their children onto the right path parents should set a good example.

According to the *Sigālovāda Sutta* the following five duties should be performed by parents:

1. They should dissuade their children from evil. Home is the first school where the children learn their elementary lessons in good and bad behaviour from their parents. Therefore the parents should be very careful to dissuade them from evils such as lying, dishonesty, stealing, vindictiveness etc.

2. They should persuade them to do good. Parents should, by words and example, try to persuade their children to emulate and practise good behaviour such as kindness, obedience, courage, honesty, perseverance etc.

3. They should give their children a good education. The best legacy that parents can bequeath to their children is a good education. There is no more valuable thing than knowledge. The parents should see that their children learn a suitable art or science along with good ethical principles. Education affords discipline and a disciplined person is a blessing to himself and to society.

4. They should give them in marriage to a suitable partner. Marriages may be either based on love or arranged by parents. It is a paramount duty of parents to see whether the marriage of their children would develop to a life-long companionship. If husband and wife do not assist each other, love each other, share their happiness and sorrow with each other, look after each other, and respect each other, the marriage would be a life-long misery. The parents have the right to advise their children with regard to their proposed marriage. They should admonish them and explain the duties of husband and wife as given in the *Sigālovāda Sutta*.

5. At the proper time they should hand over their inheritance. Loving parents not only do everything for the prosperity of their children during their youth but they also make preparations for their future comfort and well-being with their ancestral inheritance. Their own hard-earned wealth is also bequeathed to children as a legacy.

In return there are five duties that children should perform towards their parents.[1]

1. Being supported by them, they should support them in return. This is one of the paramount duties of children. They should obey them and not displease, ill-treat or disrespect them at any cost. They should attend to their needs when they are sick or getting old. In fact, they should deem it a great blessing and privilege to minister to them when they are helpless, weak or destitute.

2. They should perform the necessary duties. They should always try to know what are their parents' needs and try to provide them. The *Bodhisattva* considered it as his greatest privilege to sacrifice even his life for the sake of his parents.

3. They should maintain the family traditions. It is an important duty of children to continue the good works started by their parents. They thereby preserve the family traditions. They should carry on any philanthropic or social work started by their parents especially after their death.

4. They should act in such a way as to be worthy of their inheritance. Whatever property or legacy they receive from their parents it should be protected and increased.

5. They should offer alms in honour of their departed parents.[2] It is a noble custom to remember and revere one's parents after their death. One should offer alms to the monks or the needy and transfer the merits thereby acquired to the departed parents.

Buddhists believe in rebirth. They know that their departed parents have taken rebirth somewhere else. Therefore after doing suitable meritorious deeds they emanate their thoughts towards their deceased parents and invite them to rejoice in their good deeds. Periodical almsgivings are held, or donations are given to charitable institutions, books on the Dhamma are published, schools, hospitals, orphanages etc., are established in the names of parents. Dutiful and loving children perform all kinds of philanthropic work in order to perpetuate the hallowed name of their parents as a mark of their gratitude.

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[1] D. iii. 189.

[2] This is not mentioned in the PTS translation but it is included in the Pali text.

CHAPTER 18

THE DOCTRINE OF AHIṂSĀ IN BUDDHISM

Taking for particular examination the Buddhist doctrine of *Ahiṃsā,* it must be emphasized that there is nothing obscure or ambiguous in the manner in which this is set forth in the Buddhist Canonical texts. The Buddha categorically denounced *Hiṃsā,* violence, and asked his followers to cultivate and practise *Ahiṃsā,* non-violence, towards all beings. This sublime Buddhist principle is fully explained in Buddhist literature as *Mettā,* loving-kindness, and *Karuṇā,* compassion. In the entire Buddhist Canon there is no single saying of the Buddha in which he advocated or even permitted any kind of killing on any pretext whatsoever. He was, of all teachers, the most compassionate — *Mahākāruṇika* — and he taught us to spread peace and good-will among all without distinction.

Let us consider a few of his many sayings on this particular subject.

> "All tremble before violence; life is dear to all.
> Comparing others with oneself, one should not kill
> nor cause to kill."[1]

> "A man is no 'noble' in that he does harm to living beings. He who is harmless to all living beings, that one is called 'noble'."[2]

In the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta,* five of the ten stanzas are devoted to the *ahiṃsā* aspect of *mettā,* which is to say, to the loving-kindness which knows no injury and which is ever compassionate.

> "Whatever living beings there are, feeble or strong, tall, stout or medium, short, small or large; seen or unseen, those dwelling near or far away, those who are born and those who are yet to be born — may all beings be well and happy.

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[1] Dhp. v 130.

[2] *Ibid.* v 270.

"Let no one deceive or despise another person anywhere; let no one wish harm to another out of ill-will or anger. Just as a mother protects her only child with her own life, so should there be developed in all living beings a mind without limit.

"In all the world let there be developed a mind of loving-kindness without limit, above, below, across, without obstruction, without enmity, without rivalry."[1]

Of the five precepts which every Buddhist undertakes to observe, the first consists of the declaration, "I undertake the precept to abstain from the taking of life."[2] The Buddhist must then neither destroy nor cause, nor allow to be destroyed any living thing. Further the Buddha says:

"Do not kill a living being. You should not kill or condone killing by others. Having abandoned the use of violence, you should not use force against either the strong or the feeble."[3]

"He who for a hundred years makes a thousand sacrifices each month is not worth the sixteenth part of a person who is compassionate to living creatures."[4]

Therefore Buddhists all over the world have abstained from killing animals either for food, sport or sacrifices. In ancient India, before the birth of Buddhism, the slaughtering of animals — horses, bulls, rams and cattle was very common. Animal sacrifices are still common in Hindu temples. The Vedas, the Brahminic scriptures, enjoined this as a duty, though every Hindu will quote the saying, ***ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ***, that is, "Non-violence is the greatest religion."[5] Moreover, the stanza quoted above occurs similarly at *Manusmṛti*.[6] But the Buddha condemned these blood sacrifices outright.

The same attitude applies in the case of mosquitoes and other disease carrying insects, however dangerous they may be. Buddhists

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[1] Sn. vv 146–150.

[2] *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhā-padaṃ samādiyāmi.*

[3] Sn. v 394.

[4] Dhp. v 106.

[5] *cf. Mahābharata,* 1.11.13; xiii. 115,25 (Calcutta Edition); iii. 198,19,69; xiii. 116,40; 114,6 (Bombay Edition).

[6] *Manusmṛti,* V. v 53.

may sometimes destroy them as a preventative measure against malaria but they cannot escape the consequences of their unwholesome volitional action. It is a selfish idea to preserve one's life at the expense of another whatever form it may be. If one destroys life in order to help others one is not on that account absolved from the crime one has already committed. He has to reap the consequences. Buddhism does not take the view that the end justifies the means. Good actions bring about good results while bad actions bring about evil consequences. They are two different actions and one cannot cancel one action by another. There is no 'lesser evil' in Buddhism. Nevertheless, so long as we are still worldlings we cannot altogether escape harming other beings. But we should try to avoid it as much as possible until we reach our goal of *nibbāna,* then one is incapable of harming other beings even to save one's own life.

The greatest Buddhist Emperor, Asoka, who reigned from approximately 273–232 B.C., which would be about three hundred years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, said:

> "Here no animal shall be slaughtered and sacrificed."[1]
>
> "Abstention from slaughter of living creatures is a meritorious thing."[2]

The underlying philosophy behind this attitude is that of compassion. Buddhists do not consider that man is made in the image of a deity and therefore fundamentally different from other living beings; on the contrary, we consider that man is akin to animals although he represents a higher stage of evolution. Since life is dear to all beings we Buddhists regard even the least significant life to be sacred and therefore try to develop loving-kindness to all without limit, preference or prejudice.

The Buddhist appeal to humanity was so strong that it created a horror of the practice of blood sacrifice which overcame even devout belief in the authority of the Vedas. In all Buddhist lands the love of animals is widespread. For instance; it is not uncommon for rich Thais to buy live fish in order to gain merit by restoring them to the sea, while in Sri Lanka people will buy caged birds and restore them to freedom.

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[1] Rock Edict, 1.

[2] Rock Edict, 3.

Violence does, of course, occur in Buddhist countries. There have been wars and killings, but this does not mean that such violence is sanctioned. The Buddha made no specific statement concerning war, but the seven conditions of welfare laid down for the Vajjians and recorded at the beginning of the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*[1] are worthy of close study. The essential point to bear in mind is the Buddhist understanding that we are all responsible for our actions, whether good or bad; if these actions lead to evils we must bear the consequences. Non-violence is the aim, but, since we are all at different stages of development, it is an aim which will not easily be realised. At the same time, the fact that it may not be possible immediately to attain to an entire *ahiṃsā,* is no excuse or justification for not practising it on every occasion that in our present state of understanding we deem to be possible; rather must it be so that, by practising *ahiṃsā* to the greatest possible extent in our own immediate environment, the circumstances under which we should at present deem it impossible to practise *ahiṃsā* will never arise. The Buddha's words spoken in connection with the Vajjians, and addressed to the Brahman who had come to learn from the Buddha the likely outcome of the planned offensive:

"As long as the Vajjians are established in these seven things which do not bring loss and ruin, and remain in concord with them, so long may they be expected to prosper and not to decline:

1. As long as they gather together in public meetings frequently,
2. As long as they meet and disperse in concord,
3. As long as they abide by the Vajjian traditions,
4. As long as they respect the elders,
5. As long as they abduct no women,
6. As long as they worship the Vajjian shrines,
7. As long as they provide support and protection for the *Arahants;* so long may they be expected to prosper and not to decline."[2]

Thus it is seen that as long as a society lives together in harmony with its own members and does not actively oppress others it has little to fear from any outside antagonism. This is equally true of individuals.

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[1] D. ii. 72–76.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. 75.

A leading principle of the Buddha is peace, goodwill and harmony among all living beings and because of this he has been called *'Santināyaka'* — a leader who is a promoter of peace. Buddhism teaches one how to live peacefully in society. The result is that by keeping the Buddhist code of ethics as well as one can, and by training one's mind in meditation one has inner harmony and is at peace with all one's moods and thoughts, with one's concepts and ideas and with one's feelings. One does not repress the emotions; one controls them and does not give vent to one's harsher feelings; one tries to live in a way which harms no one and so one finds, with practice, that what we know as 'self' is just a collection of mental states which arise, persist briefly and then pass away as though they had never been. This awareness is the pivot of the Buddha's teaching. Through it, one finds inner peace, and can thus live in harmony with others. The Buddha worked to spread this 'Kingdom of Peace' on earth.

What is this mindfulness or awareness? It is awareness of everything that we think, say and do. The training is ethical and the Buddha emphasized how important it is that we try to follow ethical concepts as well as possible. The ethics of Buddhism is founded on one's mental attitude since all thought, speech and action spring from our minds — and our minds are just mental states which come and go as quickly as a flash of lightning. It is most important to guard our minds against ill-will and to practise loving-kindness. It is friendliness towards all living beings. It is not sentimentality. It is joyful because it does not cling. It understands impermanence and so it lives in the present. It looks to the 'now' and not to a future which is not yet come.

As well as loving-kindness; there are three other virtues which should be practised. Man should be compassionate. What is true compassion? It is the emotion which makes the heart of the strong man quiver when he sees the suffering of others. It is neither grief nor is it affection. It is a 'sympathy' with the person or being suffering and an understanding that, like all states, it will change, but nevertheless it is a sadness for the being experiencing the discomfort or grief or whatever.

Then there is sympathetic-joy: the Pali word is ***muditā***. This is what we should feel for those who have success in life. We should be glad for their success and happy that they have achieved fame and fortune; that they have passed their examination or have been able to

buy a fine house or a new car. It is not an easy virtue to cultivate. But if we ourselves are frugal and industrious and easily contented then it will be easier.

The fourth virtue is ***upekkhā***, equanimity. One tries not to be influenced by the praise and blame of others. One remembers that in sickness and health, pleasure and pain, one's mind can only be affected if one allows it to be. If one knows that the circumstances will change one will maintain an inner calm — one should not be affected by 'the passing show'. The goal of the holy life is complete freedom from all conflicts — both within and without.

Buddhism teaches peace and it has often been remarked that there was never any blood shed in order to propagate it. The great Emperor Asoka said, "All men are my children and, as I desire for my children that they obtain every kind of welfare and happiness both in this world and in the next world, so do I desire for all men." In the early years of his reign Asoka extended his empire by force of arms but when he realised the validity of Buddha's teaching he saw that the best way to conquer others was by one's own good example and kindness. So he instituted social reforms, built roads and hospitals, improved the education system and ruled his country with benevolence and justice.

> "Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered lie down in sorrow; casting aside both victory and defeat the peaceful dwell at ease."[1]

Asoka followed the Buddha's teaching and proved that it is quite possible to rule a country without undue harshness and without engaging in military conquests.

The Buddha once intervened in a dispute between the Sakyans and Koliyas who were disputing how the waters of the river Rohinī should be used in a time of drought — both clans needed water for irrigation of their crops. The Buddha settled the argument by pointing out that blood is far more precious than water and taught that mutual help is the best assistance one can give and obtain.[2] Governments should realise this and bring an end to the arms race.

Peace, good-will and harmony are essential to a happy life. One should feel that one fears no one and is feared by no one. If we look

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[1] Dhp. v 207.

[2] SnA. i. 358; Cp. i. v 42; DhA. iii. 254ff.

at our fear it dies away. The same is true of anger. If we learn how to 'watch' our mental states we will never have to suffer from fear or worry, despair or frustration to the same extent again. So being mindful of our mental states is very important. Systematic mindfulness; that is, slowing down and watching objectively; is the most important of all the Buddha's teachings and is fully described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas.*[1] "Don't wish, just watch!" is an excellent reminder.

"All that we are is all that we have thought"[2] is no idle saying. If we are truly aware and mindful of what we think, say and do, then we guard ourselves well. If we are well-guarded, watching our reactions and our words, our emotions and feelings, then we are people of peace and we, in helping ourselves, help others; and in helping others to be peaceful we are truly helping society. As more and more people become aware and mindful the society becomes more and more peaceful. If we all cultivate the four great virtues of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic-joy and equanimity we have a solid foundation for ethical conduct. Thus we can develop our spiritual maturity and through seeing things as they really are, we can attain full knowledge and the ultimate bliss of *nibbāna.*

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[1] D. ii. 290; M. i. 56.

[2] See Dhp. vv 1, 2, 165.

CHAPTER 19

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL

Everyone in the world desires to attain everlasting happiness. According to Buddhism the only kind of happiness that is everlasting is the goal of *nibbāna;* a word perhaps better known in its Sanskrit form of *Nirvāṇa.* The Buddha said, *"Nirvāṇa* is the highest happiness". Hence the highest aim of the Buddhist is the attainment of it. It must be realised within oneself and by oneself. *Nirvāṇa* can be realised in one of three ways, *viz:* 1) by attaining ***Srāvakabodhi*** or *Arahantship,* 2) by attaining ***Pratyekabodhi*** or 3) by attaining ***Samyaksambodhi.***

Srāvakabodhi refers to the enlightenment of the *Arahant* who has attained *nirvāṇa* by treading the path pointed out by a *Sammāsambuddha.* For this reason it is known as the enlightenment of a disciple ***(Srāvaka).*** When *Srāvakas* have comprehended the truth they are expected to follow the example of the Buddha and preach the Dharma for the benefit of others. The Buddha exhorted his disciples to wander forth and preach the Dharma for the well-being and happiness of the people. In accordance with this exhortation of the Buddha; the elders preached and taught the sublime teaching for the welfare and liberation of humanity since the time of the Buddha. The Buddha said:

> "Let one first establish oneself in what is proper and then instruct others. Such a wise man will not be defiled. As he instructs others, so should he himself act. Himself fully controlled, he should control others; for oneself, indeed, is difficult to control."[1]
>
> "For the sake of the other's welfare, however great, let one not neglect one's own welfare."[2]

The elders who preferred to preach, chose to study the Dharma ***(ganthadhura)*** and those who preferred the contemplative life retired to the forest and led an exemplary life, practising meditation ***(vipassanā dhura).*** Such Elders' preaching and guidance has been and still

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[1] Dhp. vv 158, 159.

[2] Dhp. v 166.

is of enormous benefit among the people. It is, therefore, quite obvious that the monastic Order of the *Theravādins* is not inactive and indolent. *Arahantship* is only achieved by eradicating all forms of selfishness. Egoism or personality-belief is one of the ten fetters that has to be discarded for the attainment of *Arahantship* and in the noble ideal of that attainment there is no selfishness. Innumerable wise men and women who benefitted by the golden opportunity offered by the Buddha and other saintly persons gained their enlightenment in one life-time.

Pratyekabodhi is the independent enlightenment of a highly evolved being who achieves his goal by his own efforts ie., without seeking the guidance of an enlightened instructor. He attains to the perfect insight but passes away without proclaiming the truth to the world. Although he attains enlightenment for himself he doesn't possess the gift of enlightening others. But they, too, benefit others by inspiring them with their supreme example of renunciation and virtuous living.

Samyaksambodhi refers to the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha or Fully Enlightened One. He who attains this *bodhi* is called ***Samyaksambuddha*** (or ***Sammāsambuddha*** in Pali). Only one supreme Buddha arises at a particular time. He who aspires to attain *Samyaksambodhi* is called a ***Bodhisattva***. *Bodhi* means wisdom or enlightenment; *sattva* means sentient being. *Bodhisattva,* therefore, means one who is devoted to wisdom or enlightenment.

There are three ***Yānas*** (vehicles or ways) which lead an aspirant to the goal. The third *Yāna* was at first called the ***Bodhisattva-yāna*** which was later called the ***Mahāyāna***. The other two were together known as ***Hīnayāna***. *Hīna* means 'lower', 'inferior' or 'lesser' and *Mahā* means 'higher' or 'greater'. Although there is a *yāna* of the *Pratyekabuddhas,* they do not need a vehicle for their solitary career to enlightenment. A *bodhisattva* strives to become a Buddha by attaining perfect *bodhi* whilst an *Arahant* is content with the attainment of *Nirvāṇa.*

A *bodhisattva* preaches the doctrine dealing with perfections *(pāramitā).* He has taken the great vow, "I shall not enter into final *Nirvāṇa* before all beings have been liberated". The *Mahāyāna* has preached the ideal of compassionate Buddhahood for all. The ***Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*** clearly teaches this gospel; "All shall become Buddhas." The word *bodhisattva* is very old and occurs in

the *Pali Nikāyas.* Gotama Buddha speaks of himself as a ***bodhisattva*** when he refers to the period before his enlightenment. The term *bodhisattva* is used by him when referring to his previous lives as in the ***Jātaka*** stories. In both schools of Buddhism, *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna,* great wisdom ***(Mahāprajñā)*** and great compassion ***(Mahākaruṇā)*** are regarded as equally important.

A *bodhisattva's* career commences with the production of the thought of enlightenment ***(bodhicitta)***. He thus: 1) thinks of becoming a Buddha for the welfare and liberation of all beings, 2) makes certain vows, and 3) his future greatness is predicted by a living Buddha. These three events mark the development of an ordinary person into a *bodhisattva.* Later, the Buddhist philosophers introduced a kind of novitiate of faith, worship, prayer, aspiration and devotion as necessary antecedents that should lead to the arising of *bodhicitta.* Śāntideva speaks on the *bodhisattva* ideal in the first person as follows:

> "May I be an inexhaustible treasure for poor creatures! May I be foremost in rendering service to them with manifold and various articles and requisites!
>
> "I renounce my body, my pleasures and all my merit in the past, present and future so that all beings may attain the good and accomplish their welfare. I have no desire for these things.
>
> "I have devoted my body for the welfare of all creatures. They may revile me all the time or bespatter me with mud; they may play with my body and mock and make sport of me; they may even slay me. I have given my body to them; why should I think of all that?
>
> "May I be the protector of the helpless.
> May I be the guide of wayfarers!"

THE ***PĀRAMITĀS*** (PERFECTIONS) must be developed by a *bodhisattva.* According to the ***Cariyāpiṭaka*** commentary, ***Pāramīs*** are those virtues which are cultivated with great compassion, guided by reason, uninfluenced by selfishness and unsullied by misbelief or any feelings of conceit. ***Param*** means beyond; i.e., *bodhi* or enlightenment. The ***i*** means to go. Hence *Pāramī* means excellence. There are other translations of this word such as 'Transcendental Virtue', 'Perfect Virtue', 'Highest Perfection', 'Complete Attainment' etc. The

forms *pāramī* and *pāramitā* occur in both Pali and Sanskrit works. Six *pāramitā* are discussed in Buddhist Sanskrit works:

1. ***Dāna*** (generosity)
2. ***Sīla*** (morality)
3. ***Kśānti*** (patience)
4. ***Vīrya*** (energy)
5. ***Dhyāna*** (absorption)
6. ***Prajñā*** (wisdom).

The four supplementary *pāramitā* are:

7. ***Upāya*** (skilfullness)
8. ***Pranidhāna*** (resolution)
9. ***Bala*** (strength)
10. ***Jñāna*** (knowledge)

Theravādins give the following ten *pāramī:*

1. ***Dāna*** (generosity)
2. ***Sīla*** (morality)
3. ***Nekkhamma*** (renunciation)
4. ***Paññā*** (wisdom)
5. ***Viriya*** (energy)
6. ***Khanti*** (patience)
7. ***Sacca*** (truthfulness)
8. ***Adhiṭṭhāna*** (resolution)
9. ***Mettā*** (loving-kindness)
10. ***Upekkhā*** (equanimity)

Pāramitās confer prosperity and happiness on all beings. They are sublime, supremely important and imperishable. They lead to welfare, happy rebirth, serenity, progressive spiritual development, successful concentration and the highest knowledge. They are free from the contamination of sensual pleasure, partiality, love of reward and culpable self-complacency. In fact, they are placed in this order because they imply one another and form a progressive scheme of practice. Each *Pāramitā* has three degrees:

i. It is ordinary when it is practised by the ordinary worldly person for the sake of happiness in this life or the next.

ii. It is extraordinary when it is cultivated by disciples for the attainment of *nirvāṇa.*

iii. It is superlative when it is developed by *bodhisattvas* for the welfare and liberation of all beings.

All the *Pāramitās* can be cultivated only by means of attentive thought, resolute purpose, self-mastery and wisdom in the choice of means. Foolish and vain persons may misuse the *pāramitās* leading to their downfall as they may be puffed up with pride and arrogance on account of their false sense of moral superiority.

1. *Dāna* (generosity)

There are three kinds of *dāna:*

i. The gift of wealth or material objects.
ii. The gift of religious instruction.
iii. The gift of friendliness or security.

The *bodhisattva* gives away his body, his pleasures and his merits. The recipients are divided into three categories. Firstly, his friends and relatives. Secondly, he should bestow gifts on the poor and sick. Thirdly, he should offer gifts to the monks and ascetics. Furthermore, the *bodhisattva* should exercise his discretion in the choice of gifts. He should not give anything which may be used to inflict injury on other living beings. He should also refrain from supplying others with the means to gratify their sensual appetites and passions. He should not give away poisons, weapons, intoxicating liquor, drugs, or nets for the capture of animals. He should not bestow on others land on which animals may be hunted or killed. He should not give anybody the instruments of suicide or self-torture. The wealth that he gives must be acquired righteously and peacefully.

Besides wealth and material objects a *bodhisattva* should be ready to sacrifice even his limbs for the sake of others. A *bodhisattva* should also know the gracious manner of giving. He should always be very courteous to the supplicants and receive them with every mark of respect and deference. He should always be happy and joyful when he gives something away. The donor should be even happier than the recipient. He should not talk of his charitable deeds. He should give quickly with a humble heart. He should make no distinction between friends and enemies but should give to all alike. He should not lose his sense of proportion and measure in his charity. He owes a duty to many living beings and must not sacrifice himself in vain for an unimportant purpose. He must combine wisdom and mercy equally.

Buddhist literature abounds in stories, legends and parables of charitable and self-sacrificing beings. The heroes and heroines of these stories give away wealth, limbs, life, wife and children in a spirit of exaggerated and fantastic philanthropy. A *bodhisattva* threw himself down a cliff before a starving tigress to prevent her eating her cubs. In another story a blind priest asks for the gift of an eye so the *bodhisattva* gives both eyes and remains blind himself.

The *dāna pāramitā* confers upon the giver the double blessing of inhibiting selfishness and developing selflessness. A *bodhisattva* is not very much concerned as to whether the recipient is truly in need or not since his main objective is to eliminate the craving that lies within himself. The joy of service, its attendant happiness and the alleviation of suffering are other blessings of generosity. He expects no reward in return, nor even does he crave enhancement of reputation from it.

2. *Sīla* (morality)

As a *pāramitā* it has been defined in three ways. It has been identified with virtue in general, and many other admirable qualities have been enumerated as its characteristics. It has also been interpreted in relation to the ideals of purification and restraint as they are realised with body, speech and mind (deed, word and thought). It is usually understood as referring to the five moral precepts which are the Buddhist's code of ethics. All errors and wrong views spring from ***moha*** (ignorance). ***Rāga*** (passion) and ***dveśa*** (anger) are enemies of virtue, whilst *moha* cuts at the root of wisdom. *Sīla* is thus rooted in the absence of sensuality and hatred but its ramifications are many. The overlapping lists of virtues were reduced to some kind of order in the threefold classification which was based on the ideal of restraint and self-control *(saṃvara)* as applied to the body, speech and mind. These must be controlled and disciplined; they must be purified. According to the Buddha's teaching, the body can be controlled and purified by abstaining from the three evil actions; *viz.*, harming living beings, theft and unchastity. Speech can be controlled and purified by abstaining from falsehood, slander, harsh or impolite speech, and frivolous or senseless chatter. The mind can be purified by the avoidance of covetousness, malevolence and wrong views. In addition to these ten evil actions to restrain from there are ten meritorious actions which should be cultivated.[1]

Morality consists of duties that one should perform and abstinences that one should practise. Rightly discerning the law of kamma, of his own accord he refrains from evils and does good to the best of his ability.

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[1] See page 170.

A *bodhisattva* disobeyed the command of his Brahmin teacher, who asked his pupils to steal for his benefit. A king deeply infatuated with the beautiful wife of one of his officials, refused to gratify his passion, even though the husband was willing to give up his wife out of loyalty. Prince Kuṇāla and Prince Kalyaṇakārī also refused to be seduced by passionate women who fell in love with them.[1]

3. *Nekkhamma* (renunciation)

This implies both renunciation of worldly life by adopting the ascetic life and the temporary inhibiting of the hindrances *(nīvaraṇa)* by attaining *jhāna.* Realising the vanity of fleeting pleasures he voluntarily leaves his possessions and, donning the simple ascetic garb, strives to lead the contemplative life in all its purity. He practises the higher morality to such an extent that he becomes almost selfless in his actions. No inducement; whether fame, wealth, honour or gain; could tempt him to do anything against his principles. He teaches both by word and by example. He is very strenuous in working for his inner spiritual development but at the same time caring for the spiritual needs of others. He is no burden to society because he gives no trouble to any. His needs are few and content-ment is his wealth.

Nekkhamma is not separately mentioned in the *Mahāyāna* literature but is included in the six *pāramitā* as *dhyāna pāramitā. Dhyāna* is defined as concentration and stability or fixing of the mind *(bodhisattva bhūmi). Dhyāna* is thus primarily and principally the means of experiencing and attaining serenity and calm *(samatha)* which is indeed coupled with mental concentration. A *bodhisattva* who begins to practise *dhyāna* must go through a preliminary stage of preparation which may be said to include renunciation and solitude, in cultivating the four sublime states ***(brahmavihāra)***. He must live as a celibate hermit. Kśemendra relates the story of a couple, who maintained a purely spiritual relationship in married life, though they could not avoid marriage on account of the pressure of external circumstances. *Mahāyāna* philosophers exalt monastic celibacy and seclusion, while they tolerate household life as an inferior state. A *bodhisattva* should devote himself to meditation and self-examination, and also preach occasionally to the people who may visit him.

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[1] *Divyāvadāna* 54.

4. *Paññā* (wisdom)

Paññā or *Prajñā* is wisdom or right understanding of the reality of the world as unstable *(anicca)*, unsatisfactory *(dukkha)* and soulless *(anatta)*. *Paññā* is of three kinds:

i. Wisdom which depends on hearing the teaching of another or on studying the scriptures.[1] In ancient times when writing was not in common use knowledge was passed on by word of mouth. Hence a learned person was called ***bahusuta***, or one who has heard much, corresponding to the English word, erudite.

ii. Wisdom which arises from thought, reflection, discussion, experiment and research.[2] Modern knowledge of psychology is mostly of this kind.

iii. Intuitive wisdom which is a realisation founded on personal experience of life.[3] This is a superior kind of understanding acquired by the practice of meditation. It is by such meditation that one intuitively realises the truth which is beyond the reach of logical reasoning. Meditation is not a passive reverie but an energetic striving. It leads to self-discipline, self-respect and self-knowledge. Insight into the three characteristics of existence is the apex of the practice of meditation.

5. *Viriya* (energy)

The word *viriya* derives from ***vīra***. And ***vīr***, means vigour, strength, heroism, fortitude, courage or perseverance. It is mental vigour rather than physical strength. It is the persistent effort to work for others both in thought and deed. Firmly establishing himself in this *pāramitā* the *bodhisattva* develops self-reliance and makes it one of his prominent characteristics. Failures he views as steps to success; opposition causes him to redouble his efforts; dangers increase his courage. He looks straight towards his goal, nor does he stop to rest until his goal is reached. Ceaselessly and untiringly he works for

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[1] *Sutamayī paññā.* [2] *Cintāmayī paññā.* [3] *Bhāvanāmayī paññā.*

others expecting no reward. It is effort coupled with wisdom that serves as a powerful hand to achieve all ends.[1]

A *bodhisattva* resolutely combats all the great and small evils and vices that may drag him down. He does not yield to despair as he knows that all can and shall achieve the goal. He knows that self-sacrifice becomes easier with practice. A *bodhisattva* reflects carefully before he embarks on an enterprise. But having started it he carries it through to completion, he does not leave things half-done. He acts on two great principles; "Equality of self and others" and "Regard of others before self."

6. *Khanti* (patience)

The word *khanti* or *kśānti* has been rendered as forbearance, patience, endurance of suffering. Patience is a quality of noble-minded people. Tolerant of the faults and weaknesses of others the noble-minded can see the virtues and strengths in everyone. The *bodhisattva* cultivates this virtue to perfection. He forgives all injury, insult and criticism. Though abused or even beaten he does not show his annoyance by retaliating. Knowing that the self is illusory the only pain he feels is the sorrow at the unhappiness of others; since they are already unhappy how could he be angry with them and increase their misery?

One of the most beautiful stories regarding *khanti pāramitā* is that of Kuṇāla. Emperor Asoka had a son, named Dharmaviradhara, whose eyes were beautiful like those of a Himalayan bird called Kuṇāla, hence he was known as Kuṇāla. When he grew to manhood, his step-mother, Tisyarakśita, fell in love with him and tried to seduce him but he preached to her the importance of virtue. He thus incurred her enmity and she resolved to destroy him. Later, Kuṇāla was sent to Taksaśila in the north in order to quell a rebellion; and thereafter he remained as a successful ruler. Meanwhile, Asoka fell ill and Tisyarakśita nursed him back to health. She asked him to be allowed to exercise royal power for a week and Asoka complied to show his gratitude. She despatched an order in Asoka's name to Taksaśila commanding Kuṇāla's eyes to be put out. The citizens had to obey the royal decree; Kuṇāla meekly submitting to the ordeal. He even

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[1] *Hatthavanagallavihāravaṃsa*, PTS, p 6: *Paññānuyātaṃ viriyaṃ vadanti sabbattha siddhiggahanagga hathaṃ*.

took the eyes in his hand and began to philosophize in verse. He left the town and wandered back to Pātaliputta as a beggar accompanied by his wife Kāñcanamālā. The unfortunate couple found refuge in the royal stable where they were discovered by the palace servants. When they were taken to the king's presence the vindictive queen's plot was exposed. Asoka was furious with rage and grief and threatened to put her to death with cruel tortures but Kuṇāla said to the Emperor, "O king, I am not troubled with pain at all. In spite of the terrible wrong inflicted on me, there is no burning anger in me. My heart is full of love for my mother who put out my eyes."

7. *Sacca* (truthfulness)

Truthfulness is the most fundamental spiritual quality.

i. The *bodhisattva* acts as he speaks; he speaks as he acts. He speaks the truth and nothing but the truth, and he does so at the proper time. He is consistent and straightforward in his dealings. He is no hypocrite since he adheres strictly to his principles.

ii. He does not sow strife and discord in society by uttering slanderous libels. He does not act as a tale-bearer, repeating to others what he has heard if it would cause strife. He delights in harmony and promotes concord wherever he can.

iii. He does not indulge in harsh, bitter, offensive, vulgar or angry speech. His speech is sweet, polite, gentle, agreeable and dignified. But he does when necessary speak firmly to restrain foolish people.

iv. He speaks at the proper time and his utterances are always well-reasoned, relevant and instructive. He always abstains from frivolous and senseless chatter. He speaks of dhamma and avoids worldly talk.

v. He does not use flattery to win the hearts of others, he does not exalt himself to win their admiration. He does not hide his defects to avoid blame. The praiseworthy he praises without envy. The blameworthy he blames judiciously, not with contempt but with compassion.

8. *Adhiṭṭhāna* (resolution)

Without resolution or determination the other *pāramīs* cannot be fulfilled. It is compared to the foundations of a building. Will-power forcefully removes all obstructions from the path, and no matter what hardships he has to endure he never turns away from his goal. A *bodhisattva* is a man of iron determination whose high principles cannot be shaken. As occasion demands he can be as soft as a flower or as firm as a rock.

9. *Mettā* (loving-kindness)

Mettā (Skt. Maitrī) may be translated as friendliness, loving-kindness, universal love or benevolence. It is defined as the wish for the happiness of all beings without exception. It is characterized by the desire to do good to others and provide them with what is useful. *mettā* is mentioned and extolled more frequently in the Pāli Canon than *karuṇā* or *muditā* but they are just different facets of the same nobility of heart. As a *Brahmavihāra, mettā* is developed through systematic meditation as are the other *brahmavihāras.* This practice belongs to the *Dhyāna Pāramitā* of the *Mahāyāna.* The *bodhisattva* abides pervading the whole universe with his mind full of *mettā,* free from any trace of enmity, rivalry or harmfulness.

10. *Upekkhā* (equanimity)

The Sanskrit for equanimity; ***upekṣā*** is derived from ***ikkhā*** meaning to see, view or discern. So the etymological meaning of the term is discerning rightly, viewing justly or looking impartially, i.e., without attachment or aversion. Here the term is not used in the sense of indifference or neutral feeling but is a product of the fourth of the perfections, intuitive wisdom *(prajñā).* As a perfection it goes beyond the avoidance of dualistic distinctions. It is as dynamic a quality as loving-kindness.

The *bodhisattva,* as he realises the emptiness of self-nature *(anātman),* rises beyond the distinction of self and others. According to conventional thinking he now puts the welfare of others before his own. But in realising his own emptiness, he sees that all share this emptiness and ultimately are like himself. There are no beings, there is only becoming that takes form in a myriad ways according to conditions. Hidden behind all there is only Buddha-nature; there is

only one body, that motivating power or ground of ultimate reality known in *Mahāyāna* philosophy as the *Dharmakāya.* The perfection of equanimity is that the *bodhisattva* cannot do other than act as a member of that body of the Dharma in the service of all its other parts. He is a function of the One whose task is to realise Oneness wherever it is manifested. The *Bodhisattva Vow* to save all beings, to encompass all Dharmas, however manifold is grounded upon this final perfection of equanimity and cannot be realised, or even understood properly, without it.

In order to systematise the teaching and make it more easily comprehensible, the Buddha-dharma has been reduced to numerous headings and lists. There are 4 noble truths; an eightfold path viewed from a threefold aspect; there are 7 factors of enlightenment; a twelve-fold chain of Dependent Origination. There are 10 or 13 stages (according to school) of *Bodhisattvahood;* there are 6 or 10 perfections ... and so on. There is nothing sacrosanct about such teaching devices. They represent one aspect of the supplementary perfection of wisdom of means *(upāya).*

Those who practise the Buddhist Way know that it is a dynamic whole whose parts simply do not exist in isolation. The perfection of equanimity extends from the highest realisation of Ultimate Reality to the simplest insight into the practice. No one perfection can be fulfilled without the presence and co-operation of all the others. Each supports and aids the development of the others. The same may be said of the factors of enlightenment and of the eightfold path, with which the qualities to be brought to perfection overlap. On this level too there is only the body of the Dharma. We may talk of this aspect of the Path or that — of perfections, stages of sainthood, of the *bodhisattva's* development. But this is only to strengthen our motivation, to focus our effort. It is the practice that is important. Theories, systems, teaching devices; are many, but the practice is one and should be continuous.

May the merit of this teaching, then, be for the benefit of all beings. May the noble resolve of all *bodhisattvas* come to fruition in the fulfilment of the perfections. May the blessings of the practice inspire and strengthen us all, and may the result be for the happiness of all.

CHAPTER 20

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

The doctrine of *Paticca Samuppāda* is the real foundation on which the entire philosophy of Buddhism is built. The Buddha himself said, "O *bhikkhus,* one who understand this doctrine of Dependent Origination understands the Dhamma; one who understands the Dhamma, understands this doctrine of Dependent Origination."[1] Sāntarakṣita, in his encyclopedic philosophical treatise, the *Tattva-saṅgraha,* offers his adoration to the Buddha as "The Great Sage who has preached the doctrine of *Paticca Samuppāda.*"[2] The three fundamental principles of Buddhism — 1) all is impermanent, 2) unsatisfactory and 3) insubstantial — are really derivative forms of this very doctrine.

The central point in this Buddhist doctrine is: there is nothing that is not dependent on something else. Nothing can arise on its own accord, independently. For example, the lamp remains burning because of the wick and this in turn is dependent upon oxygen, temperature etc. Likewise, the wick is the result of twining strands of cotton together and the oxygen is a combination of elements.

'Dependent Origination' means, dependent on that, this becomes." Simple examples are: there being clouds, rain falls; there being rain, the road becomes slippery; there being a slippery road, a man falls; due his falling, he is injured. Conversely, if there were no clouds, there would be no rain; if there were no rain there would be no slippery road; if there were no slippery road, there would be no accident arising from someone falling on it. All the known sciences are concerned with this process of thought; they only trace events backwards and forwards in the causal chain. In botany for instance, a growing plant depends upon suitable manure, etc. In physics, an engine depends on fuel, e.g. oxygen and coal.

There can be no first cause, because each cause becomes an effect and each effect a cause. Hence a first cause is quite inconceivable. As Bertrand Russell said, "There is no need to suppose a first cause at all which is due to the poverty of our imagination." The life

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[1] M. i. 190: *"Yo paticcasamuppādaṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati, yo dhammaṃ passati so paticcasamuppādaṃ passati."*

[2] *Tattvasaṅgraha,* vol. i.

stream flows on *ad infinitum* so long as it is fed by the muddy waters of craving, hatred and delusion. It is therefore difficult to see a beginning of things, but it is even more difficult to see an end to all things and eternity is a concept which virtually defies human imagination. Knowledge grows in proportion to our understanding correctly such causal processes. And where our scientific knowledge fails us, we often have recourse to superstition. The primitive people saw the wonders of nature and became curious to get a satisfactory explanation of them. They could not explain them scientifically, i.e. by the Law of Dependent Origination, therefore they naturally tried to explain them by some superstitious superhuman agent or agents — gods or goddesses. But history shows that any such belief in a superstitious explanation is inimical to the advancement of knowledge. The primitive man believed that the wind blew because the Wind God was going in procession to be married. If science had accepted this belief and had not tried to trace the phenomenon according to the Law of Dependent Origination, we could never have known that the movement of the wind is due to the difference of atmospheric pressure. A theistic or a superstitious explanation puts an end to all further inquiry. We cannot ask "Who created God?", or depending on what God originates. Here there is an absolute check in the advancement of knowledge.

But the Law of Dependent Origination does not investigate into the First Cause, for the very conception of a First Cause means a total check in the progress of knowledge.

Paticca Samuppāda is not, as some people erroneously suppose, the Law of Causation as understood by medieval logicians who followed Aristotle, which considers the cause and effect as two quite different events, one of which produces the other.

When examined carefully, this seems untenable. According to the Law of *Paticca Samuppāda* two events cannot be considered as quite distinct from each other for they are links of the same process, which admits of no break. No single event in the world is ever isolated. A cause, therefore, cannot stand by itself as such.

Clay is the cause of the pot, the medieval logicians would assert. Yes, the clay is certainly the cause of the pot; but it is not, by itself, sufficient for the production of the pot. If there were no water, no wheel, no potter, no effort on the part of the potter; the pot would not have been produced. All these factors are indispensable for the production of the pot. What right have we to say, therefore, that the clay is the cause of the pot? It is simply arbitrary to select one of several circumstances and call it the cause. It is not right, then, to

say that clay is the cause of the pot. A better way of expressing it is: "The pot was produced depending on clay." Thus, the most scientific and rational explanation of a thing is possible only according to the Law of *Paticca Samuppāda.*

The great Buddhist Commentator, Buddhaghosa, wrote, "Dependent Origination is so deep it is as if I had fallen into the middle of the ocean when I am trying to explain it."[1]

It explains the cycle of lives and how man accumulates kamma and is reborn through the round of existence as depicted in the 'Wheel of Becoming' — a wheel of twelve spokes denoting the twelve links of the causal process.

1–2. Dependent on ignorance, intentional activities arise.
3. Dependent on intentional activities, consciousness arises.
4. Dependent on consciousness, mental and physical phenomena arise.
5. Dependent on mental and physical phenomena, the six senses arise.
6. Dependent on the six senses, contact arises.
7. Dependent on contact, feeling arises.
8. Dependent on feeling, craving arises.
9. Dependent on craving, clinging arises.
10. Dependent on clinging, the process of becoming arises.
11. Dependent on becoming, birth arises.
12. Dependent on birth; decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise.

Thus arises this whole mass of suffering.[2]

Thus is explained the phenomena of past, present and future lives. Every kind of mixed action performed in a previous life may be termed an 'active life.' Due to this a 'relinking' takes place between the past life and the present one resulting in consciousness, mental and physical phenomena, the six senses and contact, which, with its relevant objects results in pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings. After birth, subsequent feelings lead to attachment which in turn pave the way for future birth. This sequence may be divided into three sections; past action and present effect, present action and present effect, and present action and future effect.

All phenomena which we are capable of observing, together with many we may not be able to observe, hang together and interact as

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[1] Vism. 522.

[2] S. ii. 1.

part and parcel of one larger phenomenon, of which our observations are only partial impressions. That is why we experience them as separate and attribute to them false notions of time and space. Our own sense capacities put together those things that we regard as units. When we speak of a city or a nation or a race, there are no definite outlines of the concepts which we must use in order to formulate our thoughts! The boundaries of a city are purely arbitrary and can be changed by proclamation. The units comprising a nation are separate individuals that need have no ethnological interrelations, whilst those belonging to a race may or may not be 'pure' stock. So too with childhood, youth and adulthood. Who can say at what day and hour one passes to the next stage? We have a general notion whether a person is a child or an adult but the periods of transition are indefinable. All things are in a state of flux, of motion, of adjustment, of response. It is our mind that creates the outlines and the limitations. We cannot say that the child is the cause of the youth and the youth that of the adult. They are interconnected states of the same set of circumstances. We attribute qualities, characteristics, notions to the various parts of the set, and then falsely treat those parts as independent units, calling one the cause of the other!

What there is, then, is not so much cause and effect as interrelation and interaction. The various parts interact, call forth a reaction one from the other. They are all there simultaneously, like the pages of a book or the frames of a film, but as they appear before our mind's eye so do we see them in succession. Not only this but we ourselves are part of the film, so to speak, not merely onlookers. We take part in the process of reaction: in fact, it is our reaction which creates our world for us. We have the faculty of controlling our response to certain calls for reaction, both by suppression and by stimulation. Buddhism might be called the science of Response Control; Right Effort is to suppress the undesirable, the grosser response, and substitute the desirable, the more refined, for it. That kind of response is undesirable which is inextricably interrelated with suffering and pain: we say for brevity's sake, which causes suffering and pain, though what we really mean is that it is part of that set of circumstances. We have a similar verbal inaccuracy when we speak of the rising and setting of the sun or the moon. Our way of speaking does not deceive anyone with even the slightest degree of education. Likewise, when the Buddha speaks of cause and effect, it does not deceive anyone with the slightest amount of Right Understanding; it is a convenient way of expressing himself in familiar terms. We know that sets of circumstances of which pain and suffering are part, further

entangle us; they are related with sensations of desire and indulgence in craving. Craving alone produces evil, pain, suffering and misery. This is the whole secret of Buddhism. Detachment is the keyword to the solution of the problem. Detachment alone leads to disentanglement; not because it is the cause of disentanglement, but because it is part and parcel of the set of circumstances of which disentanglement is one! Detachment is the avoidance of craving!

But if we cannot speak of cause and effect in this way, how is it that we have to wait after one phenomenon for the next one belonging to the same set to take place? Why do they not occur simultaneously? The answer is that we are so constituted that we cannot survey the entire field of experience at one glance. It is like reading a book or travelling a road. The entire road is there; though, on account of our particular mode of locomotion and our short range of vision, we can only be aware of a small portion of it at one time. But as we travel along, the remainder of the road enters our consciousness, little by little until, when we come to the end, we say we have travelled the road. But our travelling is not the cause of the road, nor is any part of the road on which we find ourselves at any one time the cause of the next part. Nor even is our travelling the cause of our seeing the road, since we see but a little of it at any one time: the one is coincident with the other, not the cause of the other. It is all part and parcel of the same set of circumstances and we have the option to travel the road quickly or slowly, on foot or on horseback, on a bicycle or in a car, to look sideways or forwards. The set of circumstances is there: how shall we respond?

With regard to Dependent Origination, therefore, with one link present, the remaining eleven links must also be present; the 'Chain of Causation' being just a convenient expression. But just as a real wheel touches the ground at one point, so too **this** 'Wheel' with its twelve spokes impinges on our life stream at just one stage. Each link is necessary for ensuring the continuity of the whole structure, just as a broken or missing spoke in a real wheel would tend to weaken and eventually cause the collapse of the whole.

And what we should try and do is to cause the collapse of this Wheel of Becoming. This can be done by severing any of its links, the easiest links where this can be achieved are either the first one, that of ignorance, or the seventh, that of feeling.

We cannot therefore say that we produce kamma[1] as much as that we are kamma maintaining itself, adding to itself, enlarging itself and entangling itself. Ceasing to crave and to be attached is equivalent to ceasing to make any further kamma and putting an end to already existent kamma. And when existing kamma has become exhausted and no new kamma is engendered, there is an end to all suffering, and *nibbāna* will have been attained.

Thus we must understand that the illusory self is a reactive principle which, for its very existence, requires the exercise of constant adaptation. This self is kamma, this exercise is kamma. If the adaptation can be made without undue strain the kamma involved is pleasant. If there is conflict involved the kamma is unpleasant or even painful. It is wise, therefore, to make ourselves so utterly adaptable; physically, mentally and emotionally; that, without attachment, we shall be able to respond immediately to any circumstances so we will never react at all to those sets of circumstances that are inherently undesirable. Buddhism provides us with a training that makes it possible to attain such a state.

This Dependent Origination is one of the most important factors in Buddhist philosophy. It is repeatedly discussed in the suttas, frequently with special reference to other opposing views of life. In this connection a passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* may be of interest.

"There are, O monks, three views held by the heretics which, when followed by the learned, are calculated to land them in moral irresponsibility in spite of the perfection which they have attained. What are these three views? Some samaṇas and Brahmins maintain that whatever a man has in this life of pain or pleasure is purely due to predestination; others say that it is due to the will of God; others that it is due to blind chance.

"Now, O monks, when I find samaṇas and Brahmins holding or preaching such views I enquire of them whether they really believe in them. And when they answer in the affirmative I say to them, 'So, then, you must acknowledge that men become murderers, thieves, adulterers, liars, etc. on account of fate, God's will or blind chance. Accordingly, all attempts at improvement or distinction between right

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[1] Intentional activities or formations *(saṅkhāra)* are called kamma. . Herein the three, namely; formations of merit, of demerit and of the imperturbable, and three, namely; the bodily, verbal and mental; which make six are formations with ignorance *(avijjā)* as condition. See Vism. 526.

and wrong becomes of no avail. Such being the case, the moral regeneration of the fallen becomes impossible.' This sort of reasoning must silence those who hold any of the three views mentioned above."[1]

The reasoning of the Buddha may be somewhat too pragmatic to please the purely logical, but it serves to bring out quite clearly the theory that things have their origin in cause and effect, and that so far as our own destiny is concerned, we are responsible for the effects, inasmuch as we are responsible for the causes.

The doctrine of causation then, was, in the first place, associated with the doctrine of moral responsibility, but the doctrine was also connected with the two Buddhist marks of impermanence and soullessness. Nothing is permanent or self-existent. All things in the universe are the ephemeral products of various causes and conditions.

But while the branches of Buddhism are in agreement as to the validity of the causal law, on probably no point is there as much divergence as regards the interpretation of the details. In the *Nikāyas* we find only such phrases as 'Because of the existence of this, that exists; this arising, that also arises.' Nor is there any specific word which covers all forms of the causal law. We find only such words as *'ko hetu, ko paccaya'*, for this cause, for this conditional relationship.

These two words were destined to have a curious history. In *Sthaviravāda* ***hetu*** came to have a very narrow significance, namely, to indicate the conditioning of certain states of consciousness by the three defilements; greed, hate and delusion. Hence those states of consciousness which are affected by these are called ***sahetuka***, or possessed of cause *(hetu)*. ***Paccaya***, on the other hand, came to signify any form of causal relationship, or the various ways in which one thing could stand in relation to another. In fact, the last book of the *Abhidhamma* is concerned almost exclusively with the twenty-four *paccayas* or possible relationships between different phenomena.

On the other hand, by both the *Sarvastivādins* and the *Yogācārins*, the two terms were used in a very different way. Here *hetu* means cause proper, or direct or primary cause; while *paccaya* signifies general affecting conditions. In any particular causal nexus, *paccaya* means not the proper cause (which is *hetu*) but the additional circumstances under which a specified cause acted. *Hetu* then is primary cause, *paccaya* is secondary cause, and the two together bring

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[1] A. i. 173.

about ***phala*** or the effect. Thus, for example, a seed is planted in the ground (which is *hetu*); through the influence of the earth, sun and rain *(paccaya)* it grows and the tree is the *phala.* Thus in contra-distinction to the twenty-four *paccayas* of the *Theravāda,* we find in the *Sarvāstivāda* a list of six *hetus.*

With all branches of Buddhism the doctrine of causation is closely associated with the theory of kamma. Literally, kamma means action or deed, and that is still its most important significance. Later it came to have the added meaning of the result of action. It is in this sense we frequently meet the expression 'he has good kamma awaiting him'. Finally, it came to mean the whole law of causation when it has reference merely to moral retribution.

In the early days, and in *Sthaviravāda,* general causality and kamma were very sharply distinguished. Kamma was one of the many kinds of causes that may bring about a certain result. Thus, Nāgasena explains to Milinda[1] that although suffering may be caused by kamma, yet it may also be due to other causes. Even the Buddha suffered pain and illness, due to various external causes.

"Suppose, O king, a clod of earth were to be thrown up in the air, and to fall again on the ground. Would it be in consequence of an act that it had previously done that it would fall?"

"No, venerable sir, there is no reason in the broad earth by which it could experience the result of either good or evil. It would be by reason of the present cause, independent of kamma, that the clod would fall again."

"Well, O king, the Buddha should be regarded as the broad earth. As the clod would fall upon it irrespective of any act done to it, so also was it irrespective of any act done by him that the splinter of rock fell upon his foot."

In like manner,[2] though kamma may cause the death of a man, the death may be due to one of several reasons. Milinda cites external causes and kamma, while the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* gives:

1. expiration of life;
2. expiration of kamma;
3. expiration of both;
4. destructive kamma.

It should be noted, however, that there was a constant tendency to increase the scope of kamma. Thus in the *Kathāvatthu,* one of the

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[1] Miln. 191.

[2] *cf.* Phil. 149.

seven *Abhidhamma* works of the *Sthaviravādins*, it is distinctly denied that matter can be due to karmic causality, while in the *Abhidhamma-tthasaṅgaha*, the four things which are said to be the origins of material phenomena are: 1) kamma, 2) mind, 3) physical change, and 4) food.[1]

In the *Sarvāstivādin* works it is repeatedly said that the cause of the re-creation of the universe is the aggregate effect of the kamma of the sentient beings in the past, while in the later *Mahāyāna* schools, where the basis of the whole universe is said to be mind, the appearance of the whole universe is due to kamma and its corollaries.

Buddhists believe that the doctrine of cause and condition is universal as regards 1) place, 2) time, and 3) object.

1. Causal law applies uniformly to all portions of the universe, both in the innumerable material worlds and in the various heavens and hells.
2. Causal law applies to the three periods of time; past, present and future. To a Buddhist this means, moreover, that the circle of causality is endless; that there never was a beginning and there will never be an end. Hence they reject the belief in a first or ultimate cause. Vasubandhu has a long and very interesting passage in the *Abhidharmakośa* defining the Buddhist position on this point.[2]
3. It applies to all objects. The only exceptions are the *Asaṅkhata dhammas*, which are eternal and uncaused. All the *Saṅkhata dhammas*, however, whether *rūpa*, *citta* or *cetasika* have only a dependent or conditioned existence, and are without any substantial existence of their own. Buddhism distinguishes itself from most other systems by applying the doctrine of causality and non-substantiality to the mind as well as to the body.

We are told, moreover, that even the Buddhas are subject to causality:

"Even the Buddhas of the three ages have not been and shall not be able to alter this great law."

This is a very important point, inasmuch as it is a doctrine which distinguishes Buddhism from practically every other religion. In most other systems of thought, though the causal relationship is in some way recognised, the higher powers, especially the Supreme

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[1] *op. cit.* p. 161.

[2] A.K. 7–6a.

Being, are considered superior to this law, and are able, as shown by their miracles, temporarily to abrogate it. Buddhism, though it accepts the possibility of miracles, seeks to correlate them with causality. The favourite theory of the higher law is introduced. Just as physical scientists are able, by increased knowledge, to bring about results which to an ordinary man seem marvellous, so too, according to Buddhism, do sages possess certain powers gained by good kamma, which enable them to control the elements. To the Buddhist, increase in the power of vision by means of the telescope is neither more nor less miraculous than increase of vision (clairvoyance) by means of the cultivation of the psychic faculties. Even in *Mahāyāna* where the Buddhas accomplish the salvation of sentient beings, this salvation must be effected through causal agencies.

One final point deserves attention — all schools of Buddhism agree that nothing can be produced by the action of a single cause; every dhamma is the result of at least two causes. In the first instance this doctrine was probably directed against the doctrine of *Isvara* or the creating deity, but in later times it came to imply that to produce an effect a cause requires adventitious aid from without. It is not, therefore, true to say that every cause necessarily has an effect, because some single causes, finding no favourable conditions, never come to fruition. It is possible, moreover, for a strong cause to render a weak cause barren.

The Buddhists applied their theory of causality in two ways. Firstly from the point of view of the groups of *dhammas* taken as a whole; particularly the personality, human or otherwise. Secondly from the point of view of each of the *dhammas* taken separately. The first, therefore, we may call synthetic, the second analytical.

The first aspect was prominent even in the early period of Buddhist philosophy, and was merely the development of the theory of kamma, showing how, for certain causal reasons a man would be reborn at death in a happy or unhappy state. The later schools did little more than systematize or formularize the older doctrines. This aspect of causality was largely centred around the old formula, known as the *Paticca Samuppāda.*

The second aspect only becomes prominent in the *Abhidhamma.* Here an attempt was made to distinguish and define the fundamental types of causes, and show how the various kinds of personalities and all other combinations came into being by the action of these types of causes upon various single *dhammas.*

CHAPTER 21

KAMMA
THE PHILOSOPHICAL STANDPOINT

One of the main themes in the Dhamma is that of ***anicca***, impermanence; hence there is nothing of a tangible nature which can pass over into a new life. It follows, therefore, that if all is ***anatta***, soulless, there can be nothing which survives this life. Life, moreover, or ***saṃsāra***, is best illustrated by the spectacle of waves in an ocean; each wave, to be sure, is separate, but all are connected nevertheless by the same law of cause and effect. As the Buddha has stated, "It is our kamma", so we all are subject to the process of rising and passing away, of birth and death. Hence, although, philosophically speaking, a permanent soul-entity is denied, yet from the ethical standpoint, a continuity of the personality is accepted.

Among Occidental thinkers, Kant was the intellectual follower of the Tathāgata when, in his 'Critique of Pure Reason', he denied the existence of the soul, but, in his 'Critique of Practical Reason', accepted its existence as a meaningful necessity.

According to Buddhism, misfortune of any kind is not attributed to a power outside ourselves, but to some cause in our past lives — **and nothing is exempt from this law**; witness, in this connection, the figure of Fate constantly standing above Zeus in Greek mythology. Even divine or superhuman creatures — angels, archangels, gods — call them what you will, attain to such eminence or forfeit their lofty status solely through what actions they have committed in their lives — past or present. Since one reaps as one sows, so Buddhism can well be represented as 'an automatic system of morality' in which the man, or otherwise, is a completely free agent. Indeed, no dependence on other than actions is implied in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* where the Buddha says:

> "Be islands unto yourselves, be refuges to yourselves, seek no external refuge."[1]

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[1] D. ii. 100, iii. 58, 77; S. iii. 42, *passim: Attadīpā bhikkhave viharatha, attasaraṇā mā anaññasaraṇā.*

The influence of such a doctrine has produced nothing but good as reflected in the temperament of those native to the Far East. For a start, it has strengthened their moral responsibility, in that they are not swayed by either 'God's decree', a capricious deity, inflexible fate or blind chance. Being dissuaded from vice, they recognise the fact that man is man and master of his own destiny. In this respect, of course, the Buddha clearly saw that his own enlightened system of 'automatic morality' was vastly superior to those contemporary schools of thought which made God responsible for all that lived and acted accordingly. In short, therefore, our tomorrows are begotten of our todays, as surely as our todays were begotten of our yesterdays; the three divisions of past, present and future are, through the agency of kamma, eternally begotten in the same life-span.

Kamma (Pali) or ***karma*** (Sanskrit), means, etymologically, 'deed'. Philosophically speaking, however, its meaning has a more far-reaching effect as it is that which moulds man's destiny. At this stage, we may take an example from the field of biology to illustrate our meaning still further. We are told that, in essentials, the embryos of an anthropoid ape and a bat do not differ in any way, and that, given favourable circumstances, the latter could actually develop into the former creature. However, due to heredity and to certain traits stored up in the embryo, the final outcome is never in doubt.

Buddhism, furthermore, does not hold with the oft-quoted Semitic doctrine that "The sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children up to the third or fourth generation." Kamma can be regarded in three ways:

1. From the purely ethical standpoint.
2. From the standpoint of the individual.
3. From the standpoint of physical phenomena.

Kamma, alone, follows a man after his death. Ethics in Buddhism is absolutely automatic from beginning to end, hence everything arising from the performance of deeds, returns thereto. Individual kamma, being supreme in the moral sphere, no inheritance of deeds committed by our parents, etc. is possible. The combined doctrine of kamma and *vipāka* ensures that, having experienced many previous lives, we will experience yet more. In widening our vision, we will eventually come to the quite plausible conclusion that all beings have, at one time or another, been our relatives.

Following on from this view, we must accept that whatever occurs around us is a manifestation of our own thought processes, and does not merely reflect the strength of the human will which is but a part of our character and is composed of the physical and mental aggregates, in turn, a result of kamma. For example, geniuses like Gotama the Buddha, Plato, Shakespeare or Einstein are not just products of our age. There must have been many approaching their level in other places at other times. If heredity were the only connecting link, as scientists would have us believe, how, then, can we explain the gulf between a minor king, like Suddhodana, and his world-renowned son, Gotama; or between a humble carpenter, like Joseph, and his equally renowned son, Jesus of Nazareth? In passing, it must be said that, even when faiths founded by such personages lose their hold on their former devotees, they continue to be held in affectionate regard, even though they have now been relegated to the rank of 'culture heroes' only.

Finally, the question has often been asked, especially just lately, "How can Buddhism account for the phenomenal growth of the world's population?" One answer may be found in that, just as in history an influx of people occurred from the provinces to one large city or from one country to another, so likewise, it may be that beings from other worlds are being forced to be reborn here. Mention is made in Buddhist literature of other, inhabited planets, so who are we to be so conceited as to think our own Earth the sole place where life can be found? Science is still in its infancy, with time-worn theories being discarded in favour of more up-to-date interpretations every year. Hence, what may be considered a fable of yesteryear, may one day be proven fact. Who can tell?

CHAPTER 22

THE ROOT CAUSES OF KAMMA

The Pali term for 'Roots' is ***hetu***. ***Paccaya*** is also synonymous with it and means 'condition'. Condition is something upon which something else depends, and if absent, the latter cannot be. Manifold are the ways in which a thing or an occurrence may be the condition for some other thing or occurrence. In the ***Paṭṭhāna***, the last book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, twenty-four aspects of conditions are enumerated, explained and then applied to all conceivable phenomena and occurrences, in addition to their conditioned nature being demonstrated.

Hetu-paccaya or root-condition is the first of the twenty-four modes of condition.[1] Root-condition is that which resembles the root of a tree. Just as a tree rests on its roots, and remains alive only as long as its roots are not destroyed, so karmically unwholesome as well as wholesome mental states are entirely dependent on the presence of their respective roots; i.e. Greed *(lobha)*, Hate *(dosa)* and Delusion *(moha)*, or absence of Greed *(alobha)*, absence of Hate *(adosa)* and absence of Delusion *(amoha)*.

These conditions which through their presence determine the actual moral quality of a volitional state *(cetanā)*, together with their associated consciousness and mental factors give rise to the type and quality of a particular kamma. Therefore, we see that Greed, Hate, and Delusion are karmically unwholesome and their opposite roots wholesome.

Greed is a state associated with a consciousness that causes attachment to an object. In the Pali literature, it is compared to a soiled garment, to a piece of flesh inside the body and to an unused vessel made of clay; or to a sticky substance improvised for the purpose of entrapping monkeys. In the latter case, when any eatable,

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[1] For details see: *Conditional Relations* tr. of *Paṭṭhāna* by U Nārada Vol. I. 1969, Vol. II. 1981, PTS; *An Approach to Paṭṭhāna* by Paṭṭhāna Sayadaw U Withuddha, Universal Printing Works, 76A Inya Lake Road, Rangoon; *Causality: The General Philosophy of Buddhism* by David Kacupahana. The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1975.

such as a ripe fruit is placed over the sticky substance the monkey makes the attempt to snatch the fruit with one limb after another, and lastly with his mouth; when he is finally trapped. In the same manner, people who have a craving for sensuous pleasures become attached to the five objects of the senses and indulge in them to excess. When greed is absent in the consciousness, there is no attachment to the object. It is only when greed is associated with consciousness that attachment to the object takes place. This is a root of immoral consciousness and a very powerful one. It is this greed that is the cause of illness — mental or physical — ***dukkha***, that we find is the Second Noble Truth.

Hate is a state associated with consciousness in which arises anger and aversion on perceiving unpleasant objects; like a snake emerging from a hiding place and attacking those who pelt it with stones, or strike it with sticks or other weapons. The mental property lying in the heart-base is like a snake in a hidden place, until irritated by any of the ten causes that produce consciousness rooted in hate or aversion and accompanied by grief, which suddenly arises doing harm to himself as well as to others. He may even go to the extent of committing murder. Just as rust in iron causes corrosion, even so the individual who becomes angry does harm to another, and perhaps, ultimately destroys himself. Only one who has reached the Path of non-returner *(anāgāmi)* can be wholly free from these evil states.

Delusion or dullness is the state associated with consciousness which prevents one from seeing a thing as it really is — that is in the ultimate and highest sense. It is as if one looked at an object with the eyes half closed or through coloured glass. When there is no dullness in consciousness, only then will a true cognizance of the object occur; but when dullness is present, the real nature of the object cannot be seen. It is synonymous with ignorance *(avijjā)*, which according to the Law of Dependent Origination *(paticca-samuppāda)* is one of the spokes of the wheel of *saṃsāra* or the cycle of birth and death in a world that has neither beginning nor end. How is the real nature of the object obscured by dullness? The characteristic feature of dullness is ignorance of both the beginning and end, and of the Law of Dependent Origination which teaches that all phenomena arise depending on one or more causes and that all conditioned and composite things are subject to impermanence, sorrow and pain and are devoid of a substantial entity. In the same way as complete darkness produced by the four factors already mentioned, and because

of dullness, prevent one from seeing the truth of the three salient marks of impermanence, sorrow, and soullessness. By reason of this dullness or ignorance, one goes in the opposite direction.

When there is absence of greed, there is a state associated with consciousness which keeps it detached from objects; taking no interest in them. It may be compared to an *Arahant* in whom there is the extinction of the ***Āsavas***[1] (taints). How so? When an *Arahant* dwelling in a monastery provided by a householder who gives robes, meals, bedding and medicine indispensable for his sustenance, leaves his dwelling, he does so without attachment to the monastery or its belongings. Therefore, in one who is without greed, there is no attachment, that is why this state is compared to an *Arahant.* Similarly, just as water poured over a lotus leaf falls down without a drop remaining on its petals, even so the mental concomitant of indifference prevents attachment to any object. This is the root of moral consciousness.

The absence of hate is a condition associated with consciousness, that prevents the arising of hate or aversion towards an object. How can this be illustrated? Just as a friend who has been away in some remote place for a considerable period is given, on his return, a warm welcome by his relatives and friends; congratulations being offered on his achievement of success, even so does mental amity show forth benevolence and goodwill towards all beings. This is a great moral act and a root of moral consciousness. It is mettā, benevolence or goodwill; the first of the four ***Brahmavihāras,*** or sublime states.[2]

The absence of delusion is insight, wisdom, clear understanding or knowledge of all conditioned and composite things, as possessing the three salient characteristics of impermanence, sorrow and absence

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[1] *Āsava,* (Pali) or *āśava* (Skt; *cf. Divyāvadāna,* p 391) means that which flows out, spirit or the intoxicating extract or secretion of a tree or flower. (Vin. iv. 110). It also means that which discharges from a sore (A. i 124, 127; Pug. 30). In psychology it is a technical term for specified ideas which intoxicate the mind and muddle it so that it cannot rise to higher things. The 4 *āsavas* are i. Sensuality *(kāmāsava),* ii. Lust for rebirth *(bhava~),* iii. Wrong views *(diṭṭh~)* and iv. Ignorance *(avijj~).* See D. ii. 81, 84 *passim.*

[2] Or Divine Abodes, the remaining three being compassion *(Karuṇā),* sympathetic joy *(Muditā)* and equanimity *(Upekkhā).* See: D. i. 196; Vism 295–325; DhsA. 192.

of a substantial entity. This begets very strong and great moral thought and is a root of the moral class of consciousness.

Insight is described under the factors pertaining to Enlightenment such as Potency of Investigation *(Vīmaṃsiddhipāda)*, Faculty of Reason *(Paññindriya)*, the Force of Reason *(Paññābala)*, the Factor of Enlightenment of Investigation *(Dhammavicaya-sambojjhaṇga)* and the Path Factor of Right View *(Sammā-diṭṭhi)*. In the highest possible degree it is omniscient. This has the power of controlling all other mental concomitants associated with the state of consciousness of any of the Four Paths or their Fruition. It may be compared to a sharp arrow that is capable of piercing a thick tree. Just as a skilful marksman can send a sharp arrow right through a thick tree, even so could this faculty of reason comprehend all phenomena present in the world; for in the ultimate and highest sense, such is reality.

Again, just as any object in darkness can only be seen by lighting a lamp, so can the faculty of reason realise the three salient characteristics of all phenomena by the analysis of mind and body with reference to their features, essential properties, results and proximate causes. This is to comprehend fully the Law of Dependent Origination which had been concealed by the darkness of ignorance.

It is said that greed arises though unwise reflection on an attractive object.[1] Thus greed *(Lobha* or *Rāga)* comprises all phases of attraction towards an object from the faintest trace of personal desire up to the grossest egoism; whilst hatred *(Dosa)* comprises all phases of repulsion from the faintest trace of dislike up to the highest pitch of hate and wrath.

The three skilful *(Kusala)* roots which are the very opposite of greed, hate and delusion, though being negative in form, nevertheless are of a distinctly positive character. Just as it is often the case with negative terms in other languages. For example the negative 'immoral-ity' has a decidedly positive character. Thus, liberality and unselfish-ness are the attributes of *alobha;* loving-kindness and good-will are the attributes of *adosa;* while the attribute of amoha is wisdom *(Paññā)*. On the contrary, *lobha, dosa* and *moha* have a blinding and agitating influence upon the person under which he loses his self-control and reasoning faculty.

It is often thought permissible by some people to sacrifice animals at a certain place, or to gamble on a certain day, to tell a lie

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[1] A. i. 3.

to kid others or even worse, to rob and take a man's life if he does not belong to one's own faith. Such wrong views are called ***diṭṭhi***. They pretend to justify their vicious behaviour but really have *lobha* at heart. If the immoral consciousness is accompanied by such a *diṭṭhi*, it is called ***diṭṭhigatasampayutta***.

The consciousness of one who is very quick in performing a moral or immoral act is called ***asaṅkhārika***, or that which is neither hesitating nor urged by others. ***Sasaṅkhārika*** consciousness, on the other hand, is that which is either preceded by some hesitation or persuaded by someone else.

Types of Immoral Consciousness

Taking these classifications together, we get the following eight types of immoral consciousness rooted in *lobha:*

1. Delighted, accompanied by wrong view, without hesitation and unprompted.
2. Delighted, accompanied by wrong view, with hesitation or prompted.
3. Delighted, unaccompanied by wrong view, without hesitation and unprompted.
4. Delighted, unaccompanied by wrong view, with hesitation or prompted.
5. Indifferent, accompanied by wrong view, without hesitation and unprompted.
6. Indifferent, accompanied by wrong view, with hesitation or prompted.
7. Indifferent, unaccompanied by wrong view, without hesitation and unprompted.
8. Indifferent, unaccompanied by wrong view, with hesitation or prompted.

For example; a man, hankering after the flesh of an animal, may sacrifice the beast in the name of some deity and take delight in it thinking that he is doing the correct thing; or one with a false sense of patriotism may utter a falsehood to fulfil some end, and take delight in it, thinking that he is serving the cause of his Mother-country. Such a consciousness is the first type, if the act is done without hesitation and not prompted by someone else. But if it is prompted by someone else, it is an example of the second type.

The third and fourth types are very common. People know that it is bad to kill, to hurt others, to steal, commit adultery or to lie, in fact, to do any evil act. Nevertheless, they do indulge in them frequently and derive delight therefrom.

The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth types of consciousness are the same as the other four, except that the act is not done with delight but with a feeling of indifference or as a matter of course.

Rooted in Dosa

If an object causes us displeasure, or stands in the way of our desire, we begin to hate it. The feeling goes on intensifying, and a time comes when the very idea of it would rouse excitement in us together with feelings of antipathy and resentment. This state of mind is called ***domanassa.*** When *domanassa* is accompanied by an urge to attack and annihilate the object of hate, this excitement is called ***paṭigha*** or rage.

It is *asaṅkhārika* if, in this raging state of mind, one commits a crime without hesitation and not prompted by anyone else, but if committed after some hesitation or at the instigation of another, it is *sasaṅkhārika.* Hence there are two types of immoral consciousness rooted in *dosa,* namely:

1. Excited, accompanied by antipathy and rage, without hesitation and not prompted.
2. Excited, accompanied by antipathy and rage, with hesitation or prompted.

It is clear that there can be no delight ***(somanassa)*** or equanimity ***(upekkhā)*** in this agitated state of mind accompanied by antipathy. It cannot be associated with any right or wrong view; for it is so furious that all consideration is lacking.

Rooted in Moha

Moha is an essential condition of all immoral consciousness. *Lobha* and *dosa* cannot possibly arise if there is no *moha.* The consciousness which is thoroughly confused is called ***momūha citta*** or 'confused consciousness'. In this condition it is difficult to understand anything clearly. It is full of doubts; when they are very puzzling it is called ***Vicikicchā-sampayutta*** or a perplexed consciousness.

A *momūha citta* cannot concentrate itself upon any object; for it is a distracted mind and if the distraction is extreme, it is known as ***Uddhacca-sampayutta*** or 'restless consciousness'. There cannot be either *somanassa* or *domanassa* in this consciousness. It is essentially ***upekkhā-sahagata*** or 'accompanied by an ignorant equanimity'. Hence there are two types of consciousness rooted in *moha.*

1. Accompanied by equanimity and is perplexed.
2. Accompanied by equanimity and is restless.

The arising of 'Perplexity and Restlessness' is due to ignorance. They are not created knowingly by us, either with hesitation or without; for knowledge is quite opposed to them, like light to darkness, nor can another prompt us to be perplexed or restless. Therefore, the arising of *asaṅkhārika* and *sasaṅkhārika* in these types of consciousness is out of the question.

There are eight types of consciousness rooted in *lobha,* two in *dosa,* and two in *moha* which altogether makes twelve types of immoral consciousness.

Helping the poor and needy, giving shelter to the forlorn, saving creatures from distress and destruction, serving one's parents and elders, worshipping the Buddha, listening to inspiring discourses on the Dhamma and similar meritorious deeds are wholesome *(kusala).* They are essentially rooted in the two wholesome roots, namely, *alobha* and *adosa.* To the greedy, selfish, ill-tempered individual these charitable acts would have no appeal.

Actions performed by one who is free from delusion have knowledge *(ñāṇa)* as a base; knowledge that thereby one will be better and purer in this life and hereafter.

When a Buddhist keeps the eight precepts, goes to the monastery, gives alms to the *bhikkhus* and listens to the discourses, he is conscious that he is doing a very meritorious act which will influence and help him in his next rebirth. His consciousness in this case is ***ñāṇa-sampayutta*** or accompanied by knowledge, i.e. right view.

On the other hand, there are occasions when we do a good act spontaneously, on the spur of the moment. For instance, a man sees someone drowning and immediately jumps into the river and saves him or sees a poor beggar in the street and gives some money to him. Such spontaneous actions are not accompanied by the reflection that they will yield good karmic results. They are done automatically,

on the spur of the moment. Such a type is ***ñāṇa-vippayutta,*** or unaccompanied by a right view.

Another example of *ñāṇa-vippayutta* may be added. A person may not really understand that it is good to do a certain act but he still does it simply because it is customary to follow the example of others.

Types of Moral Resultant Consciousness

Good actions done during the course of this life determine the nature of the mental disposition of a man in his next birth. If he is of a philanthropic nature, it is because his actions in a previous life were conditioned by strong *alobha.* But if he is of a miserly nature, his actions in a previous life were conditioned by a weak *adosa.*

When a man is of keen intelligence and clear understanding his actions in a former life were conditioned by a strong *amoha* and a man is a dullard because his actions were conditioned by a weak *amoha.* If one's actions are primarily conditioned by *lobha, dosa* and *moha,* he will not take birth in the human realms at all, but as a beast or a creature of some lower species with a consciousness governed by instinct which is weak. That is why the discriminative faculty and memory of animals are so feeble. Among the animals themselves there are grades of mental development, which are due to the degree of the strength of *lobha, dosa* and *moha* in previous births.

CHAPTER 23

KAMMA

Kamma, in Pali, and ***karma***, in Sanskrit, in its most general sense means all good and bad actions, Kamma is neither fatalism nor a doctrine of predetermination. The past influences the present, for kamma is past as well as present. The past and present influence the future — in this life or in the life to come. It has a cause first and an effect afterwards. We, therefore, speak of kamma as the law of cause and effect.

What is the cause of the inequality that exists in the world. Buddhists cannot attribute it to a God, a Creator of the manifold destinies of men and the infinite gradations of beings that dwell in the universe. Neither can Buddhists believe that this heterogeneity of the world is the result of blind chance. Science itself is against the theory of 'chance' because scientists work in accordance with the laws of cause and effect. We see one born affluent and endowed with fine mental, moral and physical qualities and another born into miserable poverty and wretchedness. A man may be virtuous but have continuous bad luck, the world running counter to his ambitions. Another vicious but rewarded in spite of his evil mode of life. Why should one be inferior and another superior? Why should one be taken from the hands of his mother at an early age, another perish at ripe manhood and yet another at the age of 90 or 100? One is sick and infirm and another is strong and healthy. One lives in the lap of luxury surrounded by amusements and pleasures and another experiences tears and misery; one is a millionaire and the other a pauper and again one is brilliant and gifted and another an idiot? These are some problems which perplex thinking men. Variations due to heredity and environment are, no doubt, partly instrumental but cannot be responsible for all the subtle distinctions that exist in beings. Twins are often temperamentally and physically different in spite of this fact.

According to Buddhism these variations are due to our own kamma or the law of causation. We ourselves are responsible for our own happiness or misery. We build our own heavens and hells. We are the architects of our own fate. We ourselves, in short, are our own kamma, there being just the act and the result of the act. Hence, the Buddha said: "Every living being has kamma as its own, its

inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. Kamma is also that which differentiates beings into low and high states."[1] The literal meaning of kamma is action. Buddhism briefly defines meritorious or demeritorious volition, *cetanā,* as kamma. The Buddha said:

> "It is mental volition, O monks, that I call kamma. Having willed, one acts through body, speech or mind."[2]

Where there is no consciousness, such as in inanimate objects, there is no kamma, nor is any action kamma which is unintentional. Kamma is not merely the affair of external or visible deeds, it is the motive or volition involved in thinking, speaking or acting. Any deed devoid of willing or intention cannot properly be called kamma. Hinduism and Jainism are in perfect harmony with Buddhism as far as they attribute unevenness of states to kamma but Jainism goes off at a tangent when it stipulates that unconscious or unintentional actions are kamma.

When did kamma begin? Kamma which is a law in itself, like all general laws of nature cannot be said to have a beginning. If kamma has an identity then it must have a beginning, but kamma is a force, an energy and like electricity, necessitates a beginningless past. What is the cause of kamma? The beginning cannot be determined but the result is discernible. The 'I' is impelled to act. It receives sensations and impressions which arise as a result of craving *(taṇhā)* and grasping *(upādāna)* owing to ignorance *(avijjā),* which thus results in the acquisition of kamma. Craving or ignorance is, therefore, the cause of kamma. Who is the 'doer' of kamma if we say that there is no self *(attā)?* Who reaps the fruit? Is it as in Hinduism where the one soul builds about itself a divine essence? Not at all; for the Ancients[3] said:

> "No doer is there who does the deed nor is there one who feels the fruit; empty phenomena roll on — this indeed is right discernment."[4]

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[1] M. iii. 203; *cf.* A. iii. 186, v. 87 f.

[2] A. iii. 415; *Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi.*

[3] The *Porāṇas* referred to frequently in the *Visuddhimagga* are the saintly elders of the time of the Buddha and after, whose sayings were found in old commentaries at the time of Buddhaghosa but are now largely forgotten.

[4] Vism. 602.

In the ultimate sense Buddhism cannot conceive of an unchanging entity. A being or a *deva* or a man are forms which are only temporary manifestations of this karmic force. A being is only a concept used for conventional purposes, i.e., a combination of mind and matter. Matter, according to Buddhism, is a manifestation of forces and qualities: solidity *(paṭhavī)*, cohesion *(āpo)*, heat *(tejo)* and motion *(vāyo)*. There are also 24 material qualities derived from these. Mind is composed only of fleeting mental states, each unit of consciousness consisting of three phases; that of arising *(uppāda)*, peak *(ṭhiti)* and dissolution *(bhaṅga)*. One unit of consciousness perishes and gives birth to another consequent thought-moment which is not the same nor yet different; it is just karmic energy. Consciousness is not joined up like a chain but flows persistently like a river receiving impressions from the streams of sense contact and ever dispersing the thought stuff gathered by the way. The rapidity of thought is too swift to measure by any standard. It is like a flash of lightning which consists of sparks following each other in such rapid succession that the intervals cannot be seen. As the wheel of a car rests upon the ground on one point only, so does a being live for one thought-moment, always in the present but slipping back into the past. There is no actor apart from action, no perceiver apart from perception and no substantial subject behind them. Where is kamma, either good or bad, stored? It is not stored in either the mind or the body. The whole karmic force depends upon a flux which is ready to manifest itself as occasion arises. The working of kamma is not easy to grasp since the Buddha termed it one of the four incomprehensible things.[1]

Anyone who desires to comprehend the working of kamma must first understand the process of consciousness *(citta vīthi)*. Consciousness receives the object from within and without. When a person is asleep the mind is in a state of subconsciousness or life-continuum *(bhavaṅga)*. When the mind is not receiving impressions it experiences this subconsciousness state which, however, is interrupted whenever an object enters the mind. At this stage the natural flow of consciousness is checked and turns towards the object coming in through one of the five sense doors *(pañcadvārāvajjana)*. The object is then received by the mind, investigated *(santīraṇa)* and decided

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[1] *Viz.* 1) the scope of a Buddha, 2) the range of *jhāna*, 3) the scope of kamma, and 4) world speculation. See A. ii. 80.

upon *(voṭṭhapana)*. Then follow seven apperceptive moments *(javana)* when kamma is made, both good and bad. Then follow the two registration moments *(tadālambana)*. The effects of the first apperception moment are reaped in this life itself and are known as immediately effective kamma. If not in this life it becomes ineffective because the opportunity has been missed. The seventh *javana* is reaped in the next birth. This is also ineffective if it does not operate in the next life. The intermediate *javanas* may operate at any time until *nibbāna* is attained.

CLASSIFICATION OF KAMMA

A. Kamma is classified into four kinds according to the time at which results are produced.

1. Kamma that ripens in the same life-time *(diṭṭhadhamma-vedaniya)*;
2. Kamma that ripens in the next life *(upapajjavedaniya)*;
3. Kamma that ripens indefinitely in successive births *(aparā-pariyavedaniya)*. These kammas are bound to produce results, just as seeds are to sprout. For a seed to sprout, certain auxiliary conditions such as soil, rain, attention, protection, good season etc., are required. In the same way for kamma to produce an effect, several auxiliary causes such as circumstances, surroundings, etc., are required. It sometimes happens that for want of such auxiliary causes kamma does not produce any result.
4. Kamma which is ineffective *(ahosikamma)*.

B. Kamma is also classified according to function:

1. Regenerative *(janaka)* kamma which conditions the birth;
2. Supportive *(upatthambhaka)* kamma which assists or maintains the results of already existing kamma;
3. Counteractive *(upapīḷaka)* kamma which suppresses or modifies the result of the regenerative kamma;
4. Destructive *(upaghātaka)* kamma which destroys the force of existing kamma and substitutes its own resultants.

C. Kamma is also classified according to the priority of results:

1. Serious or weighty *(garu)* kamma which produces its resultant in the present life or in the next. On the moral side, ecstasies *(jhānas)* are weighty as they are refined mental states. On the immoral side, crimes such as matricide, patricide, murder of a perfect saint, wounding of a Buddha and creating a schism in the Saṅgha are weighty.
2. Death proximate *(āsanna)* kamma is the kamma which one does at the moment before death by having good or bad thoughts. If there is no weighty kamma it determines the condition of the subsequent rebirth.
3. Habitual *(āciṇṇa)* kamma is the action which one constantly does. In the absence of death-proximate kamma this determines the next birth.
4. Reserve *(katattā)* kamma is the last in the priority of results. This represents the unexpended kamma of a particular being and it conditions the next birth in the absence of habitual kamma.

The previous classification clearly explains that every birth is conditioned by past good or bad kamma predominating at the moment of death. In the absence of this kamma death-proximate kamma might take effect. This would be immediately before the dying thought-moment, hence the importance attached in Buddhist countries to the practice of reminding a dying person of his good deeds.

Is everything due to kamma? Buddhists say "No." Kamma is only one of various conditions recognised as having effect because if everything were due to kamma it follows that a man with bad kamma must always be bad. Not everything is due to kamma and one does not necessarily reap all that one has sown. The Buddha said: "If a man must reap everything according to his deeds, no righteous life, O monks, would be possible, nor any escape from sorrow."[1] In Buddhism ample room is possible to mould one's own kamma. One is not bound to pay for all the errors and one is not the slave of kamma. It is possible for anyone to obliterate most of his kamma through meditation *(bhāvanā)* but if it were otherwise *nibbāna* could

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[1] A i.249: *Yathā yathāyaṃ puriso kammaṃ karoti tathā taṃ patisaṃvediyati ti — evaṃ santaṃ bhikkhave brahmacariyavāso na hoti okāso na paññāyati sammādukkhassa antakiriyāya.*

not be attained and there would be just continuous rolling on. There is no one who rewards or punishes since Buddhism does not recognise a Creator God but rather that we are the architects of our own destinies.

D. A further classification of kamma is according to the place in which the results are produced, namely:

1. Immoral kamma which produces its effect in the planes of misery.
2. Moral kamma which produces its effect in the plane of the world of desires.
3. Moral kamma which produces its effect in the plane of form.
4. Moral kamma which produces its effect in the plane of the formless.

1. Ten Immoral Kammas and their Effects

i. **Killing** — This includes the destruction of any living being including animals of all kinds. To complete the offence of killing, five conditions are necessary, a) a being, b) knowledge that it is a being, c) intention to cause death, d) making an effort, and e) the consequent death.

The evil effects of killing are: having a short life, frequent illness, constant grief caused by the separation from the loved and constant fear.

ii. **Stealing** — To complete the offence of stealing, five conditions are necessary; a) property of other people, b) knowledge that it is so, c) intention to steal it, d) making an effort, and e) the consequent removal of it from its place.

The evil effects of stealing are: poverty, wretchedness, unfulfilled desires and dependent livelihood.

iii. **Sexual Misconduct** — To complete the offence of sexual misconduct, three conditions are necessary: a) intention to enjoy illicit sex, b) making an effort, and c) possession of the object.

The evil effects of sexual misconduct are: having many enemies, getting undesirable wives, birth as a women or an eunuch.

iv. **Lying** — To complete the offence of lying, four conditions are necessary: a) consciousness of falsehood, b) intention to deceive, c) making an effort, and d) communication of the falsehood to another. (It is not necessary for them to actually believe it).

The evil effects of lying are: being tormented by abusive speech, being subject to vilification, incredibility and stinking mouth.

v. **Abusive speech** — To complete the offence of abusing three conditions are necessary: a) someone to be abused, b) ill-will, and c) using abusive language.

The evil effects of abusing are: being detested by others although blameless and a harsh voice.

vi. **Slander** — To complete the offence of slander, four conditions are necessary: a) persons to be disunited, b) intention to disunite them, c) making an effort, and d) communication of slanderous speech.

The evil effect of slandering is the dissolution of friendship without any sufficient cause.

vii. **Frivolous speech** — To complete the offence of frivolous speech two conditions are necessary: a) the inclination towards frivolous speech, and b) its narration.

The evil effects of frivolous speech are: disorderliness of the bodily organs and incredibility.

viii. **Covetousness** — To complete the offence of covetousness, two conditions are necessary: a) another's property and b) a strong desire for it, thinking for example, "If only such property were mine."

The evil effect of covetousness is non-fulfilment of one's wishes.

ix. **Ill-will** — To complete the offence of ill-will, two conditions are necessary: a) another being and b) the intention to do harm.

The evil effects of ill-will are: ugliness, many diseases and detestable nature.

x. **Wrong View** — To complete the offence of wrong view two conditions are necessary: a) perverted manner in which the object is viewed, and b) the misunderstanding of it according to that view.

The evil effects of wrong view are: base attachment, lack of wisdom, dull wit, chronic diseases and blameworthy ideas.[1]

2. Ten Moral Kammas which Produce their Effects in the Sensual Planes

The work of moral and spiritual culture has been compared with that of the farmer. First, a farmer has to plough the land and prepare the ground, then he sows the seed which in due course germinates, grows up and bears fruit. In this way the farmer has to follow a two-fold method, one of destruction, the other of production. In the same way moral and spiritual culture is based on a two-fold method, one of elimination and the other of cultivation. The ***akusala kammas,*** or evils, are to be eliminated and the ***kusala kammas,*** or virtues, are to be cultivated. The one is as important as the other.

The principles explained under the heading of *sīla,* moral conduct, are more or less negative in character, so in another group Buddhism presents a positive programme based on the ten domains of meritorious deeds.[2] Many a scheme of positive character has been set forth both in the canonical and in the exegetical literature; this is only one of those schemes with perhaps a wider scope of application.

As is so frequently the case in expressing the various aspects of the Dhamma the matter in question is dealt with analytically. In this particular instance our author deals with the cultivation of moral states

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[1] Expos. i. 128.

[2] *Dasapuññakiriyāvatthūni.* For details see the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī,* 98–100; *Petakopadesa,* 237.

under the heading of the tenfold group of meritorious deeds.[1] This group of meritorious deeds is as follows: i) Charity, ii) Morality, iii) Mental Culture, iv) Reverence, v) Service, vi) Transference of Merit, vii) Rejoicing in Other's Merit, viii) Listening to the Doctrine, ix) Teaching the Doctrine, x) Straightening One's Views.

i. **Charity *(dāna)*** — literally giving, is the moral volition of giving one's possessions to others. Charity is practised in two ways:
   a) By offering one's possessions to those fit to receive offerings, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha.
   b) By giving one's possessions to others in need, which act is performed out of compassion.

There are three periods during which volitions arise in the act of giving:

   a) Before the act *(pubbacetanā)* which occur in the thought processes arising during the preparation of material for offering.
   b) During the act *(muñcanacetanā)* which occur at the actual time of giving or making the offering.
   c) After the act *(aparacetanā)* which occur in thought processes whenever the act is contemplated with joy.

Again, according to their different intensities, volitions are threefold; namely, weak, moderate and intense. They are weak when the four factors of Potency ***(Iddhi)*** *viz.*, wish to act ***(chanda)***, energy ***(viriya)***, thought ***(citta)*** and investigation ***(vimaṃsā)*** are weak at the time of offering. Volitions can also be moderate or intense at the time of offering. Again, volitions become weak when the charity is given with the impure and defiled thought which hopes for worldly pleasure in this phenomenal existence, in subsequent existences in the *devaloka* and *brahmaloka* and in the final emancipation of oneself alone. They become intense when given with the hope of attaining the four paths *(magga)*, the four fruitions *(phala)* and *nibbāna* and in hoping that all sentient beings may escape from sorrow and attain *nibbāna*. To practise in this way is to fulfil the first of the perfections *(pāramitā)* which is also *dāna*.

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[1] *Dasa kusala kammapatha: cf.* M. i. 47, 489 f.

These grades are applicable to the other moral acts such as morality *(sīla)*, concentration *(samādhi)* and wisdom *(paññā)*.

The beneficial effects of giving are: wealth, the fulfilment of one's wishes, long-life, beauty, happiness and strength. The specific result can be affected by making an aspiration at the time of giving. The Buddhist custom is to make the aspiration, "By the power of this meritorious deed may I attain *nibbāna*."

ii. **Morality** *(sīla)* — is the moral volition of refraining from evil done through the doors of the body and speech, hence it is the volition of right speech, right action and right livelihood.

Morality is of four kinds;

a) the morality of *bhikkhus (bhikkhu sīla)*,
b) the morality of *bhikkhunīs (bhikkhunī sīla)*,
c) the morality of the novice *(sāmaṇera sīla)*,
d) the morality of the laity *(gahaṭṭha sīla)*.

The morality of the laity is the observance of the three refuges and the five precepts throughout one's life and in the observance of the eight precepts or of ten precepts on ***uposatha*** days or any other day convenient for the observance of a higher ethical code.

If, without specifically taking the precepts, one were to refrain spontaneously from doing evil either of body or speech, such ability would be known as ***sampatta virati***. In the event of the five precepts having been specifically taken together ***(samādāna virati)*** even if a single precept is violated, then all are thereby violated and the householder becomes defiled ***(dussīla)***.

The beneficial effects of morality are: rebirth in noble families or in heavenly planes, beauty, fame and having many friends.

iii. **Mental Culture** ***(bhāvanā)*** — is the moral volition arising with consciousness when a man is practising any of the forty exercises prescribed for the attainment of mental tranquillity or calm ***(samatha)***; or it is the development of insight into the three salient characteristics by contemplating the mental

and physical process again and again up to the stage of ***gotrabhū ñāṇa*** which immediately precedes the attainment of the path leading to *nibbāna.* The volition arising in the processes of thought during the time of learning the doctrine or any other arts, sciences, and so on may also be included under the heading of mental culture.[1]

The beneficial effects of mental culture are: development of wisdom, good reputation, and rebirth in higher planes.

iv. **Reverence** ***(apacāyana)*** — is the moral volition of paying respect and reverence to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha; to one's parents and elders, to teachers, and other who lead virtuous lives without the impure motives of personal gain and similar undesirable qualities. It is demonstrated by rising from one's seat in their presence, by saluting them, by offering flowers and by other respectful actions.

The beneficial effects of reverence are: noble parentage, commanding respect and influential positions.

v. **Service** ***(veyyāvacca)*** — is the moral volition of rendering service to those mentioned in the previous section as well as to strangers and those about to set out on a journey; to the sick, the old, and the feeble. Stitching and darning the robes of *bhikkhus* and rendering assistance to the moral deeds of others are included under this heading.

The beneficial effects of service are: having a large following and many friends.

vi. **Transference of Merit** ***(pattidāna)*** — is the moral volition of requesting others to participate in the wholesome deeds done by a person and thereby to share in the resultant merit.

The beneficial effects of transference of merit is the ability to be able to give in abundance.

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[1] UJ. PTS, 288: *Niravajjavijjāpariyāpunanacetanā pi etth' eva saṅgayhati.*

vii. **Rejoicing in Other's Merit** ***(pattānumodanā)*** — is the moral volition of partaking of the merit offered by others and rejoicing therein. ***Patti*** is of two kinds; namely, ***uddissika*** and ***anuddissika***. *Uddissika* is giving to a particular individual, *anuddissika* is giving in general. Both *pattidāna* and *pattānumodanā* are often referred to as types of charity.

The beneficial effect of rejoicing in others' merit is finding joy wherever one is born.

viii. **Listening to the Dhamma** ***(dhammassavana)*** — is the moral volition of listening attentively and with purity of mind for the purpose of practising morality, concentration and insight, for attaining the four paths *(maggas)*, the four fruitions *(phalas)* and *nibbāna;* and for the learning of Dhamma with the aim of preaching it to those not versed in it. Listening to lectures on arts, sciences and other kindred subjects can also be included to some extent in this category.[1]

The beneficial effect of listening to the Dhamma is the development of wisdom.

ix. **Teaching the Dhamma** ***(dhammadesanā)*** — is the moral volition of teaching Dhamma to others out of compassion for them, teaching them with purity of mind without any impure motive of obtaining offerings, honour, praise, fame, or glory. Teaching arts, sciences and so on can also be included to some extent in this category.[2]

The beneficial effects of teaching the Dhamma are a pleasing voice and the development of wisdom.

x. **Straightening One's Views** ***(diṭṭhijjukamma)*** — is the moral volition of establishing right understanding *(sammā diṭṭhi)*. It is freedom from incorrect views and ideas such as the ten kinds of erroneous opinion *(dasavatthuka micchādiṭṭhi)*, the creation by Gods such as Isvara *(Issaranimmānādi)* and that

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[1] UJ. 290: *Niravajjavijjādisavanacetanā pi etth' eva sangayhati.*

[2] *Ibid. Tatheva niravajjavijjāyatanādikaṃ upadisantassa ca pavattā cetanā dhammadesanā nāma.*

fortune depends upon objects seen and so on *(diṭṭha-maṅgalikādi).*

The beneficial effect of straightening one's views is intelligence and the attainment of *nibbāna.*

3. Moral Kamma which Produces its Effect in the Planes of Form

It is of five types which are purely mental and done in the process of meditation.

i. **The First *Jhāna*** — Absorption of the mind which has five constituents: initial application, sustained application, rapture, bliss and one-pointedness of mind.
ii. **The Second *Jhāna*** — Absorption of the mind which has four constituents: sustained application, rapture, bliss and one-pointedness of mind.
iii. **The Third *Jhāna*** — Absorption of the mind which has three constituents: rapture, bliss and one-pointedness of mind.
iv. **The Fourth *Jhāna*** — Absorption of the mind which has two constituents: bliss and one-pointedness of mind.
v. **The Fifth *Jhāna*** — Absorption of the mind which has two constituents: equanimity and one-pointedness of mind.

4. Moral Kamma which Produces its Effect in the Formless Planes

It is of four types which are also purely mental and done in the process of meditation:

i. Moral consciousness dwelling on the infinity of space.
ii. Moral consciousness dwelling on the infinity of consciousness.
iii. Moral consciousness dwelling on nothingness.
iv. Moral consciousness wherein perception is so extremely subtle that it cannot be said whether it is, nor that it is not.

FREE WILL

Kamma as has been stated above, is not fate, nor irrevocable destiny. Nor is one bound to reap all that one has sown in just proportion. Most actions of men are not absolutely irrevocable; only a very few of them are. If, for example, one fires off a bullet out of a rifle, one cannot call it back or turn it aside from its mark. But, if, instead of a bullet moving through the air, it is a snooker ball on the green baize that one sets moving with a cue, one can send another after it and change its course, bring it to a halt or even reverse its direction. It is much the same way that kamma operates in the broad stream of general life. There, too, one's action of a later day may modify, or nullify one's action of a former day. If this were not possible, what chance would there ever be of a man getting free from all kamma for ever? It would be a self-perpetuating energy that could never come to an end. Man has, therefore, a large amount of free-will and there is almost unlimited possibility for him to mould his life or to modify his actions. Even a most vicious man can, by his own free will and effort, become the most virtuous person. One may at any moment change for the better or for the worse. But everything in the world, including man himself, is dependent on conditions and without conditions, nothing whatsoever can arise or enter into existence. Man therefore has conditioned free-will and not absolute free-will. According to Buddhist philosophy, everything, mental or physical, arises in accordance with the law of conditionality. If it were not so, there would be chaos and blind chance. Such a thing is impossible and if it were otherwise, all the laws of nature that man has discovered would be powerless.

The essential nature of man's action is mental. When a given thought has arisen in one's mind a number of times, there is a definite tendency to the recurrence of that thought. When a given act has been performed a number of times, there is a definite tendency to the repetition of that act. Thus each thought becomes habit and habit builds character. Having become a bad man he will gravitate to the company of bad people and having become good he will gravitate to the company of the good. But having become wise he will be free from these laws of gravity and instead will attract wise and good people to him.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM KAMMA

The more we understand it, we see that the more careful we must be in our acts, words and thoughts, and how totally responsible we our for own happiness. Living in the light of this knowledge, we will learn patience, confidence, self-reliance, restraint and power.

Patience

Knowing that the law of kamma is our great helper if we live by it, and that no harm can come to us if we work with it, knowing also that it blesses us at just the right time, we learn the grand lesson of patience, not to get excited, and that impatience is a check to progress. In suffering, we know that we are paying a debt and we learn. if we are wise, not to create more suffering for the future. In rejoicing, we are thankful for its sweetness and learn, if we are wise, to be still better. Patience brings forth peace, success, happiness and security.

Confidence

The Law of Kamma being just and perfect, it is not possible for an understanding person to feel uneasy about it. If we are uneasy and if we have no confidence it shows that we have not grasped the significance of the law. We are really quite safe beneath its wings and there is nothing to fear in the whole universe except for one's own misdeeds. The Law makes a man stand on his own feet and rouses his self-confidence. Confidence strengthens, or rather deepens, our peace and happiness and makes us comfortable, courageous and wherever we go, the Law is our protector.

Self-reliance

As we in the past have caused ourselves to be what we now are, so by what we do now will our future be determined. A knowledge of this fact and that the glory of the future is limitless. gives us great self-reliance and takes away that tendency to appeal for external help which is really no help at all. "Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No one can purify another",[1] said the Buddha

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[1] Dhp. v 165.

Restraint

Naturally, if we realise that the evil we do will return to strike us, we shall be very careful lest we do or say or think something that is not good, pure and true. Knowledge of kamma will restrain us from wrong-doing for others' sake as well as for our own.

Power

The more we make the doctrine of kamma a part of our lives, the more power we gain not only to direct our future, but also to help our fellow beings more effectively. The practice of good kamma, when fully developed, will enable us to overcome evil and our limitations; and to destroy all the fetters that keep us away from our goal, *nibbāna*.

CHAPTER 24

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARITTA[1]

THREE ASPECTS OF RELIGION

It is an undeniable fact that in every religion in the world many aspects have been developed by the followers beyond its original teaching and practice such as the philosophical, moral and benedictive aspects. For over 2,500 years, various Buddhist traditions spread over many parts of the world as a practical religion fulfilling the religious needs of many millions. Along with meditation and other practices, the aforementioned three aspects were gradually developed amidst the various cultures. The benedictive aspect is the apotropaic phenomenon which has affinity with enchantment and charm against evil influences. It is concerned with the important events of the world such as illness and health, drought and rain, calamity and tranquillity, danger and security, famine and prosperity. It is commonly accepted that there are ghosts, demons and evil forces which could adversely influence and harm human beings and their environment. Therefore, in order to avoid these situations, recourse has been sought in various forms of benediction. The chanting of *Paritta*[2] comes into the category of benediction; invoking the blessings of the Triple Gem — the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. *Paritta* is regarded as a safeguard against dangers and through it, security is sought. Like incantation and invocation as well as blessings in other religions, *Paritta* is apotropaic and it is chanted to extricate the believer from calamity which he has come across or to avert possible forthcoming calamities and dangers. Although adherents use sufficient naturalistic techniques for all the problems of life, it is customary to resort to apotropaic rituals like chanting *Paritta, Bodhipūjā,* and the like. Although it originated during the Buddha's life-time, the method of chanting underwent a gradual transformation. After the introduction of Buddhism to Sri

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[1] This article was first published by the Council for the World's Religons.

[2] ***Paritra*** — 'Protection' [*cf.* Skt. *Paritrāṇa* — neuter, *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, Prakrit, ***Parittāna***, n. trai; Pali ***Paritta***, feminine °***tā*** — n. ***ta*** to protect, with prefix ***pari*** — from all directions = protecting from all directions. Sinhala *Pirit* (by enchantment) < *Parit.*

Lanka in the third century B.C., a book entitled the ***Catubhāṇavāra-pāli***[1] was compiled by the monks of the Mahāvihāra, Anurādhapura, containing appropriate texts gleaned from the *Sutta Piṭaka* for the purpose of chanting.

From time immemorial most of mankind has thought that there was a sense and a power in sounds and the composition of selected syllables in the form of words, hymns or verses. Accordingly, the tradition of chanting verses and prayers, and uttering and muttering of mantras on occasions of happiness, joy and sorrow is widely prevalent in diverse traditions.

The Buddhist believes that there is a great power in the words that came out of the mouth of the Buddha who was totally free from all defilements such as desire, anger and ignorance. It is said, "The word which the Buddha speaks, a sure, safe guide to *nibbāna,* puts an end to all ill-will, that is the word supreme."[2] "Yet one sentence of the Dhamma is better, which if a man hears he is at peace."[3] Attentively listening and following the words of the Buddha *(Buddha-vacana),* one could obtain happiness in this life and the next and would be able to attain the ultimate, everlasting bliss of *nibbāna.* Those of his sayings which have been formalised for chanting by the Theravāda tradition are known as *Paritta.*

Paritta means 'protection', 'safeguard' or 'safety'. It is a collection of texts which is recited mainly on special occasions. They are still widely used by Buddhists of Burma, Thailand Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and other Theravāda countries for warding off evil

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[1] **Bhāṇavāra** — term of recital. A literary work of measure: 8 syllables = a 'foot', quatrain of a poem or sentence, 4 'foots' or quatrains of 32 syllables = verse or part: 250 parts of 32 syllables = term or portion of recital, i.e. 8,000 syllables constitute a *bhāṇavāra.* The book contains four *(catu)* such *bhāṇavāras.* The alternative title of the work is *Parittapotthaka* (Sinhala: *Pirit pota* or *Piruvana-potvahanse*). The *Catubhāṇavāra Pāli* has had the following *suttas* added to it by the Burmese: — 14 stanzas of *Pathavijayamaṅgala Sutta, Anekajāti udāna gātha, Yadāhave* (3 stanzas), *Jayohi udāna gātha, Paccayuddesa, Paccaya niddesa, Pubbaṇha Sutta, Sammāparibbājanīya Sutta, Purābheda Sutta, Kalahavivāda Sutta, Cūlabyūha Sutta, Mahābyūha Sutta, Tuvaṭaka Sutta, Abhiṇha Sutta, Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta, Chadisāpala Sutta, Cakkaparitta, Parimittajāla Sutta, Uppātasanti Sutta, Dhāraṇa Sutta* (Board of Buddhasāsana, Rangoon, 1950).

[2] S. i. 189.

[3] Dhp. v 102.

influences or to bring about fortune or prosperity. It is primarily used for invoking blessings and benediction, but in some cases has become a formula for exorcism. The *Paritta* ceremony is used on all possible occasions, i.e., before embarking on a journey, inaugurating any project, and also in times of illness, epidemic, drought, famine, flood, and other disasters. New-born babies and newly-married couples are also blessed by the chanting of *Paritta*. The *Dhāraṇī* is the counterpart of *Paritta* in Mahāyāna. They are also designed for averting various evils or securing certain desiderated blessings.

The *Dhāraṇīs* or protective 'spells' constitute a large and important part of Mahāyāna literature.[1] *Dhāraṇī* is a synonym of ***rakṣā*** and Pali *Paritta*. The need for benediction in very early times was fulfilled by Brahmins with Vedic mantras, especially those of the ***Atharvaveda***. It played an important part in the religious life of the people.

We have already seen how the Buddhists in Sri Lanka and other Theravāda countries used *Paritta* for similar ends. In the same way Mahāyāna Buddhists transformed some ***sūtras*** into magical formulae. There are numerous invocations of deities of both Buddhist and Hindu origin. Generally speaking, in the daily life of the Buddhist the benedictive and apotropaic aspects are very much present, as in other great religions.

Buddhist philosophy teaches a theory of ***Kamma*** (action) and ***Vipāka*** (consequences). However, *vipāka* could be mitigated by various methods which are again stipulated in the teaching.

There is a common belief that most of the afflictions and misfortunes that men suffer are due to the anger of malignant beings or forces, therefore it is believed that the anger of these spirits can be appeased by chanting *Paritta*. The *Paritta* ceremony is professed to have sanctity in the surroundings as well as among the listeners, but

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[1] See ***Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra***, Ch. xxi; *Prajñāpāramitāḥṛdaya Sūtras; Saddharmalaṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Ch. ix; *Suvarṇaprabhā Sūtra; Sikṣāsamuccaya*, etc. The *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* by Rajendralal Mitra, Calcutta, 1892, gives fifty-one *Dhāraṇīs*, pp. 194–5. Extra-canonical Parittas have been appended to the text of Paritta, such as *Jayamaṅgala Gāthā, Mahājayamaṅgala Gāthā, Jinapañjara, Aṭṭhavīsati, Āṇā, Āṅgulimāla, Jaya, Sīvalī, Aggi (gini), Vassa, Vaṭṭaka, Bojjhaṅga*, etc. These are akin to *Dhāraṇīs*. In Burma Pali *Dhāraṇīs* are called *Dhāraṇās*.

its effect may be reduced or negated by the effects of grave kamma, by the presence of mental defilements in the listeners, or by lack of faith.

The *Paritta* text consists of four parts. According to Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka it should be memorised by all *bhikkhus* before completion of their *nissaya*[1] period.

The word *Paritta* first occurs in the ***Cūlavagga***[2] and the ***Aṅguttara Nikāya***[3] in connection with the ***Khandha Paritta*** as a protection for oneself. The occasion for the delivery of this discourse was the death of a monk by snake bite. When the Buddha was asked why the monk died, he said, "It was because he did not show loving-kindness *(mettā)* towards the four tribes of snakes, namely: ***Virūpakkha, Erāpatha, Chabyāputta*** and ***Kaṇha Gotamaka.***" If he had practised *mettā,* he would not have died. Rhys Davids comments on this as follows, "The profession of amity, according to Buddhist doctrine, was no mere matter of petty speech. It was to accompany an express psychic suffusion of the hostile man or beast or spirit with benign, fraternal emotion — with *mettā.* For strong was the conviction, from *Sutta* to *Vinaya* to Buddhaghosa's ***Visuddhimagga,*** that 'thoughts are things'. That psychical action, emotional or intellectual, is capable of working like a force among forces. Europe may yet come round further to this Indian attitude."[4]

The ***Mahāmaṅgala Sutta***[5] is often recited as a protection. It deals with auspicious signs or blessings. From ancient times all sorts of objects and events were regarded as good or bad omens which could bring about good luck or misfortune. Maṅgalas, or auspicious signs such as benedictions, feeding of Brahmins and ascetics, garlands of flowers, music, bird-song were regarded as blessings. In the *Mahāmaṅgala Sutta,* thirty-eight entirely different and practical blessings have been elucidated. For example: avoidance of bad

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[1] ***Nissaya:*** under the guardianship of the teacher *(Ācariya)* the *bhikkhu* gets his training in the *Dhamma-Vinaya* and remains under his guidance until he has completed five years after ordination *(Upasampadā).* The period of *nissaya* may be extended even for the whole life if it seems he is unable to live according to the discipline. The Disciplinary Code of Paritta *(Piritkaṭikāvata)* was drafted and constituted by the *Saṅghasabhā,* Malvatta, Kandy, in 1906.

[2] Vin. ii. 109; JāA. ii. 146.

[3] A. ii. 72.

[4] Dial. iii. 186.

[5] Khp. 2–8; Sn. vv 258–269.

company, association with the wise, honouring those worthy of honour, rendering service to parents, to wife and children, giving alms, patience, obedience, etc. This *sutta* was preached by the Buddha in reply to a god who asked about auspicious signs. It is similar to the ***Svastyayana gāthā***[1] and also occurs in the ***Mahāmaṅgala Jātaka,***[2] thus showing the great antiquity of these blessings.

The ***Ratana Sutta***[3] is one of the finest lyrics in early Pali poetry. It contains charming hymns of praise of the Buddhist Holy Triad — Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. It is recited to ward off danger and to secure prosperity. Vaisāli, a prosperous city of the democratic Liccavi people, was plagued by drought, famine and an epidemic of a contagious disease called 'snake-breath' *(ahivātaka),* non-human beings were attracted to the city due to the stench of the corpses. The Liccavis requested the Buddha to come from Rājagaha. When the Buddha came, he stopped at the city gate and addressed the Venerable Ānanda, "Learn this *'Jewel Sutta'* and with the Liccavi princes perform a safeguarding ceremony *(Paritta)* in procession around the city, taking with you materials for making ceremonial offerings." then Ānanda took water in the Buddha's begging bowl and proceeded around the city sprinkling the water and reciting the *sutta.* The demons fled on hearing the *sutta* and the sickness of the people abated. The Buddha then entered the city hall *(santhāgāra)* and preached the same *Ratana Sutta* to the assembly. In the time of King Upatissa (370–412 A.D.), in Sri Lanka, the island was afflicted by a drought, and on the advice of the monks this *sutta* was recited and the calamities disappeared. The king issued a decree advising the use of the same ceremony in the future.[4]

The ***Karaṇīyametta Sutta***[5] was preached by the Buddha to some monks who complained of being harassed by evil forces while meditating in the forest. The Buddha taught them the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta* and told them to develop the meditation on loving-kindness. He instructed them to return to the same forest grove, assuring them that those beings would wish them well. The rest of the *suttas* selected for the category of *Paritta* were chosen mainly for two reasons. One is

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[1] Verses on well-being; hymns which invoke blessings.
[2] JPTS N°453.
[3] Khp. 3–6; Sn. vv 222–238.
[4] Mhvs. Ch. xxxvii, vv 189–198.
[5] Khp. 8–9; Sn. vv 143–152.

diffusing the benedictive nature of ethical and moral teaching. The other one is that some *suttas* are pleasing to deities. For the clarification of this I give brief contents of the *suttas.*

The *Catubhāṇavāra Pali* opens with the ***Saraṇāgamana*** (taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha),[1] ***Dasasikkhāpada*** (the ten precepts),[2] ***Dvattiṃsākāra*** (meditation on the thirty-two types of bodily impurities),[3] and the ***Paccavekkhaṇā*** (introspection on the use of the four requisites).[4] Then the *suttas* begin; the first one being the ***Dasadhamma Sutta,***[5] which contains the ten virtues which should be often recollected and practised by Buddhist monks. After this they invoke the blessings with asseveration. Then follow the three main *suttas: Mahāmaṅgala, Ratana* and *Karaṇīyametta* which in turn are followed in sequence by the ***Khandha Paritta*** (cultivation of loving-kindness towards snakes),[6] the ***Mettānisaṃsa*** (on the benefits of friendship and loyalty),[7] the ***Mora Paritta*** (a short verse said to have been recited by a peacock to secure protection by praising the sun god, the *Arahants* and the Buddhas),[8] the ***Canda Paritta***[9] and the ***Suriya Paritta***[10] are connected with the virtues of the Buddha and the relief of affliction coming from *Rāhu* (eclipse) by paying homage to and reflecting on the Buddha, the ***Dhajagga Sutta*** (the crest or banner)[11] which embodies the noble qualities of the Triple Gem and is a specific remedy against fear, the three ***Bojjhaṅga Suttas*** recited by Cunda to the Buddha,[12] by Buddha to Mahākassapa,[13] and by the Buddha to Moggallāna,[14] respectively, on occasions of illness. They contain the seven factors of enlightenment. Then there is the ***Girimānanda Sutta,***[15] which contains a list of different ailments and is a meditation on the repulsive aspects of the body taught by the Buddha to Ānanda for the benefit of Girimānanda who was grievously sick, the ***Isigili Sutta*** (an enumeration of *Paccekabuddhas),*[16] and the ***Āṭānāṭiya Sutta***[17] which was approved by the Buddha on the recommendation of four guardian deities for protection from demons. On one occasion, the Buddha was staying on the Vultures' Peak near Rājagaha when the Four Great Kings, the guardian deities of the four

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[1] Khp. p 1.
[2] *Ibid.* p 1.
[3] *Ibid.* p 2.
[4] A. iii. 388.
[5] A. v. 87.
[6] A. ii. 72; Vin. ii. 109.
[7] A. v. 342.
[8] Jā. ii. 33, N°47.
[9] S. i. 50.
[10] *Ibid.* i. p 51.
[11] S. i. 281f; Miln. 150.
[12] S. v. 81.
[13] S. v. 80.
[14] S. v. 79.
[15] A. v. 108.
[16] M. iii. 68.
[17] D. iii. 253.

quarters of the celestial regions, came to tell him that there were many demons in the land who neither believed in the Buddha nor abode by the five precepts, and who would frighten and attack monks and lay devotees who retired to lonely places for meditation. Therefore the Great King Vessavana (or Kuvera) wanted to present the *Āṭānāṭiya Paritta* to the Buddha so that it might be recited to make the displeased demons pleased; and consequently the monks, nuns and lay devotees would be at ease, guarded, protected and unharmed. It mentions gods and *yakkhas* or demons who are not pleased with the Buddha. The Buddha gave his consent by remaining silent so King Vessavana recited this *Paritta sutta.* Then the four guardian deities departed. When the night had passed, the Buddha addressed the monks and told them to learn the *Āṭānāṭiya Sutta* by heart and to recite it constantly. It is regarded as pertaining to the welfare of the disciples and as a saving chant *(rakśā mantra)* to get rid of evil forces.

The ***Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta***[1] was the first sermon of the Buddha to the five ascetics who were his companions. Because many thousands of deities assembled to listen to this discourse, people believe that on occasions of reciting it deities are pleased and so protect the listeners. The ***Mahāsamaya Sutta*** (Celestial Retinue of the Buddha),[2] mentions some gods who are found in this earth, and also in the regions above. It gives us a long list of gods. The ***Parābhava Sutta***[3] is the antithesis of the *Maṅgala Sutta.* It was taught by the Buddha to a god who visited him and asked what was the cause of one's downfall. To put it in a nutshell, the Buddha told him that the love of Dhamma led to progress, hating Dhamma led to downfall.

The ***Ālavaka Sutta***[4] consists of the answers given by the Buddha to a demon named Ālavaka who asked a number of questions. The ***Aggikabhāradvāja*** or ***Vasala Sutta***[5] explains the true meaning of an outcaste. The Buddha explained to Aggikabhāradvāja that by deeds alone one becomes an outcaste or a noble man, and not by birth. The ***Kasibhāradvāja Sutta***[6] contains a conversation with a Brahmin on

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[1] Vin. i. 10ff; S. v. 420f.
[2] D. iii. 194.
[3] Sn. vv 91–115.
[4] Sn. vv 181–192.
[5] Sn. vv 116–142; S. i. 213.
[6] Sn. vv 76–82; S. i. 172.

ethics and moral principles. The ***Saccavibhaṅga Sutta***[1] explains the Four Noble Truths in detail.

The *Āṭānāṭiya Sutta* is recited at the conclusion of *Paritta* ceremonies. It is regarded as having influence which pervades a hundred million world systems, and therefore is recited with great fervour. It begins with salutations to the seven Buddhas beginning with Vipassi, and is followed by the names of other gods and super-human beings. This *sutta* is considered most powerful in exorcism. The recipient should take five precepts together with the congregation, and then the *Paritta* is recited. If the evil forces do not leave, the *Paritta* recitation is repeated, beginning with the *Maṅgala Sutta.* The force should be told that if it leaves the victim, the merits of the offerings will be transferred to him, and he should leave out of respect for the Saṅgha. After declaring that the force must obey the word of the Buddha, the *Āṭānāṭiya Sutta* is once again recited.

THE PARITTA CEREMONY

Any social function, religious festival or ceremony is incomplete without the recital of *Paritta.* It could be a simple ceremony or elaborate as the occasion demands. A special pavilion *(maṇḍapa)* is constructed and gaily decorated with flowers and leaves. The text of a palm-leaf manuscript is brought together with the sacred relic casket which is installed on the altar. First the *Buddha Pūjā* is performed followed by casting flowers, fried grain, mustard, broken rice, jasmine and a special kind of grass *(heleropogon hirtus).* Then the *Paritta* thread *(pirit nūla)* is twisted round a new clay pot filled with water, and the thread is hung around the interior of the pavilion and tied around the *Paritta* text and the relic casket, and then held by the monks and all the congregation. The sponsor then invites the monks to recite *Paritta* with the following *gāthā:*

Vipattipaṭibāhāya sabbasampatti siddhiyā,
Sabbadukkhavināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ,
Sabbabhayavināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ,
Sabbarogavināsāya parittaṃ brūtha maṅgalaṃ.

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[1] M. iii. 248.

In order to ward of all calamities, to fulfil all for-
tunes,
For the destruction of all sufferings, please recite the
parittas,
For the destruction of all fears, please recite the
parittas,
For the destruction of all diseases, please recite the
parittas.

Then the leading monk invites the devas as follows:

Samantā cakkhavālesu
Attragacchantu devatā
Saddhammaṃ munirājassa
Sunantu saggamokkhadaṃ

In all the world systems, may all the *devatās* come to listen to the Good Law of the king of sages, which gives divine and *nibbānic* bliss.

Then the assembled monks chant the three *suttas; Maṅgala, Ratana* and *Karaṇīyametta Suttas* concluding with the *Jayamaṅgala Gāthā,* and thereafter they begin to chant the whole of the *Paritta* text from beginning to end in relays of two monks. Thus after one hour when it is time for the next pair of monks they can change seats without stopping the recitation. The period of chanting can be as little as one hour or as much as one week, depending on the occasion. When the chanting continues for several days, the whole group of monks assemble three times a day to chant the three main *suttas,* and on the morning of the last day a grand procession is organised to send a messenger of the gods *(devadūta)* to the neighbouring monastery. The messenger conveys messages to the guardian deities, who are invited to attend the ceremony prior to its conclusion so that they may partake of its benefits. Until the messenger returns, the officiating monks remain seated, but the chanting is suspended. Then when the messenger returns with the *devatās* the *Parittas* are chanted more energetically than ever. An admonition *(anusāsanā)* is delivered to the assembly, and the *Āṭānāṭiya Sutta* is recited for the last time to bring the ceremony to a close. By then the thread and the water have become sacred, and the sacred water is sprinkled over the participants who take a sip of it, and the thread is tied around their wrists or necks by the monks. All these observances are regarded as

protective measures against danger, and are blessings. The Buddhists in *Theravāda* countries have great esteem for the recital of *Paritta* to ward off malignant forces and to promote health and prosperity. The general rule underlying the chanting of *Paritta* is to emanate loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings. The chanting of loving-kindness is no mere sentimentality, it is imbued with psychical and emotional power. The reciters must have great love towards the listeners, and the listeners must listen with respectful attention, and thereby the expected result could be fully realised. Another aspect of receiving the efficacy of *Paritta* is that of asseveration of truth *(saccakiriyā)* by the monks.

The *Paritta* ceremony is not a deviation from Buddhism, but is in perfect harmony with it. Of the forty meditation objects enumerated in the *Visuddhimagga,* one of them is the recollection of the Dhamma *(Dhammānussati).* Therefore, the recital of *Paritta* is another way of practising *Dhammānussati.*[1]

Hindu Influence

During the Polonnaruwa period (A.D. 1017–1235), more than during the Anurādhapura period, Hindu elements had been gradually assimilated into the *Paritta* ceremony. During the Kandy period (A.D. 1494–1815), several ritual elements of the ceremony were given prominence, thus making the ceremony more glamorous and devotional so that Hindu devotees could participate with the Buddhists on such occasions; aspects such as the messenger of the deities, gateway message *(dorakaḍa-asna)* and the admonition *(anusāsanā)* were added, mingled with the sound of *Paritta.*

Rites, rituals and ceremonies were not the kernel of the Buddha's teaching, but these elegant and innocent practices afford inspiration, devotion, unity, goodwill, and friendship of the religious-minded people. In my opinion, however, traditions and superstitions play a big part in the *Paritta* ceremony, though that's not to say that there is not right understanding.

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[1] Vism. 213–218.

THE EFFICACY OF PARITTA

The *Paritta* ceremony is a form of ***Saccakiriyā*** (Skt. ***Satyakriyā***), asseveration of truth of something which is embodied in the *Parittas.* By the assertion of the truth, evil influences and diseases are warded off. This means establishing in oneself the power of the truth to gain one's end. The Buddha said, "The truth protects him who lives by it" *(dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāri).* This power of truth is also permeated throughout with the practice of loving-kindness *(mettā).* The power of love is a limitless force in warding off evil influences, healing diseases and promoting health. There are many stories which depict the efficacy of *Paritta,* and the following one is well known among Buddhists.

> Two Brahmins became ascetics, but after practising austerities together for forty-eight years, one of them reverted to lay-life. Some years later he returned with his wife and child to pay obeisance to his former companion. When he blessed them he said, 'Long life to you' to the man and his wife, but not to the child. When questioned about the reason for this, the ascetic told them that their son had only seven days to live, and suggested that they should see the Buddha to ask him if there was any means of averting the child's death. They did so, and the Buddha told them to erect a pavilion outside their house for the recital of *Paritta.* The monks recited *Paritta* for seven days, and the Buddha did so all night long. At the end of the seven days, the Yakkha Avaruddhaka, to whom the child had been promised, could no longer claim him. The Buddha declared that the boy would live for 120 years, and he was renamed Āyuvaddhana.[1]

The sounds of chanting are regarded as a penetrating and effective force. The power of good thoughts mixed with the vibrations of the sound can be transmitted to beings over great distances. It is believed that the sonorous sounds of *Paritta* sooth the nervous system, purify the blood and produce peace and tranquillity of mind, thus bringing about harmony of the physical state.

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[1] DhA. ii. 235ff.

Again, in the *Paritta* there is the power of morality. One takes the five precepts at the outset, and the *Maṅgala, Parābhava, Ālavaka,* and *Vasala Suttas* describe the benefits of a virtuous life. Listening with reverence to the Dhamma is also a virtue, and morality is the basis of mental culture *(bhāvanā)* which purifies the mind from the defilements which cause disease and distress.

Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids, whom we have quoted earlier, was of the opinion that the *Parittas* are not alien to Buddhist doctrine, but are as much in harmony with it as prayer is with theistic religions. She remarks that the harmful spirits are not, as in other cults, cursed, but are blessed with good wishes and suffused with love. Even the most malignant beings are looked at, not as hopelessly and eternally damned, but as erring unfortunates upon their long upward way. These *Parittas* are intended to arrange benign agencies on the side of the patient, and to ward off those that may harm. She compares them to prayers like Balaam's inspiration, "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."[1]

In the course of his teaching the Buddha never precluded the practice of what is beneficial. He said:

"Jappena mantena subhāsitena
Anuppadānena paveniyā vā
Yathā yatthā labhetha atthaṃ
Tathā tathā tattha parakkameyya."

"By chant and charm, well-worded speech,
Gifts and by custom rightly kept,
Where and whatever good may gotten be
Just there let him exert himself for that."[2]

In the *Milindapañha,* a Bactrian king, King Menander (2nd century B.C.) asked a monk, "Venerable Nāgasena, if the Blessed One said:

'Not in the sky, not in the ocean's midst,
Not in the most secluded mountain cleft,
Not in the whole wide world is found the spot,
Where remaining one could escape the snare of death',[3]

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[1] Dial. *op. cit.* 186–187.

[2] A. iii. 56, 62; Jā. iii. 205; *cf.* Mhvu. 290.

[3] Dhp. v 127, *cf.* v 128; Pv. 21.

then the *Parittas* like *Ratana, Khandha, Mora, Dhajagga, Āṭānāṭiya, Aṅgulimāla* etc., prescribed by the Buddha for the protection of those in danger must be useless. If the *Paritta* ceremony is not useless, then it must be false that there is no escape from death."

To this Nāgasena replied, "*Paritta* verses, O king, are meant for those who have some portion of their life left to run. There is no ceremony or artificial means for prolonging the life of one whose allotted span of life has come to an end. There are three reasons for the failure of *Paritta:* the obstruction caused by past kamma, that caused by present defilements, and that caused by lack of faith. That which is a protection to beings loses its power through the fault of their own making. Just, O king, as a mother lovingly nourishes the son who has entered her womb and brings him forth with care. And after birth she keeps him clean from dirt and stains and mucus and anoints him with the most costly perfumes, and when others abuse or strike him she seizes them and, full of excitement, drags them before the Lord of the place. But when her son is naughty, or comes in late, she strikes him with a rod on her knee or with her hands. Now, that being so, would she get seized and dragged along and have to appear before the Lord."

"No, Venerable sir."

"But why not?"

"Because the boy was at fault."

"Just in the same way, O king, will *Paritta,* which is a protection to beings, yet, by their own fault, turn against them."[1]

The Occasions

The *Arahant* Aṅgulimāla, on the advice of the Buddha, performed asseveration of truth for an expectant mother who was suffering pangs of labour, declaring that he had not intentionally killed any living thing from the time he became a noble disciple. Immediately she got relief and delivered a child. In Buddhist countries expectant mothers are blessed by this *Aṅgulimāla Paritta.*[2]

It is an indispensable monastic duty *(vatta)* of the residing monks to chant *Paritta* every morning and evening. They assemble in one place, either in the *Vihāra* or under the *Bodhi* tree. First of all,

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[1] Miln. *op. cit.* 150–154.

[2] M. ii. 97; Miln. *op. cit.* 150–151.

each one reveals his minor offences and they chant *Paritta* in unison. At the end they pay salutation to their teachers and elders. This monastic observance is known as ***Vattaparitta*** (Sinhalese: *Vatapirita*).

The chanting of *Paritta* either for blessings or safety at the outset of auspicious work in the *Vihāra* or in the homes of devotees, is called ***Santiparitta*** (Sinhalese: *Setpirita*). In some cases, *Paritta* is chanted for two or three sessions, morning and evening. All-night *Paritta* and seven-day *Paritta* are also ceremonially conducted by lay devotees as occasion demands. All-night *Paritta*, as well as seven-day *Paritta*, begins with chanting of three *suttas: Mahāmaṅgala, Ratana* and *Karaṇīya Mahāyāna Mettā* with the *Jayamaṅgala Gāthās.* As all the assemblage of the monks takes part in unison, it called the ***Mahāparitta*** (Sinhalese: *Mahapirita*).

CHAPTER 25

THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

Two thousand five hundred and ninety years ago, just before his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Buddhagayā in Northern India, Siddhatta Gotama developed the *jhānas* or ecstatic states of concentration. His mind was so clear at that time that he could perceive everything in its true perspective. Then, in the first watch of the night, through his penetrative knowledge, he recalled many of his former births. This knowledge of past lives is called ***Pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇa.***

In the second watch of the night he realised the births and deaths of millions of other beings. This knowledge is called ***Cutūpapāta ñāṇa.***

In the last watch of the night he realised the way leading to the comprehension of the elimination of all mental corruptions which is called ***Āsavakkhaya ñāṇa.*** Through this last knowledge he became the Buddha, the Fully Enlightened One.[1]

Although their interpretations may be different, almost all religious and philosophical systems acknowledge the doctrine of rebirth. Some religions explain it in terms of transmigration and others in terms of reincarnation. This is one of the most important paradoxical and conflicting philosophical speculations which has been argued and explained in different doctrines.

The Buddha's explanation of the condition of this particular doctrine is in terms of rebirth based on the law of kamma, that is Cause and Effect. This was explained by him in a simple way, as the main reason for ascent and descent of beings. This is, in fact, the real foundation of the ethical life.

The Buddha realised that rebirth is governed by the Law of Kamma as explained in detail in the Law of Dependent Origination *(paticca samuppāda)*. One of the sayings of the Buddha in relation to rebirth is as follows:

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[1] See M. i. 36.

> "All beings die. Death is the end of the present life. They all fare according to their deeds finding the fruit of merit, or demerit."[1]

Consciousness is, in fact, the one continuing factor. Each moment of consciousness flows on and rolls up in itself all the impressions that come in its way. It is continually changing the mind and the body. So we are all being, as it were, reborn every moment. Now, each moment of consciousness begets the next moment — there is no gap between them. And each moment passes on to the next moment all it inherited from the preceding moments.

When did this process start? Buddhism says that it started, not in each individual's childhood, but from eternity. From eternity we are continually being reborn and continually dying, and all the time we are gathering what we call kamma — that is, we are collecting around us good and bad actions and thoughts that inevitably shape our lives and our future. Does this process cease at death? Not if we are still in bondage to our desires — our loves and hates, our greed and anxieties, and our fears and pride. If we could annihilate all these and had no accumulation of kamma, we could be released. But if not, we will continue to be born again and again.

To understand this doctrine of rebirth we must first explain what a being is, and how this individual acts during his existence. The Buddha divided an individual being into two groups — mentality *(nāma)* and physicality *(rūpa)*. The mental group includes the aggregates of sensations *(vedanā)*, perception *(saññā)*, mental activities *(saṅkhārā)* and consciousness *(viññāṇa)*. The physical group is the aggregate of the four elements of earth, water, fire and air (or solidity, cohesion, temperature and motion). Thus what is known as a being or individual is made up of five aggregates, four mental and one physical. If we analyze these five groups, one by one, we cannot find a personality, individuality or abiding entity apart from these five groups or their united function. The combination of these five groups is called birth; their existence is called life; their re-combination is called rebirth; and their dissolution, death. That is why the Buddha said that there is neither soul *(atta)* nor entity, but only five aggregates which appear, disappear and reappear according to the law of kamma. Everything in the world, animate, or inanimate, is com-

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[1] S. i. 97.

pounded. Even an atom is compounded. All atoms move about in space to be separated into relative groups through the power of atomic attraction. Motion produces forces in accordance with the gravitational laws. Although these groups are distinct from one another in colour, shape, mass, etc., they are interdependent and mutually support one another. One is fed by another, which in turn, may support another. This Universal Law is uncreated. With animate organisms there is also a conscious power *(viññāṇa)* called instinct, tendencies etc. This innate propensity forces every conscious being to move. He moves mentally or physically. This mental or physical motion is called action. Repetition of action is habit and habit becomes moulded into character. Character becomes the master. These actions are subject to the law of kamma.

How does kamma operate in a human being? In the human body the sense organs; the eyes, ears, nose, palate, skin and mind; are more sensitive than in the animal body. When these six senses come into contact with internal or external objects they stimulate feelings and on this feeling, consciousness comes to act. If the feeling is pleasant then the mind craves for it; if it is unpleasant, then the mind shrinks from it. This craving is called ***lobha*** or ***taṇhā*** in Pali. Craving tries to grasp the object and hatred *(dosa)* tries to avoid it. This amount of craving and hatred becomes complete in deeds, words and thoughts. Craving and hatred take their origin from ignorance or delusion *(moha)*. Ignorance is the underlying principle of all unwholesomeness *(akusala)*. Actions originating from wisdom, non-attachment and loving-kindness are wholesome *(kusala)*. The results of actions are in accordance with these roots. This is the General Law. Hence consequences of an act react throughout the whole universe on the doer. Man is the inheritor of kamma which he has accumulated in his previous lives as well as in the present life. He cannot reap the result of all his accumulated kamma within the span of one life limited to eighty or a hundred years. Until all kammas become barren he is subject to rebirth again and again, in high or low states according to his good or bad kamma. That is why the Buddha said:

> "They shall fare according to their deeds,
> finding fruit of merit or demerit."[1]

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[1] S. i. 97.

All actions of body, speech and mind, whether good or bad, leave their respective impressions upon us and it is these impressions that are responsible for determining the upward, or downward direction of our life hereafter. The totality of such impressions accumulated during the span of our life is transmitted as our kamma to our next birth. The Buddha said that a man's personality is the outcome of all that he did, felt or thought from his very beginning, not only in his present life, but from the innumerable previous lives he had lived before it. A man has painted his own picture — every touch, every thought is indelibly expressed in its own way.

Where is this great accumulation of kamma stored up in us? The same question was asked by King Milinda to a Buddhist saint, Nāgasena, who gave the following answer:

> "O king, kamma is not stored up somewhere in this fleeting consciousness, or in any other part of the body, but depends on mind and body. It rests, manifesting at the opportune moment. Just as fruits are not stored up somewhere in the fruit tree, but depend on the fruit tree, so too, life springs up in due time."[1]

It would be a misunderstanding to think that consciousness is retained like articles kept in a box. It is, like other natural phenomena, a continuum which is dependent upon the conditions that are present. Each moment transmits its impressions to the following moment which in turn passes them on to the next, together with its own contribution to the process. These impressions also are not static, but are undergoing a process of their own continuous activity and reaction upon one another.

The present moment of consciousness has thus arisen with kamma accumulated from the beginningless past. For example, the student reads volume after volume for his examination and goes on receiving the knowledge gained through them. When the time comes to write his examination, all that he has studied flows from his pen, because at that moment his consciousness is rich with all the knowledge it has inherited from its predecessors.

The differences in temperament, intelligence and character in different individuals is to a great extent due to those differences in kamma that they have amassed in their life-times. Heredity and

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[1] Miln. 72.

environment are also responsible for determining the difference among men. Buddhism recognizes fully the extent which these exercise upon us. It is totally wrong to believe, as some do, that kamma is the only factor determining our destiny. The Buddha denounced the view that everything is due to our previous kamma, and that, owing to their previous kamma, men will become murderers, thieves, liars, abusive and of wrong views. For those who fall back on the previous kamma as the sole reason, there is neither the desire to do, nor the effort to do, nor necessity to do this deed, nor abstain from that deed. The impressions of good and bad action go on accumulating as our kamma and their continuous action and reaction upon one another are in a process of continuous flux. From such numerous and diverse conditions it is very difficult to say how they act and react among themselves to produce a certain result. Perhaps only the Buddha would be able to trace the connection between the past kamma resulting in the present result.

We can understand only the most general manner in which kamma works. The thought that one has directed towards someone else reacts upon oneself in its own way. Thoughts of evil and hatred towards another have a way of returning to us. Thoughts of generosity *(dāna)* and loving-kindness *(mettā)* are reflected upon ourselves and make us better and happier. This is obvious and we can understand it in our day-to-day life. Consciousness is constantly affecting ourselves and others, bringing about changes in the body and mind in its own way. The moment of consciousness flows on in a continuous rolling-up of the impressions that come in its way. We say 'moment of consciousness' because only in this expression can we elucidate the nature of the continuum. There is no gap between one moment and the next. One moment begets the next and passes on all it has inherited from the previous moment. Each moment, it may be said, we are born anew. Whence does this process start? Does it start in childhood? The Buddha points out that the process of consciousness is continuing from eternity.

From eternity we have been taking birth after birth gathering all sorts of kamma that we get by good and bad action. It would be very wrong to believe that an individual derives his character solely from his childhood. If so, why do men differ so widely in the merit of intelligence? Does this process of consciousness cease altogether when we die? It has been pointed out already that this process would certainly come to an end if one gained true detachment and know-

ledge and thus avoided the accumulation of kamma. If one is still in the bondage of craving and has accumulated kamma, one will continue to be reborn. As there is no gap between the last conscious moment in this birth and the first one in the next, these two moments occur in the same continuum. The 'dying moment consciousness' passes on the inheritance of kamma to the first moment of the next birth. Thus the last link of this birth is connected with the first link of the next birth.

The dynamic view of personality in Buddhism is different from the static conception of self as a 'soul' *(ātman)* which migrates from body to body. In the teachings of Buddhism there is no transmigration of a soul from body to body. Here is a personality in constant flux kept moving on by the impulse of desire from birth to birth. The belief that a soul transmigrates from body to body leaves no room for the possibility of it being defiled, or perfected by its own action. How can anything affect that which is unchanged? The Buddha said that if there were an unchanging soul distinct from our mind and body no righteous life would be possible.

If there is no identical soul then is he who does a deed the same as, or different from, he who gets the result of it? The same question was put to Venerable Nāgasena by King Milinda. The reply was, "Neither the same nor another. Suppose, O king, a man were to light a lamp in the evening and it were to burn the whole night. Then is the flame that burns in the first watch the same as the flame that burns in the second watch? No. And so the flame that burns in the third watch is different to that in the second and so on. But yet neither is the flame altogether another from that which burnt in the first watch. The light comes from the same lamp all the night through. Just so, is the continuity of a person maintained. One comes into being, another passes away but they are linked by a continuum."[1]

Man is compared to a lamp, with consciousness, or mind, as the flame which is undergoing a process of continuous flux. It does not suppose that his body is permanent or unchanging. It is also undergoing its own process of change. The man who does the deed and the man who gets the result is neither the same one nor another. A fire may start at one end of a field and proceed to burn its way to the opposite end. Is the fire at one end the same as the fire burning at the other extreme? It is never the same fire, nor yet different

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[1] Miln. 40.

either. Man's process of consciousness is just the same. Whatever of good or bad is acted upon at one end is sure to have its effect at the other. There is no permanent factor in man and the mind is in flux.

If there is no identical, abiding soul what is it that is born and reborn? Buddhism holds that a man dying in London may be reborn as a horse in Toronto according to his kamma. What is it that leaves the body of the dying man in London, travels to Toronto and enters the womb of the mare? If there is no soul how is the death of one to be linked with the birth of the other? Buddhism does not believe in transmigration. Nothing comes out of the body of the dying man and enters the womb of the mare. Individual lives are to be understood as a process of clinging — one giving rise to another according to the law of kamma.

The One Hundred Years War between England and France was not a continuous battle without a break. Many battles were fought on various battlefields. The enmity between the two nations continued over a hundred year period, breaking out at different times in the form of battles. In the same way the body of the man and that of the horse are two fields where the same process of desire continues. It is the continuum of the flow of desire. After the death of the man the body is burned, but the desires do not disappear with the body.

Kamma is the cause of rebirth. The process of consciousness in a dying person proceeds feebly. Just before the moment of death, one of his previous actions connected with one of the five senses actually presents itself in the avenues of consciousness and the dying person grasps that object with craving. His dying mind runs on that grasping. At the end of his mental process, or cessation of life, the death thought and desires of his next being arise. At the end of this cessation, simultaneously with the next mental action called re-linking *(patisandhi)* the past existence is set up in the next existence according to the capacity of kamma. The mental action is engaged upon the action of kamma. This karmic object is brought forth by a mental action which is rooted in dormant craving and latent ignorance and is surmounted by its mental associations. It is the outcome of all craving that co-exists with it. The Buddha says that ignorance and craving are the fundamental causes of re-linking.

Rebirth does not involve transmigration as it is generally understood. The Buddha rejected the idea of transmigration which is postulated by some religious teachings. He holds as untenable the belief that something enduring like a soul is passed from one body

to another. The individual is simply five aggregates understood in terms of the law of kamma.

What is born, then, into the next existence? The continuum of mind and matter is continued again in another form, motivated by craving and nourished by material food of the mother. As, when lighting one candle from another, the fuel and flame are different but the process of heat continues.

If one understands the significance of this doctrine he will see that the idea of a soul is without foundation. He will earnestly avoid evil deeds and strive to do good. He will appreciate the great importance of the law of kamma. Almost all rational religions commend the avoidance of evil and the doing of good because of the fact of rebirth. The aim of Buddhism, however, is not to lead man into more rebirth but to escape from it. We are suffering because of ignorance and selfish craving. Liberation is not to be found in birth or death, but in birthlessness and deathlessness. The aim of all living beings should be, first and foremost, the attainment of wisdom that can destroy ignorance and selfish craving which lead to birth, suffering and death without end.

CHAPTER 26

THE MECHANISM OF REBIRTH

The starting point of Buddhism is the 'here and now', at which present moment it traces the course of conditioned existence *(saṃsāra)*. All beings are composed of mind and matter *(nāma-rūpa)* and although all beings comprise basically the same ingredients, they are nevertheless as varied as chalk and cheese when it comes to the 'personality' of individuals. No two persons can ever be found exactly alike in all respects and each one possesses his own psychological characteristics.

Is such variation among beings due to heredity and environmental surroundings alone? If this **were** the case then why do we come across twins who display totally opposed mental attitudes and characteristics? It is these same characteristics that play such an important part in the life of each individual and are responsible for the, in many cases, subtle differences displayed. Yet if these differences are traced back to the womb, to the fertile ovum for which the same agents are responsible for creating, then the question may well be asked: "Why should one develop in one cell with a predominance of male chromosomes over female chromosomes or vice versa or with a deficiency so as to result in abnormality?"

The Buddha clearly outlined this process of gestation where the conception of an individual would be inconceivable without the presence of a third factor, the 'being to be born' *(gandhabba)*.[1] The *Papañcasūdani* (Vol. ii. p 310), *Sāratthadīpanī* and *Vimativinodanī* (p 86) are also in agreement with this meaning. Dr. O.H. de Alvis Wijesekera, however, suggests *'gandhabba'* as a 'saṃsāric being in the intermediate stage between death and birth'.[2] 'Intermediate stage' *(antarābhava)* was mainly a view held by the *Sarvastivādins,* not the *Theravādins.*[3] As it is said, "Where, monks, three are found in

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[1] In the context of the *Abhidhamma* this is the 'rebirth-linking consciousness' *(paṭisandhi-viññāṇa)* which connects one life to another.

[2] See Vedic Gandharva and Pali Gandhabba, *Ceylon University Review,* Vol iii. N°1, April 1945.

[3] See *L' Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu:* traduit et annoté par Louis de la Vallee Poussin, Paris, 1923, Ch. III. p 32.

combination, there a seed of life is planted. Thus, if a father and mother come together, but it is not the mother's season and the 'being to be born' is not present, then no seed of life is planted. Or, if the father and mother come together and it is the mother's season but the 'being to be born' is not present, then again no seed of life is planted. But when, monks, the father and mother come together and it is the mother's season and the 'being to be born' is also present, then, by the combined agency of these three, a seed of life is planted."[1]

Granted, therefore, that there really is this third factor, it automatically follows that the birth of a being in this life implies the decease of a being in a former life. The succession of births and deaths constitutes *saṃsāra,* a constant flux of aggregates and each natural break (i.e. death) is reconnected with the aid of the 'rebirth-linking consciousness' *(paṭisandhi-viññāṇa)* as is made explicit in the teaching of the *Abhidhamma.* It is, naturally, difficult to determine the exact course which this consciousness will take and only the Buddha managed to comprehend its root, which is dependent on the workings of kamma.

The question is often asked, however, "But how are we to believe in a past life?" Buddhists tend to cite as the greatest counsel for the defense of this claim the Buddha himself who is recorded as having both remembered past lives in addition to foreseeing the course of those of others:

> "With clairvoyant vision, purified, I see beings passing away
> in one state and reappearing in another state..."[2]

Following his instructions in psychic insight, Moggallāna and other great disciples trained their minds so as to trace their past lives by using the faculty of the 'divine eye' *(dibbacakkhu),* one of the Five Supernormal Powers.[3] This faculty was not restricted to the

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[1] M. i. 256.

[2] Vin. iii. 4; D. i. 13ff, 81; iii. 51, 108, 110; M. i. 22, 35, 70, 182, etc; S. ii. 122, 213; iii. 86, v. 265, etc; A. i. 25, 165, 167, 255; Pts. i. 114, ii. 175; Pug. 60; Vbh. 343; Nd2. 79.

[3] *Pañca Abhiññā:* Divine Ear *(Dibbasota),* Recollection of Past Lives *(Pubbenivāsānussati),* Divine Eye *(Dibbacakkhu),* Psychic Power such as the Penetration of Minds *(Paracittavijānana-ñāṇa)* and Magical Power *(Iddhividhā).*

Buddha or his nearest disciples but may be achieved by anyone who attains the fifth *jhāna* and practises the requisite mental exercises.

The *Theragāthā* (Psalms of the Brethren) records the story of a Brahmin, Vaṅgīsa, who is said to have learnt how to tell others' rebirths by tapping their skulls![1] Some Indian Rishis, famous for their possession of the supernormal powers (e.g. Asita or Kāladevala), foretold the greatness of the Buddha-to-be and were also able to read his past lives.[2]

One might legitimately doubt the possibility of ever attaining to that state of mind where one would be enabled to see into one's past at ease, but in view of the miracles of modern science and reliable reports of E.S.P. which are products of the human mind, is this achievement really as fantastic as it sounds? It is true that there are very few who can be shown to utilize their minds in this way, but it should always be remembered that the Buddha clearly warned his disciples against using such powers for cheap, exhibitionist purposes.

It might well be asked whether men like Buddha, Christ, Plato or Shakespeare can arise today? Buddhism would answer to the effect that, dependent on conditions, there is no reason for believing in single, isolated historical personages whose equal can never be repeated. In defence of the argument for rebirth, one hears numerous instances of the remembrance of past lives from all parts of the world. These experiences occasionally take unusual forms; *viz.*, a dying father, arranging for the hiding of some object in the hope that successors may find it and so claim kinship with him. In England, at the present time, a psychiatrist has deposited certain papers proving his identity in a safe of which he alone knows the combination in the hope of claiming them 'next time' and so proving the reality of rebirth! Other types of experience manifest themselves when people, for no known reason, suddenly take either great liking or display strong aversion towards others or feel at home among foreign surroundings.

One is often tempted to ask whether such highly developed beings such as Buddhas, infant prodigies or geniuses could arise in the world without having undertaken previous training, especially as in so many cases the persons concerned are offspring of ordinary

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[1] Thag. vv 1209–1279 (pp 109–115); see also ThagA. ii. 192 ff.; A. i. 24; AA. i. 149 ff.; DhA. iv. 226f; SnA. i. 345f; Ap. ii. 495; Sn. i. 196.

[2] Sn. pp 131–6; SnA. ii. 483 ff.; Jā. i. 54 f; BdvmA. 276 f.

parents. In such cases, therefore, heredity cannot possibly be a deciding factor. Again, one should seriously question the validity of the popular western assumption, so often leading to complacency, that 'three score years and ten' is adequate preparation for eternal heaven or hell.

Although it may be pointed out that the virtuous are all too often found in unfortunate circumstances whereas the vicious always seem to thrive amidst pleasant surroundings, the inexorable law of kamma will nevertheless eventually balance out our lives and, although we may not know whither our destination, go we will as:

> "Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in a mountain cave,
> is there a spot where a man might be free from evil deeds
> ... where deeds could not overcome the mortal."[1]

Before considering the actual processes involved in the operation of rebirth, it is first necessary to understand the undesirable aspect: death.

Those about to die experience through the power of kamma one of the following three objects[2] which come into focus at one or other of the six sense doors according to circumstances:

1. **Kamma**: a reminder i.e. a mental image of some good or bad action, habitual kamma or one performed immediately before decease.
2. **Kamma-nimitta**: a sign of destiny; the mental appearance of some object reminding one of some good or bad action, habitual kamma or one performed immediately before decease.
3. **Gati-nimitta**: the sign of the destiny that awaits. This is a vision indicating one's future rebirth.[3]

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[1] Dhp. vv 127, 128. See also Miln. 150f; *cf.* Divyāvadāna p 532.

[2] For details see the *Visuddhimagga* CH xviii; *cf. Bhavasaṅkrānti Sūtra* by Nāgārjuna (restored into Sanskrit from the Chinese version by Pt. Aiyaswami Śastri, Ayar, Madras, 1938).

[3] Buddhaghosa explains them in his *Aṭṭhasālinī* as follows: "Proceeding by way of rebirth they have as mental object, limited kamma, kamma-symbol or tendency-symbol: during life they proceed by way of the subconscious continuum and at its end by way of decease they have just this as mental object." (Expos. 521; *cf.* Compendium of Philosophy pp 149–152)

The 'death thought' is one's final moment of consciousness *(cuti-citta)* in this life. Rebirth or relinking-consciousness *(patisandhi-citta)* follows immediately. This, it should be noted, contradicts the popular but erroneous view that there exists an interval *(antarābhava)* of time (49 days, being a multiple of the supposed sacred number 7, was conceived as the normal period) during which a person endowed with psychic powers *(iddhi)* was supposed to be able to wander the universe at will.[1] Commenting on this view, Timothy Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert say in their book *'Psychedelic Experience'*,[2] a manual based on the *'Tibetan Book of the Dead:'*

> "The Tibetan Book of the Dead is ostensibly a book describing the intermediate phase lasting forty-nine (seven times seven) days, and during rebirth into another bodily frame. This, however, is merely the exoteric framework which the Tibetan Buddhists used to cloak their mystical teachings."

Suffice it to say that such a conception cannot but be illogical as consciousness, in the Buddhist sense, is viewed as a continuing subconscious life-stream *(bhavaṅga-sota)* incapable of experiencing temporary gaps.

At the expiry of his life-continuum *(bhavaṅga),* the last state of consciousness in this existence arises and ceases simultaneously with his decease. After it, rebirth-linking consciousness, which links the past existence with the new existence, arises and sets up in the next existence.[3]

One of the three above-mentioned phenomena, having presented itself, is grasped at by the dying person, as a drowning man clings to a straw. By what, however, is rebirth-consciousness produced? By mental activity, rooted in such craving as is dormant and such ignorance as is latent in the mind. In this connection, kamma or volition, constitutes 'reproductive' kamma *(janaka-kamma).* Perception *(saññā),* contact *(phassa)* and other mental factors that produce rebirth also make their appearance.

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[1] See *'The Tibetan Book of the Dead'* by W.Y. Evans-Wentz, 3rd edition, Oxford, 1957, pp 6–7.

[2] University books, New Hyde Park, New York, fourth printing, 1966, p 12.

[3] Sensory *(kāmaloka),* form *(rūpaloka)* or formless *(arūpaloka)* realms.

Ignorance and craving, in any case, usually lie dormant and latent in the mind when no occasion occurs for their manifestation, but ignorance causes wrong view *(micchādiṭṭhi)* and craving causes grasping *(upādāna)*. Furthermore, volitional activities *(saṅkhāra)* act as a driving force in all three realms of sense experience. After the dissolution of the aggregates — the natural break of death — an unbroken flux of mind continues upon rebirth.

THE THOUGHT-PROCESS PRECEDING DEATH

1) Past life-continuum *(atīta-bhavaṅga)*,
2) Vibrating life-continuum *(bhavaṅga-calana)*,
3) Arrested life-continuum *(bhavaṅga-upaccheda)*,
4) Mind-door apprehending *(manodvāravājjana)*,
5) – 9) Five apperceptions *(javana)*,
10) & 11) 2 retention consciousness *(tadālambana)*,
12) Decease-consciousness *(cuti)*,
13) Rebirth-linking consciousness *(paṭisandhi)*,
14) Life-continuum *(bhavaṅga)*.

As soon as birth takes place, cognition of light occurs and thereafter follows the process of sense perception *(saññā)* etc., and, all too often in life, the weakening of the mind through enfeeblement brought about by old age and so the wheel of *saṃsāra* turns another cycle.

The *Arahants* were able to sever all connections with the world of the senses by following the three-fold training programme (*viz.* morality, meditation and wisdom) and consequently attain the state where rebirth occurs no longer.

CHAPTER 27

THE BUDDHIST VIEW OF METAPHYSICS

What is the beginning of being or life? This question has been put many times and in almost every place. It is a question that perplexes the mind of every thinking person but although it has received the attention of many profound thinkers the expected answer has not yet been obtained and probably never will be.

The *Upanishads* (*c.* 800 B.C.) endeavour to solve the problem by tracing the origin to the Brahman, the all-pervading God from whom emanates every soul *(ātman)* which transmigrates until it is finally reabsorbed into the Brahman. According to the Upanishads, the Brahman and the *Ātman* are the same and the Brahman manifests Himself in every soul. The Upanishads, therefore, point out: "Thou art That." Samkara later developed this into his doctrine of non-duality which teaches that beings are defiled particles but through the medium of purification, eventually reach Brahman or *Paramātman.*

Christianity attributes everything to an Almighty God. All life was created from nothing and the first cause is therefore as mysterious as is the first cause in Hinduism. Modern science tackles the problem with its usual accurate investigation and ingenuity — we are the direct product of spermatozoa and ova provided by our parents. Science does not give a satisfactory explanation about the mind which is the more important of the two. It interprets quite intelligibly as far as the body is concerned but the mind is still an incomprehensible factor. Materialists while asserting, "All life from life" maintain that life and mind are gradually evolving from, and a manifestation of, matter. That is, material which is lifeless evolves into Life and Mind.

Buddhism is not concerned about a first cause or a last effect: speculations are fruitless. The *bhikkhu* Māluṅkyaputta, not content to lead the holy life, impatiently demanded of the Buddha answers to speculative problems with the threat of reverting to lay-life if they were not answered. One day Māluṅkyaputta got up from his afternoon meditation went to the Buddha, greeted him, sat on one side and said:

"Venerable sir, when I was meditating, this thought occurred to me: 'There are those problems unexplained and rejected by the Blessed One. Namely; 1) is the universe eternal or 2) is it not eternal,

3) is the universe finite or 4) is it infinite, 5) is soul the same as the body or 6) is soul one thing and body another, 7) does the Tathāgata exist after death or 8) does he not exist after death or 9) does he both [at the same time] exist and not exist, or 10) does he both [at the same time] not exist and not not-exist? These problems the Blessed One does not explain to me. This attitude does not please me, I do not appreciate it. I will go to the Blessed One and ask him about this matter. If the Blessed One explains them to me, then I will continue to follow the holy life under him. If he does not explain them, I will leave the Order and go away.' If the Blessed One knows that the universe is eternal, let him explain it to me so. If the Blessed One does not know whether the universe is eternal or not ... then for a person who does not know, it is straightforward to say 'I do not know, I do not see'."

The Buddha's reply to Māluṅkyaputta should do good to many millions in the world today who are wasting valuable time on such metaphysical questions and unnecessarily disturbing their peace of mind:

"Did I ever say to you, Māluṅkyaputta, 'Come Māluṅkyaputta, lead the holy life under me, I will explain these questions to you'?"

"No, Venerable sir."

"Then, Māluṅkyaputta, did you say to me, 'Sir, I will lead the holy life under the Blessed One if the Blessed One will explain these questions to me'?"

"No, Venerable sir."

"Even now, Māluṅkyaputta, I do not say to you: 'Come and lead the holy life under me, I will explain these questions to you' and neither do you say to me 'Sir, I will lead the holy life under the Blessed One if he will explain these questions to me.' Under these circumstances, foolish one, who refuses whom?

"Māluṅkyaputta, if anyone says: 'I will not lead the holy life under the Blessed One until he explains these questions', he may die with these questions unanswered by the Tathāgata. Suppose Māluṅkyaputta, a man is wounded by a poisoned arrow and his friends and relatives bring him to a surgeon. Suppose the man should then say: 'I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know who shot me; whether he is a *Ksatriya* (of the warrior caste), or a Brahman (of the

priestly caste), or a *Vaisya* (of the trading and agricultural caste), or a *Sudra* (of the low caste); what his name and family may be; whether he is tall, short or of medium stature; whether his complexion is black, brown, or golden; from which village, town or city he comes. I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know the kind of bow with which I was shot; the kind of bow-string used; the type of arrow; what sort of feather was used on the arrow and with what kind of material the point of the arrow was made'. Māluṅkyaputta, that man would die without knowing any of these things. Even so, Māluṅkyaputta, if anyone says 'I will not follow the holy life under the Blessed One until he answers these questions such as whether the universe is eternal or not, etc., he would die with these questions unanswered by the Tathāgata."

Then the Buddha explained to Māluṅkyaputta that the holy life does not depend on these views. Whatever opinion one may have about these problems; there is birth, old age, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, distress, "...the cessation of which I declare in this very life. Therefore, Māluṅkyaputta, bear in mind what I have explained as explained and what I have not explained as unexplained. What are the things that I have not explained? Whether the universe is eternal or not etc., I have not explained. Why Māluṅkyaputta, have I not explained them? Because it is not useful, is not fundamentally connected with the spiritual holy life, is not conducive to dispassion, detachment, cessation, tranquillity, deep penetration, full realisation, *nibbāna,* that is why I have not told you about them. What Māluṅkyaputta, have I explained? I have explained *dukkha,* the arising of dukkha, the cessation of *dukkha* and the way leading to the cessation of dukkha. Why Māluṅkyaputta, have I explained them? Because it is useful, is fundamentally connected with the spiritual holy life, is conducive to aversion, detachment, cessation, tranquillity, deep penetration, full realisation, *nibbāna.* Therefore I have explained them."[1]

> "Without cognizable end is this recurrent wandering *(saṃsāra),* a first beginning of beings who, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, wander to and fro, is not to be perceived."[2]

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[1] M. i. 426–432.

[2] S. ii. 178–193ff., iii. 149–151, v. 226, 441; Nd2. p 273; Kvu. p 29.

One should not worry in vain seeking for a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is a process of becoming, a force, a flux and as such necessitates a beginningless past whether one is ape or man. One should seek the cause of this faring-on and live in the present and not in the past. One should utilize one's valuable energy to transform the life-stream into the sorrowless, *dukkha*-free state which is *nibbāna*. As the life-span is short one should try to learn only the important things. There is no time to waste: one may live a hundred years or more but this is not sufficient time to study more than a few subjects. A library contains books on many interesting subjects but we must select the most useful subjects and specialize in them. There is no time to devote to metaphysical speculation. Those who pose questions for the mere sake of argument defeat their own ends. One might argue that life had a beginning and a finite past and that the first cause was a Creator God. In that case there is no reason why one should not question who had created the Creator. In other words, no first cause is to be found. Science does not care to investigate into the first cause simply because such an attempt is directly inimical to the advancement of knowledge. The Law of Dependent Origination does not investigate either. Because the very conception of a first cause is a complete check in the progress of knowledge.

CHAPTER 28

THE TRUTH OF UNSATISFACTORINESS

Buddhism is not a revealed religion in the sense in which that term is ordinarily understood but is a system of thought and practice based squarely on the rock of human experience. The three characteristics *(anicca, dukkha* and *anatta)* are, therefore, not articles of faith but facts of life realised by every searcher after truth who must perforce reason out each step of the path by himself having recourse to his own experience as the one, sure guide.

Even the most placid and seemingly happy among us would be forced to admit that physical *dukkha* at least is omnipresent. As the *Dhammapada* says:

> "Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor on entering a mountain cave, is found the place on earth where abiding one will not be overcome by death."[1]

The less contented would naturally go further and point out the suffering attendant upon fear, loneliness, frustration, illness, old age etc.

Before the advent of modern physics and chemistry, the Buddha intuitively perceived the impermanence and transience of all compounded things — animal, vegetable and mineral — including the 'self' which was seen as a delusive concept binding man firmly to the wheel of rebirth. Everything is in a state of flux and since this is so, then *dukkha* logically follows as a corollary for how could that which is in a constant state of change be regarded as satisfactory and desirable?

Dukkha means not merely suffering, pain or misery, but includes all others factors of an unsatisfactory nature, namely; decay, death, desire, hunger, thirst, impermanence, insubstantiality and the like.

This truth is easily realised by any who can think soberly and dispassionately. It can be easily understood, too, due to its grossness and to the fact that it can be seen everywhere around us. For this latter reason, the Buddha made it the first Noble Truth.

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[1] Dhp. v 128.

It cannot be denied that where there is sensibility, there also, is *dukkha.* Infatuation with transient pleasures prevents us from seeing things as they truly are but pain is an experience which results in a feeling of dissatisfaction. All activities, whether good or bad, stem from this feeling. Indeed, if the truth were known, it often happens that some great sorrow precedes a noble event. Witness, for example, the Great Renunciation. Here we had the Prince Siddhattha only leaving his opulent surroundings after having been confronted with four significant sights; an old man, a diseased man, a corpse and an ascetic. Hence, he left his palace to seek an escape from the ills of life, not only for himself but for the benefit of all those succeeding generations.

It may be asked: "Why bother to attempt to understand *dukkha?"* The answer lies in the fact that Buddhism is not just a means of escaping *dukkha.* As relieving a patient from physical or mental pain only constitutes part of the process of rehabilitation, so likewise, in order to overcome *dukkha,* one must first understand it.

Naturally, there are various types of *dukkha.* The *Dhammacakka-ppavattana* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas* enumerate the following: 1) birth, 2) ageing, 3) disease, 4) death, 5) sorrow, 6) lamentation, 7) pain, 8) grief, 9) despair, 10) association with the unloved, 11) separation from the loved, 12) not to get what one wants; in short the Buddha says, the five aggregates grasping constitute *dukkha.*

This is an exhaustive list of the conditions of suffering. Every mortal, irrespective of his station in life, has to pass through these conditions. No one wants to have the company of those one does not like. But sometimes one cannot avoid them and in some cases it becomes a life-long affair. On the contrary we do not like to leave the company of those who are very dear to us. But in spite of our best efforts, sometimes we have to lose them and experience bitter disappointment. If nothing else comes between us, at last death will surely separate us.

Again, we have desires, hopes and ambitions which are not fulfilled. Then we react with disappointment and frustration. At times the disappointment is so intense that people lose their mental balance and resort to suicide — destroying the very centre of their desires.

When these conditions are analyzed one by one we can see how painful they are. Every one of us has to face these conditions in our journey through life. These are plain facts which should be clear even to a person of below average intelligence. But this is not all. The

Buddha says that even those conditions which we take to be pleasant are in fact *dukkha*, unsatisfactory. This should be understood in the light of the doctrine of impermanence. There is nothing which is not subject to this universal law. Pleasures are certainly no exception. They are fleeting. So pursuing pleasure is like chasing shadows.

1. **Birth** — With birth, five aggregates unfold and begin again their ever-changing pattern. These aggregates, namely, i) matter, ii) feeling, iii) perception, iv) mental formations, and v) consciousness, represent these ever-changing physical and mental forces or energies which combine themselves so as to constitute a being. Birth is regarded as the manifestation and development of the aggregates of existence in any living being from the time of rebirth-linking consciousness up to the exit from the mother's womb. Birth is *dukkha* because it is the basis for all the suffering we experience.

2. **Ageing** — Ageing brings with it failing faculties, loss of memory etc., in short, senility in every sense. Its characteristic is ripening. Its function is to lead on to death. It is manifested as the vanishing of youth. It is suffering because it is also a foundation for suffering.

3. **Disease** — The unpleasant experience of numerous ailments to which mind and body are subject.

4. **Death** — The dissolution and break-up of the life faculty that one has cherished for long years. The Buddha said, "A being, once born, may die at any moment."[1] Its characteristic is a fall. Its function is to disjoin. It is manifested as absence from the destiny in which there was rebirth. It should be understood as suffering because it is a basis for it.

5. **Sorrow** — An inward burning resulting from loss of relatives, friends, property, health, virtue, right view, or any other loss. It has inner consuming as its characteristic. Its function is to completely consume the mind. It is manifested as continual sorrow. It is an intrinsic form of suffering and also a basis for it.

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[1] Sn. v 576.

6. **Lamentation** — The outward sign of sorrow, seen at times of wailing or moaning for loss, mentioning the qualities of the person or thing lost. Crying out is its characteristic. Its function is proclaiming virtues and vices. It is manifested as tumult. It is a state of suffering due to formation and a basis for suffering.

7. **Pain** — Constituting bodily affliction and possibly resulting in mental sickness. The oppression of the body is its characteristic. Its function is to cause grief. It is manifested as bodily affliction. It is an intrinsic suffering and it brings on mental suffering.

8. **Grief** — Mental affliction causing mental oppression and distress. This intrinsic suffering brings on bodily suffering too. Those who are gripped by grief undergo many kinds of suffering, possibly leading to suicide.

9. **Despair** — A state of hopelessness burning up one's mental fibres. No crying here, but sighing only. Its characteristic is burning up of the mind. Its function is to bemoan. It is manifested in faints and states of dejection.

10. **Association with the unloved** — Resulting from one's having to associate or mix with undesirable company. It distresses the mind and it is manifested as a harmful state.

11. **Separation from the loved** — To have to part from well-wishers such as parents, brothers, sisters, relations, friends etc., arouses sorrow which may lead to instability of one's mental faculties and even to suicide.

12. **Not to get what one wants** — This goes without saying as, with birth, one becomes endowed with an insatiable thirst for sense objects of every kind. Its characteristic is the wanting of an unattainable object, or person. Its function is to seek it. It is often manifested as disappointment.

Again, there are other ways to classify suffering.

1. **Intrinsic or ordinary suffering** — which includes all the usual forms of physical and mental *dukkha*, such as old age, sickness and death etc.

2. **Suffering produced by change** — e.g. when happiness turns to sorrow due to its impermanent nature.

3. **Suffering inherent in conditioned states** — since every being is a combination of aggregates and these are changing every moment and therefore impermanent, it follows that whatever is impermanent must of necessity be unsatisfactory.

There is also a further classification:

1. **Concealed or non-evident suffering** — i.e. that which is not obvious and is hidden to others. When someone is afflicted with a headache or some other bodily or mental affliction, one has to question the sufferer to ascertain what it is.

2. **Exposed or evident suffering** — i.e. that which manifests itself through agonized exclamations when one weeps or moans.

3. **Indirect suffering** — e.g. birth in itself, considered as a relinking-consciousness with life, is termed *dukkha* because it is birth that provides the basis for one kind of suffering or another.

4. **Direct suffering** — i.e. all accepted forms of *dukkha* other than those in 3.

"In short", says the Buddha, "the five aggregates of clinging are suffering." Our very physical and mental faculties are equated with clinging, the desire for life. The five aggregates of grasping constitute an entire life which is nothing but suffering. Hence, it has been truly said, that he who delights in life, delights in *dukkha*.

Early Western writers on Buddhism, however, saw this philosophy of life as pessimistic in that it seemed to exhort people to merely brood over the miseries of life. A case for calling a doctor a pessimist, for example, could be made out if he did but diagnose and failed to treat accordingly. However, as one would always be given a prescription for medicine; so in Buddhism, one is shown the Path which leads to freedom from desire and hence from *dukkha*. Therefore Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic; it is realistic.

CHAPTER 29

THE CAUSE OF UNSATISFACTORINESS

In our examination of the First Noble Truth we have seen the universality of suffering and uncovered its origin, namely, the Five Aggregates of existence (material form, feeling, perception, volitional acts and consciousness). We have also seen that suffering extends to all realms of life, whether of the sensuous, fine material or immaterial spheres.

These same aggregates are, of course, subject to the law of ***anicca*** — that of change or momentary decease and re-arising. However, this continuous change does not occur without a cause, according to Buddhism. (To Theists, this matter presents no problem, as they would put forward the hypothesis of a Creator God).

In his first discourse (the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta)*[1] the Buddha enumerated the causes of suffering:

> "The craving which causes rebirth, is accompanied by passionate pleasure, and takes delight in this and that object, namely sensuous craving, craving for existence and craving for annihilation."[2]

When connected with the self, craving can be very potent as witnessed by these typical egoistic expressions, "My home", "My family", "My reputation", "My career", "My interests" etc. The main underlying theme is one of rank selfishness. Just as smoke arises from a fire, so likewise, craving results from the formation of the five aggregates.

Yet why is it that we continually crave if we recognise that the aggregates are of such a fundamentally unsatisfactory nature? The answer surely is because we are deluded into thinking that these possess lasting qualities with which to satisfy our every want. It is these that cause us to forget the suffering in life. Indeed, these aggregates may be compared to a poisoned cake; possessing not only an attractive exterior (and taste and smell) but also a deadly content.

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[1] Vin. i. 10f; S. v. 420ff.; Lal. 540f; Mhvu. iii. 330f.
[2] Vin. i. 10; D. ii. 308; M. i. 48 *passim:*

Greed, hate and delusion are as virulent as the toxic properties of the cake, but mankind obstinately clings to them.

From the meanest worm to the highest divine being, these aggregates are their most prized possessions. Furthermore, not just content with them in their most basic form, every effort is made to perfect their quality and function. Following on from one life to another, like falling from the sky, anxious to find a foothold, but never succeeding; binding oneself to existence in perpetuum mobile.

Whenever contact is made with external objects by use of the six senses, these are invariably seen as good, beautiful and of permanent duration. Such objects are wanted again and again, and one is forced to gratify the senses day and night in order to keep the aggregates satisfied. One labours to maintain life, but faces endless difficulties, not only in securing the basic necessities of life, but in acquiring the various wants (which are countless in the developed countries) which are artificially created for the 'average consumer'. When one seems to possess more than enough, a mysterious longing presents itself for yet more commodities.

However, we are not always successful in our endeavours. Disappointment, frustration and mental instability cannot be discounted whilst we remain in the 'rat race'. Confronted with duties one cannot perform alone, marriage is most often resorted to, only to realise further obligations; to husband or wife, children, in-laws etc. Now we are forced to satisfy **their** desires as well! We are further assailed by family quarrels, creditors, etc.

All crimes result from craving for wealth, power, position, etc., in short in the desire to be a step ahead of everyone else. However, as in times of war, it is inevitably the innocent or those not wishing to become involved, that are the victims in such a ruthless struggle to remain on top.

Now we must turn to a very difficult problem which requires our careful consideration and reflection: how does craving cause future rebirth and *dukkha?*

The body is made up of four chief elements, namely; extension (i.e. earth), cohesion (water), radiation (fire) and motion (air). There are also four subsidiary qualities; ***vaṇṇa*** — colour, ***gandha*** — odour, ***rasa*** — taste, and ***ojā*** — nutriment. With regard to the mental faculty, this operates indescribably quickly. For example, the simple act of raising one's hand requires 100,000 thought moments or more. Because each perceptible second follows on unnoticed, the majority

of people regard the mind as either of an eternal nature or as dying on the decease of the physical body, as with the extinguishing of a flame. Both of these views are incorrect according to Buddhism.

On the occasion of anger, death, etc., the mind becomes inactive or inoperative and the subsidiary qualities of that person disappear. If he has extinguished the flame of craving, then the flame of individual consciousness will be extinguished also. If this is not the case, however, then the desire for continued existence will persist as before. This desire for future life is powerful enough to produce one of three signs: 1) Habitual act *(kamma)* 2) Mental appearance of the object *(Kamma nimitta)* 3) Place of rebirth *(Gati nimitta).*

By the operation of reproductive karmic force, a receptacle (e.g. a womb) is formed for one's preparation prior to emergence into the next life, supplied by nutriment and aided by mind, which is subsequently developed. The continuance of life is thus assured, craving is indeed the creator of birth as well as of death.

With the advent of birth, the six senses *(salāyatana)* come into being; vision *(cakkhu)* audition *(sota),* smell *(ghāna),* taste *(jivhā),* form *(kāya)* and mind *(mano).* However, it should be borne in mind that when the Buddha speaks of craving as being the cause of *dukkha* he means the main cause, because there are innumerable other factors of varying degree that result in craving, as stated in the formula of Dependent Origination.

If only we recognised the inherent unwholesome quality of the following four characteristics of kamma, then our upward climb on the path of liberation would already have begun:

1. ***Ayūhanattha*** — the quality of gathering or accumulating *dukkha.*
2. ***Nidabattha*** — the power to create or supply fresh sets of aggregates.
3. ***Samyogattha*** — the power to bind the aggregates firmly to *dukkha.*
4. ***Palibodhattha*** — its obstinate nature; craving is constantly seeking new and subtle methods to prevent the liberation of beings from the Wheel of Existence.

Thus it is kamma, not God, which is the creator of the world and of ourselves.

CHAPTER 30

NIBBĀNA[1]

The goal of all Buddhists is *nibbāna,* (Skt. *nirvāṇa*). It is a condition that cannot be defined in general terminology although Pali literature describes it in various ways. The term is derived from ***nir*** + ***vā*** while traditional exegesis analyses it as ***ni*** = non, + ***vāna*** = craving. The meaning of the root vā is to 'blow' and Sanskrit grammarians interpret the term as 'cessation', as of a lamp when the light is extinguished. In this connection, one recalls that verse in the *Ratana Sutta* which runs; "With the old *(kamma)* extinct, nothing new *(kamma)* to be reproduced, the mind detached from future birth — they have destroyed the seeds of existence. Their desires do not spring up again and those wise ones go out even as this lamp."[2] Avaghosa versifies the same as follows, "Just as a lamp, when it goes out, the flame does not go hither or thither, neither to the earth nor to the sky, neither in this direction nor to that, it having been utterly blown out on account of the oil being consumed, similarly, a sage obtains *nirvāṇa* when the desires and the passions have been consumed; he goes neither this way nor that; but obtains utter peace."[3]

Apart from the above definition, however, there have been many interpretations, the following being recorded in the great *Sarvāstivādin* commentary, *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sastrā:*

1. ***Vāna,*** implying the path of rebirth, + ***nir,*** meaning 'leaving off' or 'being away from the path of rebirth.'
2. ***Vāna,*** meaning 'stench', + ***nir,*** meaning 'freedom'; 'freedom from the stench of vexatious kamma.'
3. ***Vāna,*** meaning 'dense forests', + ***nir,*** meaning 'to get rid of' = 'to be permanently rid of the dense forest of the five

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[1] This article which was the 'Sir Baron Jayatilaka Memorial Lecture' of 1981 was published by the British Mahābodhi Society in 1984.

[2] Khp. 5; Sn. v 235: *Khīnaṃ purānaṃ navaṃ an' atthi sambhavaṃ; virattacittā āyatike bhavasmiṃ; te khīnabījā avirūlhicchandā; nibbanti dhīra yathāyaṃ padīpo.*

[3] *Saundaranandakāvyam,* Ch. xvi. v 28. *Dīpo yathā nirvrtimabhyupeto; naivāvaniṃ gacchati nāntarīkṣam; disām na kiñcid vidisām na kiñcit; snehakṣayāt kevalaṃ eti śāntim.*

aggregates *(pañca skandha)*, or the 'three roots of greed, hate and delusion *(lobha, dvesa, moha)'* or 'three characteristics of existence (impermanence, ***anitya;*** unsatisfactoriness, ***dukkha;*** soullessness, ***anātma***)'

4. ***Vāna,*** meaning 'weaving', + ***nir,*** meaning 'knot' = 'freedom from the knot of the vexatious thread of kamma.'[1]

That this difficulty in defining is not of recent origin is illustrated by the following revealing dialogue between the Indian *Arahant,* Nāgasena, and the Greek king, Menander (Menandros; Pali, Milinda), sometime in the first century B.C. in North-West India.

"Venerable Nāgasena, this *nibbāna* that you are always talking of — can you make clear to me by a simile, explanation, reason or argument its form, figure, duration or size?"

"That I cannot, O King, for *nibbāna* has nothing similar to it. By no simile, explanation, reason or argument can its form, figure, duration or size be made clear."

"That I cannot believe, Nāgasena, that of *nibbāna* which really, after all, is a condition that exists, that it should be so impossible in any way to make us understand either the form, figure, duration or size. How do you explain this?"

"Tell me, O King, is there such a thing as the great ocean?"

"Yes."

"Well, suppose someone were to ask your majesty, 'How much water is there in the ocean and how many creatures dwell therein?' How would you answer him?"

"I should say this to him, 'My good fellow, such a question should not be asked and it is a point that should be left alone. The oceanographers have never examined the ocean in that way and no one can measure the water there or count the number of creatures that dwell therein.' Thus, sir, would be my reply."

"But why should your majesty make such a reply about the ocean? The ocean is, after all, a thing which really exists. Ought you not rather to count and tell him, saying, 'So and so much is the water in the ocean and so and so many are the creatures that dwell therein?"

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[1] *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sāstra,* Taisho, vol 27, 163 a-b. Translated from *'Systems of Buddhist Thought',* Yamakami Sórgen, Univ. of Calcutta, 1912, p 31 f.

"That would be impossible, sir, for the answer to such a question is beyond one's power."

"As impossible as it is, O King, to tell the measure of water in the ocean or the number of creatures dwelling therein though, after all, the ocean exists, so impossible is it in any of the ways you suggest to tell the form, figure, duration or size of *nibbāna,* though, after all, it is a condition that does exist. And even, O King, if one endowed with psychic powers, master over mind, were to be able to ascertain the quantity of water and count the creatures in the ocean, even he would never be able to tell the form, figure, duration or size of *nibbāna."*[1]

There is, no way of understanding the nature of *nibbāna* other than by individual realisation by following the methods prescribed in the texts. The above explanations are, however, insufficient to understand fully the nature of *nibbāna.* It is a significant fact that even the great Nāgārjuna himself resorted to a negative interpretation, "That is called *nirvāṇa* which is not acquired, not reached, not extirpated, not eternal, not suppressed, not produced."[2]

The negative aspect of *nibbāna,* therefore, implies the extinction of the threefold fire *(lobha, dosa* and moha), leading to the annihilation of all desire and complete liberation of mind.

II

I now reproduce the lucid explanation of the positive aspect of *nibbāna* given by Venerable Nāgasena to Milinda.

"Venerable Nāgasena, I grant that *nibbāna* is bliss unalloyed and yet that it is impossible to make clear either by simile, explanation, reasoning or argument, its form, figure, duration or size. But is there no attribute of *nibbāna* which is inherent also in other things that it can be made evident by metaphor?"

"Though there is nothing as to its form which can be explained, there is something as to its quality which can."

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[1] Miln. 315–318.

[2] *Mādhyamikakārikā* of Nāgārjuna ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin (Bibl. Budd.) with Candrakirti's commentary, *Prasannapadā,* St. Petersburg, 1903–1913 Ch. xxv, Kārikā 3.

Apratītam asamprāptam anucchinnam asāsvatam;
aniruddham anutopannan eva nirvāṇam ucayate.

"Oh happy word, Nāgasena, speak then that I may have an explanation of even one point in the characteristic of *nibbāna*. Appease the fever of my heart by the cool breeze of your words."

"There is one quality of the lotus, O king, inherent in *nibbāna*, two qualities of water, three of medicine, four of the ocean, five of food, ten of space, three of the wish-fulfilling gem, three of red sandalwood, three of the essence of ghee and five of a mountain peak.

"As a lotus is unwetted by water, *nibbāna* is unsoiled by the defilements.

"Like water, it cools the fever of defilements and quenches the thirst of craving.

"Like medicine, it protects beings who are poisoned by the defilements, cures the disease of suffering, and nourishes like nectar.

"As the ocean is empty of corpses, *nibbāna* is empty of all defilements; as the ocean is not increased by all the rivers that flow into it, so *nibbāna* is not increased by all the beings who attain it; it is the abode of great beings [the *Arahants*] in whom the great evils and all stains have been destroyed, endowed with power, masters of themselves, and it is all in blossom as it were, with the innumerable and various fine flowers of the ripple of its waves, so is *nibbāna* all in blossom, as it were, with innumerable and fine flowers of purity, knowledge and freedom.

"Like food which sustains life, *nibbāna* drives away old age and death; it increases the spiritual strength of beings; it gives the beauty of virtue, it removes the distress of the defilements, it drives out the exhaustion of all sufferings.

"Like space, it is not born, does not decay or perish, it does not pass away here and arise elsewhere, it is invincible, thieves cannot steal it, it is not attached to anything, it is the sphere of *ariyans* who are like birds in space, it is unobstructed and it is infinite.

"Like a wish-fulfilling gem, it fulfils all desires, causes delight and is lustrous.

"Like red sandalwood, it is hard to get, its fragrance is incomparable and it is praised by good men.

"As ghee is recognizable by its special attributes, so *nibbāna* has special attributes; as ghee has a sweet fragrance, *nibbāna* has the sweet fragrance of virtue; as ghee has a delicious taste, *nibbāna* has the delicious taste of freedom.

"Like a mountain peak, it is very high, immovable, inaccessible to the defilements, it has no place where defilements can grow, and it is without favouritism or prejudice."

"Excellent, Nāgasena, that is so and I accept it as you say."[1]

The positive aspect of *nibbāna* implies, however, the complete fulfilment of three cardinal virtues, *viz.*, generosity *(dāna)*, loving-kindness *(mettā)* and wisdom *(paññā);* together with the utter abandonment of the Ten Fetters *(dasa saṃyojana):* wrong belief in a self *(sakkāyadiṭṭhi)*, doubt *(vicikicchā)*, belief in and perverse adherence to rites and ritual *(sīlabbataparāmāsa)*, sense desire *(kāmarāga)*, ill-will *(vyāpāda)*, the craving for material states of being *(rūparāga)*, the craving for non-material states of being *(arūparāga)*, conceit *(māna)*, restlessness *(uddhacca kukkucca)* and ignorance *(avijjā)*.

A purely intellectual comprehension of *nibbāna* by individuals like us is not possible because it is not within the scope of logic *(atakkāvacara)*. However, one can argue with logical consistency, after reflecting on the positive and negative aspects of life that if there exists ill, there must also exist an opposite state. The only way to comprehend *nibbāna* is to attain the state of a developed mind and realisation by following the Eightfold Noble Path with knowledge, earnestness, industry and perseverance. Any attempt to comprehend it prior to such realisation may be likened to someone attempting to understand the taste of sugar without actually tasting it or the labour pains at child-birth by one who has never gone through that experience.

III

To say that there is no *nibbāna* or that it is nothingness, simply because one cannot perceive it through one's senses, is as illogical as to maintain that light cannot exist because the blind cannot see.

The following fable illustrates the incomprehensibility of *nibbāna* by worldlings *(puthujjana)*.

Once upon a time there lived a fish and a turtle who were friends. The fish, having lived all his life in the water knew nothing whatever about anything else. One day, as the fish was swimming in the water, he met his friend the turtle, who had just returned from an

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[1] Miln. 317–323.

excursion on dry land. On being told this, the fish said, "On dry land! What do you mean by 'dry land'? I have never seen such a thing — 'dry land' is nothing!"

"Well," said the turtle, "you are at liberty to think so, but that is where I've been all the same."

"Oh, come" said the fish, "try to talk sense. Just tell me, what is this 'land' of yours like? Is it wet?"

"No, it is not wet," said the turtle.

"Is it nicely fresh and cool?" asked the fish.

"No, it is not fresh and cool" replied the turtle.

"Is it clear, so that light can come through it?"

"No, it's not clear. Light can't come through it."

"Is it soft and yielding, so that I can move my fins about in it and push my nose through it?"

"No, it is not soft and yielding. You cannot swim in it."

"Does it move or flow in streams? Does it ever rise up into waves with white foam on them?" asked the fish, becoming rather impatient at the string of "No's."

"No," replied the turtle, "it never rises up into waves."

The fish then asked, "If the land is not a single one of these things, what else is it but nothing?"

"Well," said the turtle, "if you are determined to think that 'dry land' is nothing, I cannot help you. But anyone who knows what is water and what is land would say you were a silly fish for you think that anything you have never known is nothing because you have never known it."

This fable shows that neither the turtle who was acquainted with both land and water could explain to the fish the real nature of land, nor could the fish understand what the land was, being acquainted only with water. In the same way, *Arahants,* who are acquainted with both the mundane and supramundane states, cannot explain the supramundane to a worldling using mundane terms, nor can a worldling understand the supramundane merely with mundane knowledge. Hence, although in our vocabulary, there are found words to describe mundane objects, *nibbāna,* being of a supramundane nature, no adequate comparison can possibly exist for it.

IV

Although *nibbāna* is devoid of *dukkha*, it is not devoid of *sukha*, 'happiness' or 'ease'. However, it should be clearly understood that there are two kinds of happiness; the kind derived from sensual pleasures *(vedayita)*, which may arise from an enchanting sight, captivating sound, enticing smell, delicious taste, pleasant touch or fascinating thought; in other words the satisfaction derived from food, clothes, money, etc. and from association with close friends. "I proclaim that everything experienced by the senses is *dukkha*"[1] the Buddha said to disciples like Udāyi. The other kind of happiness is that derived from emancipation *(vimutti)* or from release from an unpleasant experience. This occurs when one ceases to suffer from an existing ailment or is relieved from future suffering and, comparable to this is the happiness of *nibbāna*.

Before we try to understand the nature of *nibbānic* bliss, we must realise what constitutes *vimutti*, emancipation or happiness derived from release, in this very life. When, for example, one suffers from toothache, the feeling of pain registers in one's mind. When this ache is over, the feeling of relief likewise registers which one naturally considers as a kind of happiness. However, this happy feeling would continue only until another such ailment occurred and in the same way, sensual pleasure or happiness is also of a temporary nature and, therefore, not of much value. Another characteristic of sensual pleasure is that one tends to refuse it if in excess (one can have too much of a good thing), whereas happiness derived from emancipation is not so. The story goes that a certain treasurer, guild-master (or alderman) of Rājagaha was afflicted with a severe headache. Jīvaka, the Buddha's own physician, cured him and then asked what reward the treasurer would give him. "I will give you all my wealth and become your slave."[2] This illustrates the value of the second kind of happiness, in that a person, if seriously ill, will give all that he has in order to escape death. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive of the true value of happiness connected with the escape or relief from countless deaths.

Since there is nothing to compare with *(anidassana)* the exalted state of *nibbāna*, one can only get an idea of the nature of bliss there

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[1] M. iii. 208; S. ii. 53, iv. 216: *Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ taṃ dukkhasmin' ti.*
[2] Vin. i. 273 ff.

by reflecting on the unlimited extent of *dukkha* which one has to undergo in the countless existences in the cycle of births *(saṃsāra)*. Every being has experienced such *dukkha* in the past and there is no conceivable end to *dukkha* in the future; hence, unless *nibbāna* is realised, endless births in various states of being are inevitable. The extent of bliss in *nibbāna* is therefore in proportion to the extent of suffering experienced by living beings — i.e. is a perfect antithesis to it. Similarly, the safety which *nibbāna* affords is in perfect antithesis to the horrors of *dukkha,* the comfort it affords to the dangers of *dukkha.*

In this *saṃsāra* without beginning or end,[1] there can be no doubt that each being has enjoyed happiness of various kinds, but all such pleasant experiences fade in the memory, proving once more that sensory happiness has no lasting or intrinsic value. Once *nibbāna* is realised, however, real and lasting happiness is never lost.

From what has already been said, *nibbāna,* being the only unconditioned thing which has not arisen from a cause, may be said to possess four characteristics of, namely:

1. ***Nissaraṇaṭṭha*** — Total release from *dukkha,* or emancipation from the defilements *(kilesa)*. Outside this state, *dukkha* is omnipresent.

2. ***Vivekaṭṭha*** — Void of *dukkha* and the defilements. *Nibbāna* is totally unconnected with them, hence, outside this state, there is no peace, no rest from *dukkha.* Just as in heat there is no cold, in light no darkness, so there is no pain in *nibbāna.*

3. ***Asaṅkhataṭṭha*** — Absence of the need for protection or fostering, producing or repairing. It is only when one is attached to the aggregates *(khandha)* that one is forced to put forward effort in order to protect and feed them and to stave off decay and dissolution (i.e. death). *Nibbāna,* however, not being conditioned by any cause, there is no arising, decay and death, no cause and effect present. It is a state which represents the opposite of *dukkha;* as heat is opposed to cold, or light to darkness.

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[1] *cf.* S. ii. 178–193; S. iii. 149–151; S. v. 226; Nd2. 273; Kvu. i. 29.
Anamataggo 'yaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubbakoṭī na paññāyati avijjānivaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsārataṃ.

4. ***Amataṭṭha*** — Eternal. Aggregates produced through kamma continuously change, hence the fear of death, but in *nibbāna* there is eternal security from death.[1]

Nibbāna is also associated with three distinctive qualities:

1. ***Dhuva*** — It is eternal or stable. Everything cosmic or hyper-cosmic belongs to one of two classes: conditioned by cause *(saṅkhata)* or not conditioned by cause *(asaṅkhata). Nibbāna,* by belonging to the second category, is birthless, deathless and, therefore, eternal.

2. ***Subha*** — Desirable. Everything in the universe belongs to the conditioned-by-cause *(saṅkhata)* category. Every such conditioned thing, ranging from the smallest particle to the highest being or the most massive object, is constantly changing without remaining the same for a second. The rise and fall of nations, the rapid changes a person undergoes during his lifetime, transitoriness of mind and matter, prove the fluctuating and changing nature of life. Everything that springs from a cause must pass away: this is the universal law of flux. Therefore, all such things are undesirable and its opposite, the unconditioned *(asaṅkhata)* must be desirable.

3. ***Sukha*** — Happy. What we call happiness is nothing but the gratification of some sense desire. All such desires are insatiable and the resulting happiness fleeting in nature. That which is transient cannot be real happiness, but the happiness of *nibbāna* grows neither stale nor monotonous, nor is it ever lost; therefore it is termed a 'happy state.'

The nature of our life can be aptly illustrated by the following allegory contained in a Sinhalese verse which is presumably based on a famous Jain parable: "Being hotly pursued by an elephant in a forest, a man runs for his life through the forest paths. He comes across a deep pit with creepers hanging down. Clinging to one of them, he descends some distance down the creeper for refuge. He looks down to the bottom of the pit and sees deadly snakes there;

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[1] Pts. i. 110. (*cf.* Pts. 17, 20.)
Nirodhassa nissaraṇaṭṭhaṃ vivekaṭṭhaṃ asaṅkhaṭṭhaṃ amataṭṭhaṃ sacchikaronto vivaṭṭati tithatthe paññā sacca-vivaṭṭe ñāpam.

raising his eyes upwards, he notices the elephant with upraised trunk waiting threateningly for him. Then he looks around the pit and sees two mice, one black and one white, engaged in ceaseless gnawing at the creeper he is clinging to. Meanwhile, he observes that drops of honey are falling on his body from a beehive that is hanging above him. Notwithstanding the dangers he is beset with at that moment, he holds his mouth open, and enjoys the honey."[1]

Herein, the forest is *saṃsāra,* the creeper is rebirth, the elephant is death, the snakes are old age, disease etc., and the two mice are night and day, while the drops of honey are the fleeting sensual pleasures of life.

While defining *nibbāna,* Anuruddha says in his *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* as follows: "*Nibbāna,* which is reckoned as beyond the world and therefore a transcendental and supramundane *(lokuttara)* state, is to be realised through the knowledge belonging to the Four Paths *(catumaggañāṇena).* It is the object of those Paths and their Fruits (i.e. Path and Fruition cognition). It is called *nibbāna* in that it is separated from *(nikkhantattā)* craving *(taṇhā)* which is called *vāna.*"[2]

Here are those supramundane Paths *(magga)* and Fruitions *(phala)* which are realised by Noble Ones *(ariya puggala)* one after another, consisting of four pairs:

1. The path of Stream-entry *(sotāpatti)* and its fruition.
2. The path of Once-return *(sakadāgāmi)* and its fruition.
3. The path of Non-return *(anāgāmi)* and its fruition.
4. The path of Perfection *(arahatta)* and its fruition.

'Path' *(magga)* is a mere designation for the moment of realising the four stages produced by intuition or insight *(vipassanā).* 'Fruition' *(phala)* means those moments of consciousness which follow immediately thereafter as a result of the path.

1. Through the first path one becomes free from three fetters *(saṃyojana)* which bind beings to existence in the sensory

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[1] *Samarāicca-kahā,* ii. ed. H. Jacobi in *Bibl. Indica,* Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1926, pp 55–80; see *'The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths',* ed. R.C. Zaehner (*q.v.* article on Jainism contr. by Prof. A. L. Basham) Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, p 265; *Māhābhārata* 11, 5. For other versions of this parable, particularly Chinese, see Vkn. pp 36–7 n 27.

[2] *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha,* ed. T.W. Rhys Davids, JPTS, London 1884, repr, 1978, Pts. vi. 14; Compendium, p 168.

sphere, *viz.*, i) Personality belief, ii) doubt, iii) perverse adherence to rites and rituals.

2. Through the second path one weakens the fourth and fifth fetters, *viz.*, iv) sense desire, and v) ill-will.

3. Through the third path one becomes fully free from the fourth and fifth fetters.

4. Through the fourth path one becomes free from the five remaining fetters, vi) craving for material existence, vii) craving for non-material existence, viii) conceit, ix) restlessness and x) ignorance.

V

All phenomena in the universe are differentiated as either internal or external, distant or near, high or low, base or exalted. Conditioned by a variety of causes, such phenomena constantly change their nature and, as we have already seen, do not remain fixed or unaltered for two consecutive moments; therefore, they contain within them the seeds of their own dissolution and insubstantiality. The state of *nibbāna,* however, being outside the concepts of time and space cannot be included in the above category.

Just as those with eyesight can see the moon, so those who have attained to one or other of the four paths of sanctity can perceive *nibbāna* with the eye of wisdom. Just as the blind **cannot** see the moon, so those who never practise *sīla* or *samādhi* or acquire *paññā* can never hope to perceive *nibbāna.* Short of the realisation, however, a wise worldling *(puthujjana)* might appreciate the significance of *nibbāna* by unravelling the underlying truths of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta.*

Nibbāna, therefore, is the objective of the four paths and fruits thereof and it stands to reason, that without *nibbāna,* these fruits can never be attained.

Pointing out the existence and character of *nibbāna,* the Buddha says: "Monks, there is a state which is neither earth, nor water, nor heat, nor air, neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, nor nothingness, nor perception, nor non-perception, nor this world nor that world. That, monks, I call neither coming nor going, nor standing; neither death nor birth. It is without establishment, without procession, without a basis, that is the end of unhappiness, *nibbāna.*"

> "Monks, there is an unborn, unoriginated, unmade, unformed. Were there not such a state, there would be no escape from what is born, originated, made, formed. Since, monks, there is such a state, there is an escape from the born, originated, made and formed."[1]

In any case, we have as convincing proof of their attainment, the biographies of the great disciples of the Buddha, like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, etc. If there is no *nibbāna,* the four paths and fruitions would be unattainable stages. But those who attained to those stages categorically mentioned that they enjoyed the bliss of *nibbāna.*

Nibbāna is, in its nature, single, but for the purpose of logical treatment *(kāraṇapariyāyena)* there are two aspects of *nibbāna:*

1. ***Sopādisesanibbāna*** — i.e. *nibbāna* with the aggregates of existence[2] still remaining (***sa*** = with, + ***upādi*** = material substrata, + ***sesa*** = remaining). This is also called the *kilesanibbāna,* i.e. *nibbāna* with the extinction of the defilements *(kilesa)* such as greed, hate, delusion etc. In other words, one has attained to *nibbāna* with the still remaining stuff of life; substratum, basis or nexus of the five aggregates. This is the *nibbāna* attained by individuals who, having annihilated all kammas, fetters, torments, and the three roots of evil, are still living.

2. ***Anupādisesanibbāna*** — i.e. *nibbāna* without the aggregates remaining (***an*** = without, + ***upādisesa***). This is the state of *nibbāna* attained by Buddhas, *Paccekabuddhas* and *Arahants* on their death, or, more accurately, on their *Parinibbāna.* This is also called *khandhaparinibbāna,* i.e. *nibbāna* with the extinction of the aggregates. It connotes that there is no further continuity of this psycho-physical process of existence.

As the Buddha says, "O monks, there are two elements of *nibbāna.* What are they? *Nibbāna* with the residue of the aggregates and *nibbāna* without the residue of the aggregates."[3]

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[1] Ud. 80 f.

[2] *Viz:* Form *(rūpakkhandha),* feeling *(vedanā~),* perception *(saññā~),* mental formations *(saṅkhāra~)* and consciousness *(viññāna~).*

[3] Iti. 38.

Commenting on Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamikavṛtti,* Candrakīrti defines the two-fold *nibbāna* in his *Prasannapadā* as follows:

"(The first) of them is conceived as something attainable by complete deliverance *(prahāna)* from the whole catalogue of defiling elements *(kilesagana),* e.g. illusion (of personal identity, *avidyā*), desire, etc. *(rāgādi).* A substratum is what underlies (all these defiling agencies), it is (the inveterate instinct) of cherishing one's own life *(ātmasneha).* The term 'residual substratum' thus refers to that foundation of our belief in personal identity *(ātmaprajanpti)* which is represented by the ultimate elements of mundane existence *(upādāna-skandāh = sarvadharmāh),* which are systemised in five different groups. A residue is what is left. A substratum is left (in a partial *nirvāṇa*).

What is the thing (in which there is still a residue of personal feeling)? It is *nirvāṇa.* It is a residue consisting of pure elements *(skandhamātṛakaanāsravadharmāh)* of existence alone, delivered from the illusion of an abiding personality *(satkāyadṛṣṭi)* and other stealthy defilers *(klesataskara),* a state comparable to that of a town in which all criminal gangs have been executed. This is *nirvāṇa* at lifetime with some residue (of personal feeling).

A *nirvāṇa* in which even these purified elements themselves are absent is termed (final *nirvāṇa*) a *nirvāṇa* without any residue (of personal feelings), because of the idea that here *(nirupadhiśeṣa)* the residue (of personal feeling) is gone (it is impersonal). It is a state comparable to that of a destroyed town, a town, which, after all the criminal gangs have been executed, has itself also been annihilated."[1]

In addition to the above, there are three further characteristics of *nibbāna:*

1. ***Śūnyatā*** (voidness, emptiness) — All conditioned things are conducive to *dukkha.* Because one is generally unaware of this fact, one is prevented from gaining ultimate peace of mind. Hence, *nibbāna* is devoid of conditioned things.

2. ***Animitta*** (signlessness) — All conditioned things are associated with signs, objects, concepts and the like and such hallucinations, erroneous views, perceptions and ideas come about when one regards, for example, impermanent objects as permanent or of unchanging quality. Hence *nibbāna* is devoid of all such signs and hallucinations.

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[1] *Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa,* Th. Stcherbatsky, Leningrad, 1927, p 183f.

3. ***Appaṇihita*** (desirelessness) — All conditioned things are associated with hopes, wishes and desires which results, inevitably, in frustration, sorrow, ill, misery. Hence, *nibbāna,* which is devoid of all such factors, is regarded as a state of absolute content, literally neither hankered after nor longed for.

VI

One is only able to obtain a valid knowledge of *nibbāna* in one or other of the four proximate means *(pramāna):*

1. Perception *(pratyakṣa).* — *Nibbāna* can be ascertained by actual realisation of it through the attainment of the paths and fruitions. Albeit it is beyond the capacity of science to prove the existence of non-materiality, transiency is easily proven and should therefore be regarded as a state to which one should not become attached. In this connection, worldly happiness, as has been shown, usually means the gratification of the senses: we long for name, fame, wealth, power, even though we court the risk of becoming objects of hatred or jealousy. Worldly happiness, therefore, is all too often a prelude to pain in some form or another, but since *nibbāna* is over and above all this, the latter is considered as a calming, never fluctuating state.

When the three roots of greed, hatred and delusion are even temporarily suppressed, true happiness results.[1] When the five hindrances *(pañca nīvaraṇa) viz:* sense desire *(kāmacchanda),* ill-will *(vyāpāda),* sloth and torpor *(thīnamiddha),* restlessness *(uddhacca-kukkucca),* and doubt *(vicikicchā)* are eliminated, then *jhānic* states (of meditative absorption) are easily developed. Further, insight *(vipassanā)* is developed resulting in the realisation of *nibbāna.* In short, on eliminating craving *(taṇhā),* one will attain to one's cherished goal that is the certain assurance provided by perception *(pratyakṣa).*

2. The inference which is intended for oneself *(svārthānumāna).* — The cause is inferred from its effect. It is quite legitimate

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[1] Craving, hatred and delusion. *cf.* Vin. i. 34: *Kena āditta̤m rāgagginā, dosagginā, mohagginā āditta̤m.*

to deduce the presence of one form from the presence of another. For example, if one commits an unskilful or unwholesome act *(akusalakamma)* one would surely be subject to unwholesome results and vice versa in the case of a wholesome act. Both Noble Truths — first and second — unhappiness *(dukkha)* and its arising *(samudaya)* as craving *(taṇhā)* are certain and visible to us without a shadow of doubt. It is therefore quite legitimate to deduce that the remaining two truths — the cessation of unhappiness *(nibbāna)* and the way leading to the cessation of unhappiness are also just as certain.

3. The syllogism intended for the sake of others *(parārthānumāna)*. — This process of logical reasoning is a simple inference; on the analogy of the perceptible truth, imperceptible things are also considered as true facts. Through this, one can reason out and come to the logical conclusion that *nibbāna* exists. This proximate means *(pramāna)* was employed by the Bodhisattva Sumedha who contemplated thus:

"Even as, although there *dukkha* is,
Yet happiness is also found,
So, though indeed existence is,
A non-existence should be sought.

"Even as, although there may be heat,
Yet grateful cold is also found,
So, although the threefold fire exists,
Likewise *nibbāna* should be sought.

"Even as, although there evil is,
That which is good is also found,
So, though 'tis true that birth exists,
That which is not birth should be sought."[1]

4. Verbal testimony *(āgama)*. — This is the reliable testimony of worthy persons who had attained *nibbāna* and experienced it. Their words, giving expression to the bliss of *nibbāna*,

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[1] Jā. i. 4; Bdvm. 7; Translation adapted from *Buddhism in Translations* by Henry Clarke Warren, Harvard Univ. Press, 1947, p 6.

have been recorded authoritatively in the *Tipiṭaka* — the Buddhist Canon. One can, therefore, accept the reality of *nibbāna* on the validity of this corpus and become acquainted with this sublime state by accepting the evidence furnished by such references in the Buddhist texts like *Theragāthā* and *Therīgathā.*[1]

VII

Two questions which are often asked should perhaps be briefly answered. They are: 1) Where is *nibbāna?* 2) Who attains it?

Just as a fire when it goes out or a wind which stops blowing cannot be said to be stored up somewhere else, so also *nibbāna* cannot be said to occupy any geographical region but is only **realised** on fulfilling certain conditions. In the *Milindapañha,* Venerable Nāgasena answers this question in the following words, "There is no spot looking east, south, west or north, above, below or beyond, where *nibbāna* is situated, and yet *nibbāna* is: he who orders his life aright, grounded in virtue and with rational attention may realise it, whether he lives in Greece, China, Alexandria or in Kosala."[2]

Using the previous analogy of the fire, which goes out due to lack of fuel, so also the so-called individuality is extinguished due to the absence of the rebirth-producing factor of craving. Hence, no 'I' or 'being' attains *nibbāna,* there is simply realisation. This 'personality' composed of mind and matter *(nāma-rūpa)* in reality is not a 'being' but a becoming. The 'being' is thus a ceaseless flux of mind and matter. As there is neither a permanent ego *(atta)* nor identical being, it goes without saying that there can be no 'I' or 'being' in *nibbāna.*

The Buddha said, "*Nibbāna* is the highest happiness."[3] This constitutes the absolute cessation of all conditioned phenomena *(saṅkhāra).* This fact is quite clear in the Buddha's explanation of the third Noble Truth: "Now this, O monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of *dukkha.* It is the cessation without remainder of

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[1] *'Psalms of the Early Buddhists'*, verses tr. Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *The Sisters,* 1909 and *The Brethren,* 2nd ed. 1937, PTS; *Elders' Verses,* prose tr. K.R. Norman, Vol. I. 1969, Vol. II. 1971, PTS.

[2] Miln. 326ff.

[3] Dhp. v 204: *Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā.*

craving *(taṇhā)*, the forsaking of it *(paṭinissaggo)*, release from it *(mutti)*, non-attachment to it *(anālayo)."*[1]

Although attempts have been made to define this exalted state, it is surely to be realised within oneself, rather than talked about as it is "not within the scope of logic", being a supramundane state. King Milinda questioned, "Venerable Nāgasena, things produced of kamma, cause and season are to be seen. Tell me what in the world is born neither of kamma, nor of cause nor of season?"

"These two, sire, in the world are born neither of kamma, nor of cause nor of season — space and *nibbāna."*

"Do not, Venerable Nāgasena, corrupt the Conqueror's words and answer the question wrongly!"

"What did I say, sire, that you speak thus to me?"

"Venerable Nāgasena, what you said is true of space, but with many a hundred reasons did the Lord point out a way to the realisation of *nibbāna* — and yet you speak thus, *'Nibbāna* is not born of a cause'."

"It is true, sire, that with many a hundred reasons did the Lord point out a way to the realisation of *nibbāna;* but he did not point out a cause for the production of *nibbāna."*

"Here we, Venerable Nāgasena, are entering from twilight into pitch darkness; from a jungle into a thicket; in as much as there is a cause for the realisation of *nibbāna* but no cause for its production. If, Venerable Nāgasena, there is a cause for the realisation of *nibbāna* one would also require a cause for the production of it. For as there is a child's father, for that reason we would also require a father of the father. Because there is a top of a tree, for this reason there is also a middle and a root. Even so, Venerable Nāgasena, if there is a cause for the realisation of *nibbāna* we would also require a cause for the production of *nibbāna."*

"Nibbāna, sire, is not produced; therefore, a cause for its production has not been pointed out."

"Please, Venerable Nāgasena, convince me by means of a reason, so that I may know there is a cause for the realisation of *nibbāna* but no cause for its production."

"Well then, sire, attend carefully and I will tell the reason for this. Would a man, sire, with his natural strength be able to go from here up a high Himalayan mountain?"

"Yes, Venerable Nāgasena, he would."

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[1] Vin. i. 10; M. i. 49, 299; M. iii. 251; S. v. 421; Pts. i. 40; Vbh. 103.

"But would that man, sire, with his natural strength be able to bring a high Himalayan mountain here?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Even so, sire, it is possible to point out a way for the realisation of *nibbāna* but impossible to show a cause for the production of *nibbāna*. For what reason? It is because of the uncompounded nature of the thing."

"Venerable Nāgasena, is *nibbāna* uncompounded?"

"Yes, sire, *nibbāna* is uncompounded. It is made by nothing at all. Sire, one cannot say of *nibbāna* that it arises or that it does not arise; or that it is to be produced or that it is past or present or future; or that it is cognizable by the eye, ear, nose, tongue or body."

"If that is so, venerable sir, then there is no *nibbāna.*"

"*Nibbāna* is, sire; for *nibbāna* is cognizable by the mind. An Ariyan disciple, faring along rightly with a mind that is purified, lofty, without obstructions, without temporal desires, can see *nibbāna.*"

"But what, venerable sir, is that *nibbāna* like that can be illustrated by similes? Convince me with reasons according to which a thing that is can be illustrated by similes."

"Is there, sire, such a thing as the wind?"

"Yes, venerable sir."

"Please, sire, show the wind by its colour or configuration or as thick or thin; long or short."

"But it is not possible, venerable sir, for the wind to be shown; for the wind cannot be grasped in the hand or touched; but yet there is the wind."

"If sire, it is not possible to show what the wind is; is there then no wind?"

"I, venerable sir, know that there is wind, I am convinced of it, but I am not able to show the wind."

"Even so, sire, *nibbāna* is; but it is not possible to show *nibbāna* by its colour or configuration."

"Very good, Venerable Nāgasena, well shown is the simile, well seen the reason; thus it is and I accept it as you say; there is *nibbāna.*"[1]

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[1] Miln. 268–271.

VIII

Nirvāṇa (Skt.) or *Nibbāna* (Pali) means literally, "That which is blown asunder"; 'That' comprising the three evil roots of greed, hate and delusion.

A wanderer who ate rose-apples spoke thus to the Venerable Sāriputta; "Venerable sir, it is said, *'nibbāna';* now what venerable sir is *nibbāna?"*

"Whatever, your reverence, is the extinction of passion, of aversion, of confusion; that is called *nibbāna."*

"Is there a way, venerable sir, for the realisation of this *nibbāna?"*

"There is, your reverence. This ariyan Eightfold Noble Path itself is for the realisation of *nibbāna,* that is to say, Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Mode of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. But for certain it needs diligence."

"Excellent, venerable sir, is the Way; excellent the course for the realisation of *nibbāna.* But for certain it needs diligence."[1]

It is essentially craving that has to be discontinued, resulting in the attainment of *nibbāna.* The Buddha said, "It is called *nibbāna* because of the getting rid of craving."[2] And again, "As to this, Ānanda, he perceives thus; 'This is the real, this the excellent, namely the calming of all the mental formations, the casting out of all biases *(āsava),* the extinction of craving, dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna'."*[3]

By way of a simile, so long as the electric current is operating, so long will the fan move; hence, when desire ceases, life ceases. But it is absurd to ask what happens to someone upon his attainment of ***Parinibbāna*** (i.e. in the case of an *Arahant* who dies), as it is to ask what happens to the movement of the fan after the current has been switched off! This again, reminds one of the comparison with the extinguished flame of a lamp.[4]

This goal of Buddhism corresponds to 'salvation' except that the former is not attained through the agency of another or outside being but solely through one's own efforts. What happens to an *Arahant* on death? It cannot be stressed strongly enough that he is **not** annihi-

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[1] S. iv. 251, 252.

[2] S. i. 39.

[3] A. v. 322.

[4] *cf.* footnotes 2 and 3 on page 221.

lated, which opponents put forward as the only logical answer. The argument devolves around the Buddhist view of the self; no part of the individual can possible be identified with a self or soul; hence, one cannot speak of the annihilation of the latter. In the West, however, many follow the theories of Plato and maintain that the soul is synonymous with consciousness, and that it is **this** that is immutable and immortal. This view, which is denied by Buddhism, is very much akin to the Hindu *'Ātman'* theory.

Nibbāna is a permanent state and to be experienced only by those who have attained thereto ... to the question, "Is there any consciousness in *nibbāna?"* the reply comes back, "Nothing else but the bliss of *nibbāna."* This is the ultimate state and there is nothing beyond it. Referring to the *parinibbāna* of an *Arahant,* the Buddha said, "That monk of wisdom here, devoid of desire and passion, attains to deathlessness, peace, the unchanging state of *nibbāna."*[1]

Dispassion is called the way to the passionless state of *nibbāna.* It is said, "Through dispassion one is freed." Yet, in meaning, all these words; cessation, renunciation, surrender, release, lack of clinging; are synonyms for *nibbāna.* For according to ultimate meaning, *nibbāna* is the ariyan truth of the cessation of suffering. But because, when *nibbāna* is reached; craving detaches itself and ceases, there is renunciation and there does not remain even one sensory pleasure that is clung to; it is, therefore, called cessation, renunciation, surrender, release, lack of clinging. Its distinguishing mark is peace; its flavour is unchangeable or its flavour is a means of comforting; its manifestation is the signless or is unimpeded.[2]

IX

Dispelling the misunderstanding of those who accuse Buddhism of being nihilistic, Buddhaghosa examines and elucidates *nibbāna* by means of a catechism.

Q Could it be said, "Indeed, there is not *nibbāna.* It is like the horn of a hare; it is not to be got at"?

No, this could not be said, for it is apprehensible by a certain means. It is apprehensible by means of attainments suitable to it; as the

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[1] Sn. vv 1086, 1087.

[2] Vism. ii. 507.

A worldly thoughts of others are apprehensible by such cognition as encompasses the mind. Therefore it should not be said, "Because it is not apprehensible by ordinary means it does not exist", any more than it should be said that the knowledge of the worldly thoughts of others does not exist because it is not apprehensible by the ordinary person.

"Moreover, it should not be said that *nibbāna* is not because the practise of Dhamma is not barren. For if *nibbāna* were not, there would be barrenness in regard to spiritual attainment in the three categories of moral habit, concentration and wisdom. But due to the attainment of *nibbāna* there is not this barrenness."

Q But according to what was said, beginning, "Whatever, your reverence, is the extinction of greed, hate and delusion" (S. iv. 252) — it might be asked, "Is *nibbāna* extinction?"

A No, because it would follow that *Arahantship* also, was mere extinction, shown by such expressions as that just cited.

Furthermore, if *nibbāna* were of short duration and so on, it would be stained. Were this the case, one might conclude that *nibbāna*, short in duration, with 'compounded' as its distinguishing mark, would be attainable without any need for Right Effort.

Q "If, after extinction there is no further procedure is not that a stain on the existence of *nibbāna?*"

A "No, for extinction such as this does not exist. Even had it existed, it could not have transcended the stains we have spoken of. And belonging to the Noble Way is the finding of the existence of *nibbāna*. For the Noble Way extinguishes stains, and is, therefore, called extinction. Further than that there is no procedure for stains. It is called 'Extinction' because in a broad sense it is the sufficing condition of the extinction which is called stopping without rebirth."

Q "Why is it not called this explicitly?"

A "Because of its extreme subtlety. Its extreme subtlety is successful in bringing unconcernedness to the Buddha and in being seen through noble vision and because a Noble One's eye is needed to see it (M. i. 510).

"This *nibbāna* is attainable by one possessed of the Way, is not shared by all and from having no earliest beginning is without a source."

Q "But if it exists due to the existence of the Way, is it truly not without source?"

A "No, because it cannot be produced by means of the Way. It is only attainable by means of the Way. Therefore it is precisely without source. Because it is without source it is unaging and undying. Because there is no source, no aging or dying, it is permanent."

"Because it transcends material shape it is without material shape — formless and immaterial — the Buddha's goal is one and has no plurality. There is only one goal. Attained by someone through mind development, it is called *nibbāna* with the groups of existence still remaining. For here, although defilements are allayed, some groups of existence still remain and grasping is still evident. But he who, by getting rid of its arising, and with the last thought of the fruit of kamma extinguished, from the non-arising of the 'procedure' groups of grasping and from the disappearance of those that have arisen — for him there is then the absence of the groups of existence. And for him, now without the groups of existence remaining it can be laid down; 'Here there is not a group of existence remaining'."

Because it is attainable by means of special cognition perfected by unfailing effort, because it was spoken of by the Omniscient One, because it has existence in the ultimate meaning, *nibbāna* is not 'non-existence'. So this was said, "There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded. (*Itivuttaka* p 37; *Udāna* p 80)"[1]

Thus the total extinction of the conditions of being as well as that of the *āsavas* represents the *nibbāna* without remainder, the complete and perfect freedom, the highest bliss.

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[1] Vism. 507–509, taken from *"The Path of Purification"*, tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli.

CHAPTER 31

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

In the holy city of Benares, on the full-moon day of *Āsāḷha,* the Buddha opened his first discourse — the Discourse of Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Doctrine[1] by exhorting his first five disciples to avoid the extremes of self-indulgence *(Kāmasukhallikānu-yoga)* and self-mortification *(Attakilamathānuyoga)*

"Self-indulgence is low, coarse, vulgar, ignoble and unprofitable and self-mortification is painful, ignoble and unprofitable"[2] he said. Because the former retards one's spiritual progress and the latter weakens one's intellect.

These erroneous doctrines of extremes were actually propounded by two religious groups at the time: the one, materialist *(cārvāka)* and therefore supporting hedonism; the other, believing in a transcendental self or soul bound to a material body, which should be annihilated by severe ascetic practices in order to release the true self.

The Buddha himself put into practice both of these doctrines before his Enlightenment; the first, when he was a prince in his father's palace before he renounced the world; the second, as an ascetic in the Uruvelā forest prior to his Enlightenment. Hence, he realised their futility and discovered that only self-conquest in moderation leads to the ultimate goal — *nibbāna.*

Avoiding the two extremes, the Buddha, therefore, asked his followers to take the Middle Way which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, and to full enlightenment. In fact, according to the Four Noble Truths,

1. ***Dukkha sacca*** — life is subject to sorrow,
2. ***Samudaya sacca*** — this sorrow is caused by ignorance which results in desire or attachment,
3. ***Nirodha sacca*** — this sorrow can be eliminated by the elimination of desire,

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[1] *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta:* Vin. i. 10f; S. v. 420ff; Name of the *sutta* occurs only in the commentaries e.g. Jā. i. 82; DA. i. 2; AA. i. 69 etc.; Skt. version is in Lal. 540 (416)f, Mhvu. iii. 380f.

[2] Vin. i. 10; M. iii. 230, 231; S. iv. 330.

4. ***Magga sacca*** — the Way to eliminate desire.

One can, therefore, put an end to sorrow by adopting and following the way — the Middle Path — which, to the Buddhist, is the philosophy of life itself. This Middle Path of self-conquest which leads to the ultimate goal is eightfold, namely:

1. Right Understanding *(Sammā Diṭṭhi)*,
2. Right Thought *(Sammā Saṅkappa)*,
3. Right Speech *(Sammā Vācā)*,
4. Right Action *(Sammā Kammanta)*,
5. Right Livelihood *(Sammā Ājīva)*,
6. Right Effort *(Sammā Vāyāma)*,
7. Right Mindfulness *(Sammā Sati)*,
8. Right Concentration *(Sammā Samādhi)*.

1. Right Understanding

To begin treading the path we must see life as it is, in accordance with its three characteristics of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta;* we must possess a clear understanding of the nature of existence, of the moral law, of the factors and component elements that go to make up this *saṃsāra* or conditioned realm of life. In short, we must have the clear understanding of the twelve ***nidānas*** or the links of the Law of Dependent Origination *(Paticca samuppāda)* and the Four Noble Truths. We should, therefore, make these the bases of our acceptance of the vicissitudes of life.

2. Right Thought

This means that our mind should be pure, free from lust, ill-will and cruelty and the like. At the same time, we should be willing to relinquish anything that obstructs our onward march and unselfishly transfer the merit to all sentient beings. Three other steps follow upon and accompany Right Thought, namely; Right Understanding, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness.

3. Right Speech

By refraining from lying *(musāvādā)*, back-biting *(pisunāvācā)*, harsh speech *(pharusāvācā)* and idle gossip *(samphappalāpā)*, we create a connecting link between thought and action. One, moreover,

which is characterised by wisdom and kindness. Correct speech should not be unduly loud or excitable, nor prompted by infatuation, ill-will or selfish interests; it should be free from dogmatic assertions and discrimination; finally, it should not be such as to inflame the passions.

4. Right Action

This generally consists in observing the Five Precepts, which can be shown both in their negative and positive aspects:

i. Not to kill, but to practise love and harmlessness to all.
ii. Not to take that which is not given, but to practise charity and generosity.
iii. Not to commit sexual misconduct, but to practise purity and self-control.
iv. Not to indulge in false speech, but to practise sincerity and honesty.
v. Not to partake of intoxicants or drugs which cause heedlessness, but to practise restraint and mindfulness.

It is important to notice that *kāmesu micchācārā,* 'sexual misconduct' has wrongly been mistranslated as adultery on many occasions, whereas, the original Pali usage *kāmesu,* being in the plural, denotes that all abnormal or illegal practices should be avoided in addition to any other practice or pursuit which tends to over-stimulate the senses. For the ordinary disciple, moreover, it is essential for him to practise all these injunctions if he wishes to aspire to the higher life.

In particular abstaining from taking life, from taking what is not given and from sexual misconduct is Right Action. This is also conjoined with the first, sixth and seventh steps.

5. Right Livelihood

The layman should only pursue an occupation that does not cause harm or injustice to other beings. Deceit, treachery, divination, trickery, usury are regarded as wrong living. The traditional trades from which the layman is debarred are:

i. Dealing in arms,
ii. Dealing in living beings,

iii. Dealing in flesh,
iv. Dealing in intoxicating drinks, and
v. Dealing in poison.

He should be free from acquisitiveness or any connections with dishonest money-making, legalised or otherwise, prostitution of any kind and should have a sense of service and duty in life. As the 'homeless life' is the ideal state at which he aims, he should, although encumbered with family and business responsibilities, simplify his needs and devote more time to meditation.

The first, sixth and seventh steps are conjoined with Right Livelihood in its practice.

6. Right Effort

Self-perfection can be achieved by avoiding and rejecting ignoble qualities while acquiring and fostering noble qualities. This stage is, therefore, subdivided into four parts.

i. The effort to prevent the arising of evil which has not yet arisen.
ii. The effort to expel that evil which is already present.
iii. The effort to induce good which has not yet arisen.
iv. The effort to cultivate and maintain that good which is already present.

By conscientiously practising the above, the lay-man will be enabled more easily to cultivate the higher spiritual ideals, the best known formulation of them being termed the Ten Perfections, which are explained in Chapter 19.

"The effort of Avoiding, Overcoming, of
Developing and Maintaining;
These four great efforts have been shown
By him, the scion of the sun.
And he who firmly clings to them,
May put an end to suffering."[1]

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[1] A. ii. 16.

7. Right Mindfulness

This implies a state of constant awareness with regard to i) the body, ii) feeling, iii) thoughts, and iv) mind objects. The development of this type of mindfulness is necessary to protect the practitioner from being led astray by erroneous views. Thus, it is the culmination of the intellectual process, namely ***vipassanā*** or direct insight into things as they truly are. This step marks a further advance from the stage when things were known only by the differing features each displayed, since here all such discrimination is discarded. Although things seem corporeal, good or bad, right or wrong, such attitudes as these only go to prove how the mind views things on an incomplete basis. The processes of thought are only food for the intellect to enable the mind to diagnose the truth more clearly when those discriminations first appear. Hence, we should transcend the intellectual mind if we are to progress further and realise the true significance and relationship of all compound things.

The above four Fundamentals of Mindfulness, practised and developed, bring the Seven Factors of Enlightenment *(bojjhaṅga)* to full perfection. They are:

i. Mindfulness *(Sati)*,
ii. Investigation of States *(Dhammavicaya)*,
iii. Energy *(Viriya)*,
iv. Rapture *(Pīti)*,
v. Tranquillity *(Passaddhi)*,
vi. Concentration *(Samādhi)*,
vii. Equanimity *(Upekkhā)*.

8. Right Concentration

At the final stage, we should aim at one-pointedness *(ekaggatā)* of the mind directed towards a wholesome object. Through desire and craving, the root of all evil, kamma is accumulated making rebirth necessary. To overcome this process, we must understand that everything is impermanent *(anicca)* unsatisfactory *(dukkha)* and soulless *(anatta)*. True knowledge of this nature is acquired through the practice of meditation, of which there are two aspects; the active one, practice; and the passive one, realisation of the truths.

To do this, we should sit quietly, with tranquil mind, and, if vagrant thoughts arise, humbly and patiently regulate the mind by

noting them until they cease. Breathe gently, slowly but evenly. Devices like counting are usually necessary at first to assure concentration and absorption but can be discarded once we have got a firm grip on our mind and can prevent it from wandering away from the task in hand. In this connection, there are five mental hindrances *(pañca nīvaraṇa)* to be eliminated, or at least weakened, during the development of concentration. They are:

i. Sensuality *(kāmacchanda)*,
ii. Ill-will *(vyāpāda)*,
iii. Sloth and Torpor *(thīnamiddha)*,
iv. Restlessness and worry *(uddhacca kukkucca)*,
v. Sceptical doubt *(vicikicchā)*.

Once their baneful influence is removed, we will be able to concentrate more easily, enabling our ultimate goal to become clearer. We have to undergo a long training to achieve this stage. When it is achieved, *samādhi* is attained which is a prerequisite for the realisation of *nibbāna*.

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CHAPTER 32

THE MEDITATION ON LOVING-KINDNESS

One of the mightiest forces in the universe is that of *mettā*. Unlike violence *(himṣā)*, it does not trouble the innocent world nor does it afford sorrow and unhappiness either to oneself or to others. In short, it does not lead to any kind of evil. It is not tangible. This wonderful mighty force takes place in the hidden silence of the heart, nowhere else.

Mettā (in Pali), ***maitrī*** (in Sanskrit), is the Buddhist term for loving-kindness, universal love or all-embracing kindness. This, according to the Buddha's teaching, is a method of meditation. It is designed to cultivate and develop that mighty force in the heart which can be radiated out to the whole world. By so doing, one can attain to unspeakable peace, tranquillity and happiness within oneself.

There are four 'Sublime' or 'Divine Abidings' *(cattāro brahma-vihāra)* which are also called the four 'Boundless States' *(cattāro appamaññā); viz.,* loving-kindness *(mettā),* compassion *(karuṇā),* sympathetic-joy *(muditā)* and equanimity *(upekkhā).* Here, however, our subject matter is concerned solely with the first state.

One who wishes to create this force within himself, that is to say, who wishes to meditate on *mettā,* should first sever the impediments inimical to his peaceful surroundings. Then, he should choose a suitable time and a secluded place when and where he can, without interruption, devote himself to his meditation practice. After his meal, if it is the meal-time, and rest, he should sit comfortably on a well-prepared seat. He should then perceive the danger of anger arising, and, at the same time, should realise the advantage of possessing patience, because anger has to be abandoned and patience has to be fostered in the development of meditation.

The dangers of anger should be understood in every possible way as far as he is able. The most effective method would be to understand it in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. For the benefit of the aspirant, a few sayings of the Buddha from the scriptures are cited here which may be read before the actual commencement of his meditation.

"Monks, seven things gratifying and helpful to an enemy befall one who is angry, whether a woman or a man. An enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

1. 'Let him be ugly.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy's beauty. Now when this person is angry, though he be bathed and well-anointed, with hair and beard trimmed, well-dressed and clean, yet he is ugly because of his anger.

2. 'Let him lie in pain.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy's lying in comfort. Now when this person is angry, although he may lie on a comfortable couch, well-prepared, yet he lies only in pain because of his anger.

3. 'Let him have no prosperity.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy's prosperity. Now when this person is angry, he mistakes bad for good and good for bad, and each being thus taken wrongly in the other sense, these things conduce to his harm and suffering for long because of his anger.

4. 'Let him not be rich.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy having riches. Now when this person is angry, although he has riches gained by endeavour, yet the ruler's treasury gathers in fines because of his anger.

5. 'Let him not be famous.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy's having fame. Now when this person is angry he loses any fame he may have acquired by his diligence because of his anger.

6. 'Let him have no friends.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy having friends. Now when a person is angry, the friends he may have, his companions, relatives and kin, will keep away from him because of his anger.

7. 'Let him, after death, reappear in an unhappy state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition.' Why is that? Because no enemy relishes an enemy's going to a good destination. Now when this person is angry, he commits misconduct in body, speech and mind, and thereby, after death, reappears in an unhappy state.

"When anger does possess a man;
He looks ugly; he lies in pain;
What benefit he may come by
He misconstrues as a mischance;
He loses property through fines
Because he has been working harm
Through acts of body and speech
By angry passion overwhelmed;
Wrath and rage that madden him
Gain him a name of ill-repute;
His fellows, relatives and kin
Will seek to shun him from afar;
The anger fathers misery:
This fury does so cloud the mind
Of man that he cannot discern
This fearful inner danger.

"An angry man no meaning knows,
No angry man can see the truth,
So wrapped in darkness, blinded
Is he whom anger dogs.

"Someone a man in anger hurts;
But, when his rage is later gone
With difficulty or with ease,
He suffers as if seared by fire.
His look betrays the sulkiness of
Some dim, smoky, smouldering glow
Whence may flare an angry blaze
That sets the world of men aflame
He has no shame or conscience; curt
No kindly words come forth from him
There is no island refuge for
The man whom anger dogs.

"Such acts as will ensure remorse,
Such acts are far from true ideals;
It is of these that I would tell,
So hearken to my words.

"Anger makes man a patricide,
Anger makes man a matricide,
Anger can make him slay a saint,
As he would kill the common man.
Nursed and reared by mother's care,
He comes to look upon the world,
Yet the common man in anger kills
The being who gave him life.

"Everyone seeks his own self's good
None dearer to him than himself,
Yet men in anger kill themselves,
Distraught for reasons manifold:
For crazed, they stab themselves,
In desperation swallow poison,
Perish hanged by ropes, or fling
Themselves over precipices. Yet,
How their life-destroying acts
Bring death unto themselves as well,
That they cannot discern, and that
Is the ruin anger breeds.

"This secret place, with anger's aid,
Is where Mortality sets the snare.
To blot it out with discipline,
With vision, strength and tolerance,
To blot each fault out one by one,
The wise man should apply himself,
Training likewise in true ideals:
'Let smouldering be far from me.'
Then rid of wrath and free from hate,
And void of lust and envy too,
Tamed, and with anger left behind,
Taintless, he reaches *nibbāna*.[1]

The advantage in practising patience is seen in these words of the Buddha:

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[1] A. iv. 94–98 (adapted from Ven Ñāṇamoli's translation).

"There is no higher practice than patience,
nibbāna the Buddhas say, is supreme.
One gone forth does not harm others;
one who hurts others is no recluse."[1]

"Who, without anger, endures abuse, beating and being bound; in whom patience is arrayed in force: 'tis then I call him priest."[2]

"No greater thing exists than patience."[3]

"No royal force, however vast its might,
Can win so great advantage in a fight
As the good man by patience may secure.
Patience is the cure of fiercest feud."[4]

After contemplating as above, the aspirant should then embark upon the development of *mettā* for the purpose of ridding the mind of hate which is a danger for the acquisition of patience which is known as an advantage. What should one bear in mind before the beginning of meditation? He should know that *mettā* should, at first, only be directed towards certain types of persons and not to others. It is absolutely unwise, as well as dangerous, at the commencement of the practice of *mettā*, to direct one's thoughts towards the following six types of persons: an antipathetic, a very dearly-loved, a neutral, a hostile, a deceased person or one of the opposite sex.

What is the reason why *mettā* should not, in the preliminary stages, be developed towards these six kinds of persons?

1. To direct thoughts of *mettā* towards an antipathetic person causes mental fatigue.
2. To put a very dearly-loved one in a neutral person's place is also fatiguing, and, emotional feelings may arise in him.
3. To put a neutral person in a respected or a dear one's place is, again, fatiguing.
4. Anger springs up if a hostile person is recollected.
5. If *mettā* is directed towards a deceased person, neither absorption *(appanā)* nor access *(upacāra)* concentration is reached.

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[1] D. ii. 49; Dhp. v 184.
[2] Dhp. v 399.
[3] S. i. 222.
[4] Sn. 145.

6. Should *mettā* be developed towards the opposite sex, lust, inspired by the thought of that person, may arise.

There is a story of a young monk who had started the practice of developing *mettā* but, on making no headway, went to a *Mahā-thera* and said; "Venerable sir, I am quite familiar with the attainment of trance *(jhāna)* through *mettā,* yet now I cannot attain it. What is the matter?" The *Mahāthera* replied; "Seek the sign, friend, the object of your meditation." When the young monk did so, he discovered that his teacher, to whom he had been directing his thoughts of *mettā,* had died. He then proceeded to develop it towards another and attained absorption. This, therefore, is the reason why *mettā* should not be developed towards one who is dead.

For successful meditation, one should be in a peaceful situation as free from distraction as possible. To begin meditation, the practitioner should be in a posture convenient to him. The proper postures include lying, walking, and sitting. If it is convenient to him, the ideal position is sitting cross-legged, with spine erect, head straight, eyes half-closed and his hands in his lap.

The First Step

For the beginner in this practice of *mettā,* it should be developed first towards oneself, mentally repeating the following formula or any other of similar intent, either in Pali or in one's own language:

"Ahaṃ avero homi;
Abbyāpajjho homi;
Anīgho homi;
Sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi."

"May I be free from enmity;
May I be free from ill-will;
May I be free from distress;
May I keep myself happy."

But does this not conflict with what is said in the texts? For there is no mention of any development of *mettā* towards oneself to be found in the *Vibhaṅga* which says: "How does a monk dwell pervading one quarter with his heart filled with loving-kindness?"[1] In

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[1] Vbh. 272.

the *Paṭisambhidā* it is said: "In what five ways is mind-deliverance of loving-kindness practised with unspecified pervasion? 'May all beings be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily. May all breathing things; all who are born, all individuals whatever be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, may they live happily'."[1]

In the *Mettā Sutta* we find the following:

"May all beings be happy and secure;
May their hearts be wholesome.
Whatever living beings there be —
Feeble or strong, tall, stout or medium,
Short, small or large, without exception;
Seen or unseen,
Those dwelling far or near,
Those who are born and who are unborn,
May all beings be happy!"[2]

The reason this does not conflict with the texts is because the latter refers to absorption *(appanā)*[3] alone and not to the initial development of *mettā* in oneself which is only by way of example; for even if one developed *mettā* for a hundred years in this way mentally repeating "May I be free from enmity" and so on, absorption would never arise. But in comparing oneself with all that lives, one repeatedly thinks in this way:

"May I be free from enmity — May I keep myself happy;
just as I wish to be happy and dread the thought of pain,
as I wish to live and not to die, so too do others."

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[1] *op. cit.* ii. 130.

[2] Sn. vv 145–7.

[3] Fixing of thought on object, especially of the attainment of trance. In the course of development of meditation *(samādhi)* first inducement is 'access' or 'approaching near' *(upacāra)*. It is one step behind *appanā* and is ranked as a sensory nature *(kāmāvacara)*. In the preliminary stage *upacāra samādhi* is induced by every type of meditation. *Appanā* is applied to that *samādhi* which is associated with *jhānic* factors and systematically develops into the fourth *jhāna*. It is also associated with the formless attainment as well as the transcendental *(lokuttara)* states. Literally it means fixing together to a *jhānic* state.

Taking oneself as the example, one then extends the wish to other beings' welfare, and happiness arises. This method is shown in the words of the Buddha:

> "I visited all the quarters with my mind, Nor found I any dearer than myself; Likewise to self is every other dear; Who loves himself will never harm another."[1]

So first, one should, by way of example, pervade oneself with *mettā.*

The Second Step

In order to proceed easily, one should recollect the gifts received, kind words that inspire loving-kindness and endearment, and qualities that inspire respect and reverence towards a religious teacher, preceptor etc., such as virtue, learning and so on. Then develop *mettā* towards that person by thinking, "May this good person be free from ill-will ..." With thoughts directed towards such a good person one may attain absorption.

The Third Step

If, however, one who meditates wishes to proceed further, in order to break down more subtle, spiritual barriers, one should follow up with the development of *mettā* towards a dearly-loved friend.

The Fourth Step

One should then develop it towards a neutral person just as one would towards a dearly-loved friend.

The Fifth Step

Finally, one should develop it towards a hostile person, considering him as neutral. As one does this, so one's mind becomes malleable in each case before passing on to the next. On the other hand, if one is the type of individual who perceives none as his enemy, even though one may suffer harm at their hands, one should refrain from making an attempt like the following: "Now that my consciousness of *mettā* has become wieldy and under control towards

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[1] S. i. 75; Ud. 47.

a neutral person, I shall apply it to a hostile one." Only one who considers that he actually has an enemy should develop *mettā* towards a hostile person as a neutral.

Overcoming Resentment

The First Method

Should resentment arise when one's mind is directed towards a hostile person because of the memory of past wrong done by him, one should endeavour to overcome this feeling by repeatedly entering into a state of trance brought about by the development of *mettā* and directed towards any of the aforementioned persons. Thus having emerged each time, one should direct one's feelings of goodwill towards the hostile person in question.

The Second Method

If in spite of one's efforts, the feeling of resentment continues to exist, one should strive to leave resentment behind. One should admonish oneself by reviewing the Dhamma in this way: "Why should I get angry? Has not the Buddha said, 'Monks, even if bandits brutally severed limb from limb with a two-handed saw, he who entertained hatred in his heart on that account would not be one who carried out my teaching'."[1] Further, one should admonish oneself by reviewing the teachings of the Buddha contained in the following verses of the *Dhammapada:*

> "In those who harbour such thoughts, 'He abused me, he hit me, he defeated me, he robbed me' — hatred never ceases."[2]

> "Hatred never ceases by hatred in this world; only through love will peace come. This is an ancient law."[3]

> "Some do not think that all of us here will one day die; the wise realise it therefore their quarrels cease."[4]

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[1] M. i. 129.
[2] Dhp. v 3.
[3] Dhp. v 5.
[4] Dhp. v 6.

"Give up anger, renounce pride, overcome all fetters. Misfortune does not befall one who doesn't cling to the mind and body and who is free from defilements."[1]

"Let a man overcome anger by serenity; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the miser with liberality and the liar with truth."[2]

"One should speak the truth; and not give way to anger; one should give when asked, even if it is only a little. By these three things one will go to the presence of the gods."[3]

"It is not only now, Atula, it has always been so. They blame one who is silent, they blame one who speaks much and one who speaks little. There is none in the world who is not blamed."[4]

"Guard against misconduct in speech, control your speech. Give up evil speech and cultivate good speech."[5]

"The wise control their body, speech and mind. They are indeed perfectly self-controlled."[6]

"Monks, there are these five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed by a monk when it has arisen in him. What five?

1. Loving-kindness can be maintained towards a person with whom you are annoyed: this is how annoyance with him can be removed.

2. Compassion can be maintained ...

3. Equanimity can be maintained ...

4. The forgetting and ignoring of a person with whom you are annoyed can be practised ...

5. Ownership of deeds in a person with whom you are annoyed can be reflected upon thus: 'This person is owner of his deeds, heir of his deeds, his deeds are the seed from which he is born, his deeds are his kin for whom he is responsible,

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[1] Dhp. v 221.
[2] Dhp. v 223.
[3] Dhp. v 224.
[4] Dhp. v 227.
[5] Dhp. v 232.
[6] Dhp. v 234.

his deeds are his refuge, whether they be good or bad.' This too, is how annoyance with him can be removed."[1]

The Third Method

If, after striving according to the above method, one's resentment subsides, it is good; if not, one should remove irritation by recollecting some controlled, pure and pleasing qualities in that person which, when recalled, help one's anger to subside. Some, though their words and thoughts are not well-controlled, are pleasing in their deportment. Others, though their deportment and speech are not well-controlled, may be of pleasing speech; congenial and polite in speech and able to expound the Dhamma in detail. Others may be controlled in their mental behaviour, such as when worshipping at shrines etc. Others may not have any redeeming qualities. In this case compassion should be aroused towards them, since the feeling of irritation will subside when compassion arises.

The Fourth Method — Admonition to oneself

If, however, in spite of one's efforts, irritation continues to arise, one should think thus:

"Suppose an enemy has hurt you
In what is now his domain,
Why do you try yourself to hurt
Your mind? That is not his domain.

"This anger that you entertain
Is gnawing at the very roots
Of all the virtues that you guard —
Where is there such a fool as you?

"Another does ignoble deeds,
So you are angry — why is this?
Do you then want to copy, too,
The sort of acts that he commits?

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[1] A. iii. 185.

"Suppose another, to annoy,
Provokes you with some odious act,
Why suffer anger to spring up,
And do as he would have you do?

"If you get angry, then maybe
You make him suffer, maybe not;
Though with the hurt that anger brings
You certainly are punished now.

"If anger-blinded enemies
Set out to tread the path of woe,
Do you, by getting angry too,
Intend to follow him heel to toe?

"If hurt is done you by a foe
Because of anger on your part,
Then put your anger down, for why
Should you be harassed needlessly?

"Since states last but a moment's time,
Those aggregates, by which was done
The odious act, have ceased, so now
What is it you are angry with?

"Whom shall he hurt, who seeks to hurt
Another, in the other's absence?
Your presence is the cause of hurt;
Why are you angry, then, with him?"

The Fifth Method — Reviewing ownership of deeds

If, however, resentment fails to subside when one admonishes oneself thus, one should then call to mind the fact that oneself and others are owners of their deeds *(kamma)*.

Thereupon one should reflect as follows: "What is the point of becoming angry with another? Will not this kamma that has anger as its source lead to my own harm? Since I am the owner of my deeds, heir of my deeds, having deeds as my origin, deeds as my kin, deeds as my refuge; I will become the heir to whatever deeds I commit.[1] It leads not to enlightenment or even to favourable rebirth in the

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[1] See A. iii. 186.

world, but is rather the kind of action that may lead to my downfall and to manifold sufferings in states of woe.

"By allowing anger to arise I am like one who wants to hit another and picks up a burning ember or excrement and by doing so either burn or soil myself." Having reviewed one's own deeds in this way, one should proceed to review other's also. "What is the point of his becoming angry with me? Will it not lead to his own harm? For he is the owner of his deeds, heir of his deeds; he will have to suffer their result. They are not the kind of deeds that can bring him to enlightenment or even to a high social position; rather they will lead to his downfall or to manifold sufferings in a miserable state."

By becoming angry one is like a man who throws dust against the wind — he himself becomes covered in dust. For this was said by the Blessed One:

> "When a fool hates one who is free from hate,
> Who is purified and free from every blemish,
> Such evil he will find comes back on him;
> As does fine dust thrown against the wind."[1]

The Sixth Method — Recollection of the Buddha

If, after reviewing ownership of deeds, anger still persists, then one should recollect the special qualities of the Master's former conduct; for when the Master was but a *bodhisattva,* prior to the attainment of full enlightenment and whilst engaged in the fulfilment of the Perfections, he allowed no hate to corrupt his mind even when his enemies on various occasions attempted to kill him. Many are the examples of self-control to be found in the 'Birth Stories'. It is, therefore, unworthy of one to allow thoughts of resentment to arise if one is attempting to emulate the Blessed One who reached omniscience and whose special quality of patience has no equal in this world.

The Seventh Method — Reviewing the *suttas*

But if, as one reviews the special former qualities of the Master, resentment still remains, as one has long been a slave of the defilements, then one should read the *suttas* which deal with the endless

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[1] Dhp. v 115.

round of birth and death. For example, we find, in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya:*

> *"Bhikkhus,* it is not easy to find a being who has not formerly been your mother, father, brother or sister, or your own son or daughter in some former existence."[1]

The Eighth Method — Reviewing the advantages

Should one still be unable to quench the feeling of anger in this way, one should then review the advantages of loving-kindness as follows: "Has it not been said by the Blessed One: *'Bhikkhus,* when the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is cultivated, developed, much practised, made the vehicle, made the foundation, established, consolidated and properly undertaken, eleven blessings may be expected. What are the eleven?

1. One sleeps in comfort.
2. One awakes in comfort.
3. One doesn't have bad dreams.
4. One is dear to human beings.
5. One is dear to non-human beings.
6. Devas guard him.
7. Fire, poison and weapons do not affect him.
8. One's mind is easily concentrated.
9. One's mien is serene.
10. One dies unconfused.
11. If one penetrates no higher, one will be reborn in the world of *Brahmā.*"[2]

If one fails to arrest the thought of anger, one will be deprived of these advantages.

The Ninth Method — Resolution into elements

But if one is *still* unable to prevent the arising of anger, one should try 'resolution into elements'. How is this accomplished? One should ask oneself when angry with someone: "What is it that I am angry with? Is it the hairs of the head, the earth element therein, etc., or the water element, or the fire element, or the air element that I am angry with? Or among the five aggregates or the twelve bases or the

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[1] S. ii. 189.

[2] A. iv. 150.

eighteen elements with respect to which this one is called so-and-so; which material aggregate, then, am I angry with? Or is it the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the formations aggregate or the consciousness aggregate that I am angry with?" For when one tries this resolution into elements, one's anger finds no foothold, like a mustard-seed on the point of an awl or a painting in the air.

The Tenth Method — The giving of a gift

If, however, one cannot effect the resolution into elements, one should try giving a gift. This can either be given by oneself to the other person or accepted by one from the other. For example, taking the case of a *bhikkhu,* if his requisites are incomplete, then the gift may be made by oneself and any annoyance with that person will entirely subside. In the other person, too, even anger that has been dogging him from a past birth subsides at such a moment. An example is recorded in the *Visuddhimagga*[1] where a senior elder received a bowl given him at the Cittalapabbata Monastery by an almsfood eater elder (who had been forced to move three times from his lodging by him) and who presented it with these words, "Venerable sir, this bowl worth eight ducats was given to me by my mother who is a lay-devotee and was honestly obtained. Please accept this for the good of my mother." Because of this act the senior elder's resentment subsided, for so efficacious is the act of giving that this is said:

> "A gift for taming the untamed,
> A gift for every kind of good;
> Through giving gifts they do unbend
> And condescend to kindly speech."

The Breaking Down of the Barriers

The Sign

When one's resentment towards the hostile person has been allayed, then one can turn one's mind with loving-kindness towards that person too, just as one can towards the one who is dear, the very dear friend and the neutral person. One should then endeavour to break down the barriers that separate one from the other by

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[1] Vism. 306.

practising loving-kindness continuously, accomplishing mental impartiality towards the four persons, that is to say: oneself, a dear person, a neutral person and a hostile person.

The special characteristic of this practice is as follows: suppose one is sitting with a dear, a neutral and a hostile person; oneself being the fourth. Then suppose a gang of bandits come and say, "Let us have any one of you so that we may slit his throat!" If on imagining this the meditator thinks, "Let them take this one or that one" he has not broken down the barriers. Should he think "Let them take me but not any of these" he has not yet broken down the barriers. Why? Because he seeks the welfare of the others only. However, when he does not see a single one among the four of them who should be given to the bandits whilst he directs his mind impartially towards himself and the other three, only then can it be said that he has broken down the barriers. Hence the Ancients said:

"When he discriminates between
The four, that is, himself, the dear,
The neutral and the hostile one,
Then 'Skilled' is not the name he gets,
Nor 'Having amity at will',
But only 'Kindly towards beings'.

"Now when a *bhikkhu's* barriers
Have all the four been broken down
He treats with equal amity
The whole world with its deities;
Far more distinguished than the first
Is 'He who knows no barriers'."[1]

Thus the sign and access are obtained by this person simultaneously with the breaking down of the barriers. When this has been effected, he reaches absorption without difficulty by cultivating, developing and repeatedly practising the same sign.

At this point, one has attained to the first *jhāna* which, amongst other things, is accompanied by loving-kindness. When that has been obtained, one should continue to cultivate, develop and repeatedly practise the same sign and successively reach the second and the third *jhānas.*

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[1] Vism. 307; Trnsln. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli.

Now it is by means of one of these *jhānas,* beginning with the first, that one "dwells intent upon one direction with one's heart imbued with loving-kindness, likewise, the second direction, the third and fourth directions; also above, below and around; everywhere and equally one dwells pervading the entire world-system with one's heart imbued with loving-kindness; abundant, exalted, measureless, free from enmity and free from affliction."[1] Here is the commentary to the above:

Imbued with loving-kindness means possessing loving-kindness.

With one's heart means with one's mind.

One direction means one in which a being is first discerned and pervasion of all beings in that one direction.

Pervading means touching, making one's object of concentration.

One dwells means one causes the occurrence of an abiding (*vihāra* — dwelling or continuation) in postures that are devoted to the 'divine abidings'.

Likewise the second means that, just as one dwells pervading any one direction among those beginning with the eastern quarter, so does one with the next, the third and the fourth.

Above means in the same way pervading the upper direction.

Below, around means also the lower direction and all around. In such a manner does one send one's heart full of loving-kindness back and forth in all directions like a horse in a circus ground. Up to this point specified pervasion with loving-kindness is shown in the discernment of each direction separately.

Everywhere, etc., is said for the purpose of showing unspecified pervasion. Here everywhere means in all places.

Equally means, to all, whether classed as inferior, medium, superior, friendly, hostile, neutral, etc., just as to oneself; equality with oneself without making the distinction "this is another being".

Entire means possessing all beings, associated with all beings.

World: the world of beings.

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[1] Vbh. 272; D. i. 250.

Abundant: should be regarded here as abundance in pervading.

Measureless: through familiarity and through having innumerable beings as its object.

Free from enmity: through abandonment of ill-will and hostility.

Free from affliction: through abandonment of grief; without suffering. This is the meaning of the versatility described in the passage beginning, "With his heart imbued with loving-kindness."

VERSATILITY

Just as this versatility is successful only in one whose mind has reached absorption, so too that which is described in the *Paṭisambhidā* should be understood to be successful only in one whose mind has reached absorption, that is to say:

A. the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with unspecified pervasion in 5 ways.

B. the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with specified pervasion in 7 ways.

C. the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with directional pervasion in 10 ways.[1]

A. Unspecified Pervasion In Five Ways

1. May all beings be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily.
2. May all breathing things ... live happily.
3. May all creatures ... live happily.
4. May all persons ... live happily.
5. May all those who have personality ... live happily.

B. Specified Pervasion In Seven Ways

1. May all women be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily.
2. May all men ... live happily.
3. May all Noble Ones ... live happily.

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[1] Pts. ii. 130–131.

4. May all non-Noble Ones ... live happily.
5. May all deities ... live happily.
6. May all human beings ... live happily.
7. May all those in states of deprivation ... live happily.

C. Directional Pervasion In Ten Ways

1. May all beings in the eastern direction be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety and live happily.
2. May all beings in the western direction ... live happily.
3. May all beings in the northern direction ... live happily.
4. May all beings in the southern direction ... live happily.
5. May all beings in the south-eastern direction ... live happily.
6. May all beings in the south-western direction ... live happily.
7. May all beings in the north-eastern direction ... live happily.
8. May all beings in the north-western direction ... live happily.
9. May all beings in the downward direction ... live happily.
10. May all beings in the upward direction ... live happily.

The same thoughts are then directed to all creatures all persons, all who have personality, all women all men, all Noble Ones, all non-Noble Ones, all deities, all human beings, all those in states of deprivation in the eastern direction and then to those in other directions in the same manner.

Herein, **all** signifies inclusion without exception.

Beings ***(satta)***: they are held *(satta)*, gripped *(visatta)* by desire and greed for the aggregates beginning with materiality, thus they are beings *(satta)*. For this was said by the Blessed One: "Any desire for matter, Rādha, any greed for it, delight in it, any craving for it, has held *(satta)* it, has gripped *(visatta)* it, that is why 'a being') *(satta)* is said."

However, in ordinary speech this term of common usage is applied also to those who are without greed, just as the term of common usage, 'palm fan' *(tālavanta)* is used for different sorts of fans in general, even if made of split bamboo. However, in the world of etymologists *(akkhara-cintaka)*, who do not consider the meaning, it is a mere name, while those who *do* consider the meaning maintain that a 'being' is so called with reference to the 'bright principle' (i.e. the aura or radiance that emanates from a being).

Breathing things ***(pāṇa)*** are so called because of their state of breathing; the meaning being, because their existence depends on in-breaths and out-breaths.

Creatures ***(bhūta)*** are so called because of the being (*bhūtatta* — becomeness); the meaning is because of their being fully become *(sambhūtatta)*, because of their being generated *(abhinibbattatta)*.

Persons ***(puggala)*** i.e. those who have fallen into an unhappy state *(niraya)*.

Personality ***(attabhāva)*** is what the physical body is called, or it is just the pentad of aggregates since it is actually only a concept derived therefrom. What is referred to is included *(pariyāpanna)* in that personality, thus it 'has personality' *(attabhāva-pariyāpanna)*. 'Included in' is delimited by 'gone into'.

All the remaining terms should be understood as synonyms for 'all beings' used in accordance with ordinary speech as in the case of the term 'beings'. There are, of course, other synonyms too for 'all beings', such as 'folks', 'souls' etc., but it is for the sake of clarity that "the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness with unspecified pervasion in five ways" is said and that only these five are mentioned.

Those who insist that there is not only a mere verbal difference between 'beings', 'breathing things', etc., but also an actual difference in meaning are contradicted by the mention of unspecified pervasion.

Here, "May all beings be free from enmity" is one absorption; "Free from affliction" another, meaning freedom from ill-will *(vyā-pāda-rahita);* "Free from anxiety" is also an absorption, that is, freedom from suffering; and "May they live happily" yet another. Consequently, one who attempts the practice of pervading with loving-kindness should do so in accordance with whichever phrase is clear to him. Hence, there are altogether twenty kinds of absorption in unspecified pervasion.

CHAPTER 33

A SURVEY OF BUDDHIST MEDITATION

The original word for Buddhist meditation is ***Bhāvanā*** which means mental culture or development of the mind. On the simplest level, meditation may be defined as a process of mental development leading to the attainment of spiritual development. As such, the aims of Buddhist meditation are manifold, but all are related by one ideal, the final realisation of *nibbāna.* Through the practice of meditation the Buddhist strives to purify his mind, to rid it of various impurities and turmoil such as greed, hatred and delusion. At the same time he wishes to acquire and develop some positive attributes, like concentration. Although this, in itself, is a notable aim on a personal level, on a more specific level, he works towards reaching that state of wisdom which sees the nature of things as they really are, and realising the ultimate goal, *nibbāna.* Though this final goal is the greatest aim, the other significant aspect of meditation is its function as a preparation to combat the problems of life, especially those of daily life. It produces a state of perfect mental health, steadiness of mind, equilibrium, peace and tranquillity. This has important side effects in the development of an individual, giving him an awareness and capacity for understanding, which is most beneficial in a confused world filled with multifarious problems.

Meditation is considered to be the centre of the Buddhist doctrine. It may be compared to prayer in other religions. Almost all Buddhist practices are nothing else but some form of meditation.

There are two forms of meditation: 1) development of concentration or tranquillity *(samatha),*[1] and 2) development of insight or wisdom *(vipassanā).*[2] The development of mental concentration is not unique to Buddhism; it was in use before the Buddha's time. It is concerned with one-pointedness of mind *(ekaggatā)* which involves concentrating the mind on a single object *(kammaṭṭhāna).*[3] This is in preparation for reaching the highest mystic states, which are 'mind created' and 'mind produced' conditions. The Buddha called these

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[1] See *The Buddha's Way,* H. Saddhātissa, London 1971; 71f, 78, 81f.

[2] *Ibid.* p 74f, 80ff.

[3] See *Buddhist Meditation,* Paravāhera Vajirañāṇa, Kuala Lumpur, 1975; p 29.

states 'A happy abiding here and now' *(diṭṭhadhamma-sukhavihāra).* The untrained mind is in a state of agitation due to the presence of 1) craving, 2) hatred and 3) delusion. Therefore the aim of meditation is to eliminate these defilements.

A prerequisite to success in meditation is the selection of a suitable subject. Preferably this is done by the teacher on the basis of the pupil's temperament. The teacher usually analyses the student's traits, personality, behaviour and nature, before advising him as to which exercise would be most suitable for him. There are six main types of temperaments:[1]

1. Lustful *(rāga-carita).* 2. Hateful *(dosa-carita).* 3. Ignorant *(moha-carita).* 4. Devout *(saddhā-carita).* 5. Intellectual *(buddhi-carita).* 6. Discursive *(vitakka-carita).*

Temperament is formed by our daily, habitual actions, and it is considered to be the intrinsic nature in people which is revealed when one is in a normal state, without being preoccupied by anything.

Subjects for Meditation

In the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification), forty subjects for meditation are enumerated:

A. The first ten involve focusing attention on an external device:[2]
1. Earth. 2. Water. 3. Fire. 4. Air. 5. Blue. 6. Yellow.
7. Red. 8. White. 9. Light. 10. Space seen through a hole.

B. The next ten are concerned with corpses which may be at any one of the following stages of decomposition:[3]
1. Swollen. 2. Discoloured. 3. Festering. 4. Fissured.
5. Gnawed. 6. Dismembered. 7. Cut and dismembered.
8. Blood-stained. 9. Worm-infested. 10. A skeleton.

C. The third category are ten recollections.[4]
1. The Buddha. 2. The Dhamma. 3. The Saṅgha. 4. Morality.
5. Liberality. 6. Divine Beings. 7. Mindfulness of Death.
8. Mindfulness regarding the body. 9. Mindfulness of breathing.
10. The Peace of *Nibbāna.*

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[1] Vism. 102.
[2] *op. cit.* 118ff, 170ff.
[3] 185ff.
[4] 197ff, 229ff.

D. The four Divine Abidings *(Brahmavihāra)*.
1. Loving-kindness. 2. Compassion. 3. Sympathetic-joy.
4. Equanimity.

E. The four Immaterial States.
1. Boundless Space. 2. Boundless Consciousness.
3. Nothingness. 4. Neither Perception nor Non-perception.

F. The Perception of the Loathsomeness of Food.

G. The Analysis of the Four Elements.

As well as choosing a suitable subject, a suitable place is also necessary. The type of place also depends on one's temperament. It should be a place where one can get the necessary requisites of food etc., with ease but quiet enough to avoid frequent disturbances and interruptions. Particularly suitable places are forests and caves. A certain preliminary conditioning of the mind is necessary for successful concentration. It helps to maintain a regular routine of meditation. Early morning and late evening are the most commonly favoured.

When one sees a Buddhist meditating he is usually seated in a lotus, or cross-legged posture — the left foot on the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh. However, it is not essential to adopt this posture if one finds it too uncomfortable. Any posture may be adopted as long as one can remain alert and attentive. Even lying down may be used but it is not generally recommended since it often leads to wandering of the mind and drowsiness.

The first step in beginning any of the above-mentioned exercises is for the meditator to focus his attention solely on the chosen object. The meditator must patiently but persistently restrain his mind from wandering to any other subject and at the same time, must also maintain his alertness; i.e., he should not slip into 'hypnotic reverie'. If he is successful he will sooner or later see the object in the form of the acquired image *(uggaha-nimitta)*.[1] This occurs when the meditator is able to view the object equally well with the eyes open or closed. When he has acquired this image he can sit wherever he finds most convenient and continue his exercise until the acquired image becomes crystal clear.

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[1] *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, Henepola Gunaratana, Delhi, 1985, pp. 17, 33, 55.

THE FIVE HINDRANCES

The second step involves the overcoming of the five hindrances which impede concentration. These five are: 1) Sensual desire, 2) Ill-will, 3) Sloth and torpor, 4) Restlessness and remorse, and 5) Sceptical doubt.

1. **Sensual desire** *(Kāmacchanda)* — is intense thirst for the possession or satisfaction of base desires. Where does this craving arise and take root? According to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta;* "... where there is the delightful and pleasurable, there this craving arises and takes root. Forms, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily contacts and ideas are delightful and pleasurable; there this craving arises and takes root." When obstructed by some cause it is transformed to frustration and wrath.

2. **Ill-will** *(vyāpāda)* — Man naturally revolts against the unpleasant and disagreeable and is depressed by them. To be separated from the loved is painful, and equally painful is union with the loathed. It is wrong thinking or unsystematic reflection that brings about hatred. Hatred breeds hatred and clouds the vision; it distorts the entire mind and thus hinders awakening to the truth, blocking the way to enlightenment. This hatred or aversion, as well as lust, is rooted in ignorance which is the greatest evil according to Buddhism.[1]

3. **Sloth and Torpor** *(thīna middha). Thīna* is mental lassitude or the morbid state of mind and *middha* is the sluggish state of the mental properties. *Thīnamiddha,* as some are inclined to think, is certainly not sluggishness of the body. *Thīnamiddha* retards mental development; under its influence mind is inert (without the power to move or act) like cold butter too stiff to spread or like molasses which sticks to the spoon. Laxity, negligence and inattention are dangerous enemies of mental development. Laxity leads to greater laziness until finally one reaches a stage of total apathy. This weakness of character is a stubborn block to righteousness and peace of mind. It is through determined mental effort that one can overcome this pair of mental ills.

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[1] *Avijjā paramaṃ malaṃ:* A. iv. 195, Dhp. v 243.

4. **Restlessness and Remorse** *(uddhacca kukkucca)* As a rule, anyone who commits evil is mentally excited and restless; the guilty and the impatient suffer from this hindrance. The minds of men who are restless and unstable are like flustered bees in a shaken hive. This mental agitation impedes concentration and blocks spiritual progress.

   Equally baneful is remorse. People often repent over the evil actions they have committed. This is not praised by the Buddha for it is useless to cry over spilt milk. Instead of brooding over such shortcomings one should endeavour not to repeat such unwholesome deeds. There are others who worry over good deeds omitted and duties left undone. This too, serves no purpose. Instead of useless worrying one should endeavour to perform wholesome deeds.

5. **Sceptical Doubt** *(vicikicchā).* The Pali term, *vicikicchā,* literally means without medicine or difficult to cure. One who suffers from perplexity is like someone suffering from a dire disease. Until and unless he abandons doubt he will continue to hesitate. So long as he is subject to this mental irritation, he will continue to take a cynical view of things which is most detrimental to spiritual development. The commentaries explain this hindrance as the inability to decide anything definitely; it also comprises doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the absorptions. In this connection, one may note that even yogīs who have no knowledge of the Buddha can inhibit doubt and gain the absorptions.

The meditator who attains the absorptions *(jhānas)* inhibits the five hindrances by the five factors of absorption *(jhānaṅga).*

1. *Kāmacchanda* is inhibited by ekaggatā (one-pointedness or unification of mind).
2. *Vyāpāda* is inhibited by *pīti* (joy).
3. *Thīnamiddha* is inhibited by *vitakka* (applied thought).
4. *Uddhacca kukkucca* is inhibited by *sukha* (happiness or bliss)
5. *Vicikicchā* is inhibited by *vicāra* (sustained thought).

With the abandonment of the five hindrances the meditator is able to achieve access concentration *(upacārasamādhi).* It is by

focusing his attention on the 'counterpart-sign' *(paṭibhāga-nimitta)* that the meditator finally enters into the first absorption *(jhāna)*.[1]

JHĀNA

Jhāna is a state of ecstatic concentration completely free from the five-fold sense activities and the mental hindrances. They are the products of the concentrated mind. Just as scientists, by increased knowledge, are able to arrive at results which seem marvellous to the ordinary man, so can those who cultivate the mind by means of *jhāna* gain certain powers which enable them to control the elements. Of course, this kind of meditation is pre-buddhist and well known to *yogīs*. I, personally, do not like to designate any meditation as 'Buddhist' meditation, it is much better to leave it without a label. These techniques for mental development can be used by anybody. Just as increase in the power of human vision can be effected by means of telescopes and microscopes, so it is that with the cultivation of these absorptions that psychic powers can be gained. To do so one must subdue mental defilements such as covetousness, hatred, anger, contempt, pride, envy, deceit, hypocrisy, intolerance, vanity etc. Furthermore, without purification of morals, abandoning wrong views and freeing the mind of carnal appetites, the gaining of ecstasies is impossible. Proper and controlled thinking is the means by which dispassion and super-normal powers are attained. There are nine progressive stages of mental purity rooted in morality or non-remorse:

1. In one so thinking gladness arises.
2. From gladness, rapture arise.
3. With mind enraptured, the body is tranquil.
4. One whose body is tranquil is blissful.
5. Being blissful his mind is concentrated.
6. Being concentrated he sees things as they really are.
7. Thus seeing he becomes disenchanted and repulsed.
8. Being repulsed he becomes dispassionate.
9. Being dispassionate he is freed.

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[1] D. i. 73, 82, 214, 246, ii. 83, iii. 50, 101; M. i. 181, 276, ii. 38; S. v. 160; A. ii. 211, iii. 64, 93, 100, 386f, v. 207; Vbh. 245; Pug. 59.

See also: *The Five mental Hindrances and their Conquest, Selected texts from the Pali Canon and the Commentaries,* Nyanaponika, BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1961; *The Path of Serenity and Insight,* pp 28–35.

What is ecstasy? When detached from pleasures of the senses and free from mental impurities the meditator enters on and abides in the first *jhāna.*[1] This state, born of inward aloofness, is a high and pure state of mind endowed with five mental factors *(jhānaṅga); viz.,* applied thought *(vitakka),* sustained thought *(vicāra),* joy *(pīti),* bliss *(sukha)* and one-pointedness *(ekaggatā).* The second, third and fourth *jhānas*[2] differ from the first in the factors which are present as follows:

Mental factor	**Jhāna**			
Applied Thought	1st			
Sustained Thought	1st			
Joy	1st	2nd		
Bliss	1st	2nd	3rd	
One-pointedness	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Equanimity				4th

THE FIVE MORAL POWERS

One who wishes to attain these *jhānas* must be endowed with five moral powers: *viz.,* confidence, mindfulness, energy, concentration and wisdom.

1. **Confidence** *(saddhā)* — is the foundation of psychical development. Without firm confidence the student does not become expert in the views and methods presented by his teacher. Thus he fails to acquire the *jhānas.*

2. **Mindfulness** *(sati)* — He should be mindful of every action and thought. It is mindfulness that guards the senses to prevent the thieves (external objects) entering through the unguarded doors of the senses and stealing his good thoughts.

3. **Energy** *(viriya)* — He must make a strenuous effort to acquire virtues which are beyond the reach of ordinary men.

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[1] *The Path of Serenity and Insight,* p 49ff.

[2] *Ibid.* p 79ff.

4. **Concentration** *(samādhi)* — A well directed and concentrated mind is compared to a well-tamed animal which is governable according to its master's wishes. Whereas the scattered mind tends to hunt after carnal satisfaction like a wild beast.

5. **Wisdom** *(paññā)* — One who possesses innate wisdom is able to reason correctly. This faculty may be compared to the midday sun since it dispels the darkness of ignorance and sees things as they really are. The wise student cuts of egoism, scepticism, false views and other harmful states with the sharp sword of wisdom whetted on the stone of concentration. All foolish questions such as — "From whence do I come?" "Where will I go to?" etc., — are due to lack of wisdom.

If the student possesses all of these five powers he is sure to gain the *jhānas*. In his effort to gain them he must keep all these qualities in a state of equilibrium.

Excessive confidence must be balanced with discretion or wisdom. Excessive wisdom leads to being hypercritical. It should be balance with devotion or confidence.

Excessive effort leads to restlessness and impatience. It should be offset by concentration and tranquillity. Excessive calm tends to sloth or complacency, it should be balanced by renewed vigour and diligence.

Mindfulness is required in every case. It is the factor which maintains the other qualities in balance.

The mind of a person who has attained these states is not inclined to be pleased or displeased with external objects as is the ordinary person. The normal tendency is for man to seek out and amuse himself with sensual contacts which are agreeable and pleasurable and to shun those which are unpleasant. The case of those who practise meditation for the attainment of *jhāna* is quite different. They must train themselves to guard the doors of the senses. How? When a visible form comes into contact with the eye they must resolve not to pay attention to its details or pleasing characteristics that might lead to desires and other unprofitable states of mind. So too with the other sense faculties.

Their minds are content and serene, being concentrated on one of the objects of meditation. They must train themselves to be mindful in every posture. They must be scrupulously pure in deed,

word and thought and subdue their appetites for worldly pleasures. Gradually they gain the will-power to renounce these things. Harming no one they live with kindness and compassion towards all that lives. They are always vigilant and mindful, all torpor gone. Being free from remorse they are happy and all restlessness and doubt are dispersed.

The attainment of these *jhānas,* though extremely valuable, is not the highest aim of Buddhist meditation. Through the attainment of *jhāna* the mental defilements are inhibited but they are not cut off altogether; if the meditator is not in *jhāna* the defilements can reappear and if he breaks his morality he may lose the ability to gain *jhāna* altogether. *Jhānas* should be used to develop insight *(vipassanā)* which alone can uproot the latent mental defilements *(anusaya-kilesa).* So long as these latent impurities remain the meditator has not yet attained security from suffering in lower worlds (as an animal, hungry ghost or in hell). There are two ways distinguished in the texts to attain insight.

1. **Samatha-yānika** — The way of one who practises *jhāna* first and then applies the method of *satipaṭṭhāna* to attain insight and *nibbāna.*

2. **Suddhavipassanā-yānika**[1] — The way of one who practises pure insight without first trying to attain the *jhānas.* One practises the method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* from the beginning and develops concentration simultaneously with insight. One may or may not attain *jhānas* on the way to the realisation of *nibbāna.*

IMPORTANT NOTE — The practice of *jhāna* is found outside of the Buddha's teaching whereas the more subtle practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* leading to insight is not. Therefore, in the view of most meditation teachers, it is most essential to practise to attain the seeds of insight while we have the opportunity of meeting the Buddha's teaching. The understanding of the three characteristics of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta* is an invaluable seed for attainment of *nibbāna* in future lives even if one fails to attain it in this life. The practice of *jhāna,* however, does not, by itself, lead to this understanding.

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[1] *Vipassanā* (*Samatha* often occurs with *vipassanā*). A. i. 95; D. iii. 273; M. i. 494; S. iv. 360 *passim:* See *The Buddha's Way,* 81ff.

CHAPTER 34

SATIPAṬṬHĀNA — DHAMMA FOR ALL

In modern usage, and indeed traditionally in Pali scriptures the word *Sati* is translated as 'awareness' and has the meaning of being skilfully attentive. Only occasionally is the original Sanskrit meaning used: this carries the meaning of memory, in the sense of recollection of past events. Between these two meanings there lies the key to the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna,* for in the awareness of the present there must essentially be clear recollection of the conditions of the past in which all present states have a base.

In *Satipaṭṭhāna* practice, recollection of the past and skilful attention to the present are inseparable and are jointly described by the word 'Mindfulness'. This mindfulness, so simple in its formula, and yet often so difficult to attain by us who are so complex, can come to be an extra sense which acts as a faithful guardian at the gate of the mind allowing no 'undesirable' to enter.

In almost all systems of meditation, both in East and West, the instruction to 'withdraw within' is invariably found. In terms of analogy it is as though we must withdraw our attention from the vast cinema screen which is the external world, and turn our attention to the projector. No one will need reminding that if the lenses are not correctly in focus, the picture will be distorted: nor also that if the inner light is not bright, our view of the picture and thus of the world will be clouded.

This Self-awareness is directed to the five aggregates — the *khandhas* — and the first three aspects of mindfulness are concerned with: 1) Awareness of the Body, 2) Awareness of Feelings, 3) Awareness of Thoughts. The fourth aspect is directed towards Awareness of the States of Mind or Mental-objects.

1. AWARENESS OF THE BODY

The meditator is taught to start by focusing his attention on his own breathing. He must not attempt to lengthen or shorten the breaths or in any way regulate them. His only aim is to observe. When followed peacefully (that is to say with interest and without restlessness) this practice soon produces a sense of serenity in the mind, and of lightness in the body. In Pali this method is known as *Ānāpānasati* and is regarded as one of the most widely applicable objects of meditation. Those who do not wish to undertake this practice in a religious sense will find excellent reasons for adopting it as a therapy, for it is highly recommended for those who have a weak memory or

suffer from inability to concentrate. Here again we find the link with recollection contained in the origin of the word *'sati'*.

A further object of meditation concerns movements of the body. The meditator must observe the movement of his limbs, and also the functions of everyday life "...whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down ..." and when eating, drinking, lifting up, or putting down. In the purely mundane sense, attention to these movements will adjust the very common state of 'absent-mindedness'.

It develops into a constant vigilance and awareness of not only what we are doing, by *why* we are doing it. From these small beginnings we will gain alertness and fitness and progress to the higher stages of Mental Culture.

2. Awareness of Feelings

In the same way that vigilance of bodily movement was practised, attention must be directed to emotional changes. Feelings of pleasure or of pain, or feelings which may be quite neutral should be observed as arising states. To think "Here is a feeling of pain" is obviously better than "I am *in* pain", for if *we* are *in* pain then we are surrounded and are at the mercy of this feeling. Not only does this state of observation assist in lessening painful events, but it means that we will not be stampeded by pain into rash actions, into irritation and anger against innocent objects, or into a state of fear which paralyses intelligent action. Neither will we be liable to gullibility or rash reaction to pleasant associations, which as we all know do not necessarily herald pleasant events.

Although the word 'emotion' was used to describe these states, some further clarification is needed. Feelings *give rise* to emotions: they are the first reaction to sense stimuli which according to our temperament and experience will give rise to a further emotional reaction in one of the states of mind. Thus if a point of calm is in operation at the time of sense impression, then this will act in a way as a 'shock absorber' and so minimise the emotional impact in the states of mind.

3. Awareness of Thoughts

This assists a meditator to maintain mental discipline in spite of powerful distraction. Love, hate, joy, depression, fear, and hope too, are all likely to cause a person to lose control. In such circumstances this body will act much as would a horse when suddenly startled, thus we should be like good horsemen, positive in our control of the reins and ever alert to states which could threaten the harmony of the

relationship. As mindfulness increases we become less at the mercy of emotions.

Such mental control is as valuable in our regular meditations when seated, as it is during our everyday vigilance, for restlessness and a 'wandering mind' are often found to be considerable nuisances to the beginner. It should therefore be remembered that the only duty of the meditator *is to observe.* He must sit quietly and watch his mind as it leaps about; he must watch it as he would watch a puppy at play, and gradually but firmly bring this untrained mind to heel.

4. Awareness of States of Mind (Mental-objects)

The development of this awareness produces a sense of morality and an intuitive grasp of the essentials in any situation for it entails a constant observation of the Laws taught by the Buddha as they are perceived *in action* in the world.

The Four Noble Truths, the Five Aggregates of Mind and Body, the Six Spheres of the Senses. These are not just jargon, they are accurate descriptions: they are living realities to be observed and realised in the clear brilliant light of *SATI.*

They are the Exposition of Life, of Man, and of the Universe continually unfolding before us if only we will open our 'eyes' and see. Yet this is not a seeing in the sense of an intellectual knowing, it is the calm observation of mindfulness at rest which sees life as it moves in accordance with laws, and which merely notes the rising and falling away of the many states of body, mind, and objects as they occur *without becoming personally involved.*

Only in this way will the wordless truth of *Anatta* be realised. for the impersonality of observation is the only way which clearly reveals that in all rising states there is no 'I' to be found

At the highest level of such realisation. the state of *samadhi*[1] comes to be. Whilst *Satipaṭṭhāna* remains the method. this state of supreme awareness which is *samādhi* has the nature of illumination in which there can be no delusion. because there is no duality. Realisation of the characteristics of *anicca. dukkha* and *anatta* at the *samādhi* level is the only liberation from the 'Wheel of Continual Rebirth'. The ignorance of 'things as they really are' causes us to have desire *(taṇhā)* for a state of personal existence. and thus only through mindfulness will we become aware of this ignorance and cease to desire.

Intellectual understanding may be gained from books, or by independent thought. and in this way it is probable that one will

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[1] See *The Buddha's Way.* H. Saddhātissa: pp 57, 61.

arrive at the conclusion that everything is transitory, without substance, and full of unsatisfactoriness; but this understanding alone cannot liberate one from the bondage of desire for the very states which one intellectually refutes. The 'final analysis' is beyond intellect. It transcends all conventional thought or expression. It is realisation. The final analysis is *samādhi,* which is only gained through mindfulness. This is the Buddha's teaching. This is *Dhamma.*

What is the barrier between intellectual understanding and realisation? It is our delusion about the nature of life, and the states of mind which arise causing us to continually desire this personalised idea of living. Again, these states are observable to one who is mindful as distractions and fetters which impede clear thought. They are sensual desire *(kāmarāga),* ill-will *(vyāpāda),* sloth and torpor *(thīnamiddha),* restlessness and remorse *(uddhacca-kukkucca)* and perplexity or doubt *(vicikicchā).* Under their influence it is impossible to concentrate on even the mundane actions in life, so to even consider the more profound aspects of insight must be quite foolish.

The system of mental culture recommended in *Satipaṭṭhāna* progressively trains the meditator to gain firm control and clear comprehension of all states arising in mind and body. As experience grows so also does confidence, and with confidence comes calm. This calm is the base from which the meditator views the nature of life benevolently and without personal desire. The aim is *Samādhi,* the method is mindfulness. The Way to begin is to sit down, in goodwill, and to observe the breath. This is the first seed; the fruits will be liberation.

The title of this chapter, '*Satipaṭṭhāna* — Dhamma for All' was taken from a passage in the introduction to '*Satipaṭṭhāna,* the Heart of Buddhist Meditation', by Venerable Nyanaponika Thera.[1] This publication with its excellent foreword by Dr. Graham Howe[2] is a classic of clarity and instruction, and it is with gratitude that its value is acknowledged. It is fitting therefore to end this short essay with a further quotation from the introduction:

> "This ancient way of mindfulness is as practicable today as it was 2,500 years ago. It is as applicable in the lands of the West as in the East: in the midst of life's turmoil as well as in the peace of the monk's cell."

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[1] Rider & Co. (George, Allen & Unwin), London 1962, reissued 1983, repr. 1986, 1987.

[2] Included in the edition published by *'The Word of the Buddha':* Publishing Committee, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1956.

CHAPTER 35

THE SEVEN STAGES OF PURITY

The knowledge of *vipassanā* is beneficial not only to those who practise insight meditation, but also to those who do not practise *vipassanā*, because they may gain greater understanding of the world in its true perspective *(yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti)*. There are seven stages of *vipassanā* called the seven purities *(satta visuddhi)* or seven stages leading to liberation. Even if you don't practise *vipassanā*, if you understand this, it will help you realise many other truths.

According to the teaching of the Buddha, all beings are subject to decay and death. All things and beings in the world are impermanent. Meditators come to perceive the transitory nature of the world and the rising and vanishing of everything in it. They realise that everything is subject to *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness). The rising and vanishing are themselves *dukkha*. Since everything is impermanent and unsatisfactory, there can be no possibility of finding a permanent ego. These three facts — transitory nature of existence, *dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness, and insubstantiality or soullessness, are the three characteristics taught by the Buddha. Right understanding of these three characteristics leads to the development of wisdom and true knowledge.

There are two kinds of meditation *(bhāvanā)* in Buddhism — meditation for the development of calm *(samatha)* and meditation for the development of wisdom *(vipassanā)*. *Samatha* consists of concentrating the mind on a suitable subject, like the respiration. Forty suitable subjects are described in the Buddhist scriptures which also include sections devoted to these meditation practices. *Vipassanā bhāvanā* consists in developing awareness of one's own mental and physical processes until the three characteristics become apparent. By this means one will pass through seven stages of purity.

These states, achieved in serial order, produce the development of knowledge and the cleansing of the heart by diminishing evil thoughts. The Buddha said that by wisdom one is purified. He went on to say that men defiled by evil do not become pure by sprinkling holy water or even by bathing in holy water said to be contained in certain rivers, wells and springs. A man should, through knowledge, purify his mind from those mental blemishes which hinder clarity and obstruct insight. The mind of a person given to lust, passion and excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures is unable to see the true nature of life which is oppressed by the three characteristics.

Likewise if a person harbours ill-will towards others, he is far from purity. Revenge, malice, pride, intolerance and self-glorification are defilements of the mind. Practising self-mortification or other austerities does not cleanse a man if those evils are not put away by him. For six years the Buddha underwent austerities in order to purify himself according to the advice of his ancestral teacher. But he could not reach purity through these methods, so he condemned them. Each man is able to attain the highest state of development by earnest effort. Each man makes himself happy or miserable, here or hereafter, by his own deeds, words and thoughts. Purifying the mind is achieved only by passing through all of these seven successive stages:

1. Purification of Morals *(sīlavisuddhi).*
2. Purification of Thought *(cittavisuddhi).*
3. Purification of Views *(diṭṭhivisuddhi).*
4. Purification from Doubt *(kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi).*
5. Purification of Knowledge regarding Right and Wrong Paths *(maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi).*
6. Purification of the Knowledge and Insight into Progress *(paṭipadāñāṇadassanavisuddhi).*
7. Purification of Knowledge and Insight which leads to *nibbāna (ñāṇadassanavisuddhi).*

1. Purification of Morals

The first step is very important from every point of view. It consists in the observance of moral rules in several ways. These moral precepts were designed for the liberation of mankind from evils of various sorts. There are precepts for monks, nuns, novices and for lay disciples. All of them are intended for their discipline and appropriately match their positions. The observance of moral precepts in general restrains man from misbehaviour as regards physical and verbal activities. The man who governs himself according to the Dhamma strives against giving way to lust, hatred and ignorance, which are the sources of all ills and wrong-doing in daily life. The meditator strives to live up to that aim and so refrains from taking life, from taking things not given to him and from illicit sex. He abstains from falsehood, slander, abusive speech and frivolous or vain talk. He speaks such words as are charming and pleasing to the ear and worthy to be stored up in the mind. He has confidence in the result of practising charity, morality and of paying respect to elders and teachers. He has confidence in those who have renounced the world and have attained perfection. He believes in past and future existences.

There are various degrees in the observance of moral precepts, but in connection with *vipassanā* meditation it is the highest mode of observance that is required. The person who is possessed of good behaviour in word and deed sees danger even in the slightest faults and trains himself in the strict observance of the moral rules. He is free from all misbehaviour and all wickedness. He does not commit any transgression even for the sake of protecting his own life. The non-violation of the precepts is deemed more precious than life itself. He is also careful to protect his senses from any external objects that might arouse defilements. When he sees an object with the eye, he is not entranced by its general appearance or by its details. He determines to restrain that which might cause immoral states to flow in and thus he attains to mastery of the senses.

He contemplates the true nature of the physical body which the foolish regard as attractive but which is nothing but a mass of filth covered with skin. It consists of such composite parts as hair, nails, teeth, skin, bones, blood, pus, urine, etc. It has to be cleaned daily in order to remove unpleasant odours. It has to be kept in good condition with great effort and continually maintained with food and drink. Its very nature is impermanence. It is subject to various disorders and to decay. Its beauty is but skin deep and there is nothing in it to be proud of, nor is there any reason to indulge an appetite for it. Thinking thus, the meditator keeps watch over his faculty of sight and in like manner when he hears a sound with the ear, smells a scent, tastes a flavour, feels a touch with his body or conceives an idea he is not entranced.

Being a person who refrains from wrong-doing, he must be strict in his observance of the moral precepts with regard to earning his living. He does not earn his living by trading in human beings for slavery or prostitution. Nor does he sell lethal weapons, animals for slaughter, poisons or intoxicating liquors or harmful drugs.

For those who lead the higher life of a monk or nun or novice there are further refinements regarding their livelihood. They must not gain a living in inappropriate ways such as bribery, deceit, flattery or harassing people to give alms. They cannot beg but must wait for gifts to be offered. Those who practise meditation should also abstain from such things. We should try to get our common needs as human beings by rightful means. This is the first purification.[1]

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[1] Vism. CH I & II.

2. Purification of Thought

Having established himself in habitual good conduct, which is the foundation of all the other stages, the meditator must subdue those stains which pollute the mind.

Many people speak about pollution, but they fail to realise the pollution of their own mind. This purification of thought is achieved by developing one-pointedness, or by concentrating the mind. It is concentration in the sense of peaceful composure of the mind. It is a steady, quiet confining of the mind and the mental faculties to one single object so that they are not scattered here and there among other external objects. This serene and peaceful state of the balanced mind, attained by earnest effort in meditation upon the mental and physical processes within oneself is called the purification of thought, the second purification.[1]

3. Purification of View

The third stage of purification embraces a vast field. There are many wrong views in the world, and if we are entangled with such views, we have no peace. I am here only concerned with *vipassanā* meditation. Purification is gained through the knowledge of mind and matter or in other words, through the realisation of the true nature of the five aggregates. The study of the aggregates and a penetrating knowledge of them helps us to attain the right view with regard to our body, the world of living beings, and the world of things we find around us. Then not only our views, but also our thoughts are pure and they become clear by the rejection of illusion and of the delusions that surround us. Those who are devoted to the higher life, having established themselves in the two previous stages of purification, gain purification of views by continuing with their meditation.

In this third stage they realise the First Noble Truth, that of unsatisfactoriness, through their knowledge of the aggregates. True thinkers are those who see things, not in accordance with their outward appearances, but in terms of the aggregates. All things, great or small. are known by contact with the senses. Knowledge thus gained has given rise to many misconceptions as to the true nature of things. Hence come theories about the soul and about gods of various kinds. The Enlightened One, after his struggle to attain perfection, was able to recognize for the first time the true nature of all beings and things. The knowledge of the world lies in the understanding of the aggregates. The realisation of *nibbāna* and of liberation is attained

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[1] *Ibid.* CH III to XIII.

through true knowledge of the aggregates. Consider the essential parts into which a material substance breaks down when carefully analyzed. The unbroken existence of the aggregates and all their changes and permutations is called *saṃsāra* — the ceaseless ocean of births and deaths. Thus the person who understands this succession of life and death is able to destroy his unhappiness and attain perfect bliss. The person who is ignorant of this will be a helpless sufferer, ignorant as to whence and why his suffering comes.

Aggregates come into being and their existence is regulated through four things:

1. Kamma *(kammaja).*
2. Mental activities *(cittaja).*
3. External conditions *(utuja).*
4. Nourishment *(āhāraja).*

The combination of the five aggregates; matter *(rūpa),* feeling *(vedanā),* perception *(saññā),* mental formations *(saṅkhārā)* and consciousness *(viññāṇa);* is called a man, women, animal or living being. Attachment to the aggregate of matter is attachment to the four main elements — earth *(paṭhavī),* water *(āpo),* fire *(tejo)* and air *(vāyo).* Solid parts of the body — hair, nails, teeth etc. — show the predominance of the earth element. The water element is most obvious in bile, blood, sweat and tears. The heat which digests our food and keeps us warm is the fire element. The air element produces all kinds of movements and speech as well as internal wind and it supports the body. The body which is composed of these four elements is called form *(rūpa).*

There are four mental aggregates. Feeling; whether pleasant, unpleasant or neutral; is one aggregate. Perception, which recognises objects as blue, yellow, red and so on, is another aggregate. All mental properties besides feeling and perception such as greed, anger, love, joy etc., are the fourth aggregate known as mental formations. Consciousness constitutes the fifth aggregate. The realisation of these five groups in detail is all that is needed to convince a man that the body is nothing but a group of worthless things, full of dangers and miseries. Thus the person who is devoted to the practice of meditation realises the First Noble Truth of unsatisfactoriness and consequently purifies his views through the penetrating knowledge of mind and matter. This is the third stage of purity, purification of views.[1]

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[1] Vism. 587 ff.

4. PURIFICATION FROM DOUBT

Already we have seen the importance of the first three stages of the development of insight — Purification of morality, thoughts and views. As long as one has any doubt in distinguishing right from wrong, it is a mental torment. You must try to get rid of doubt and then you are pure and at ease. As true knowledge develops, you can get rid of this canker of doubt.

The fourth stage in the development of insight is gained by dispelling doubt through knowledge of cause and effect. The person devoted to the higher life, having established himself in the three previous stages of purification and further pursuing his meditation practice attains a pure state of mind. In this state he realises the Second Noble Truth — the cause of suffering. There is *dukkha* and there must be some reason for this. He understands that the process of mental and material states is not the creation of a causeless cause. They are not without causes and conditions within the states themselves. This fact may be understood in several ways. One may understand the conditional nature of the material states with reference to kamma, consciousness *(citta)*, temperature *(utu)* and sustenance *(āhāra)*. As regards the mental states, one observes that they come into existence as a result of the interrelation between the sense organs and objects.

This is true of all the mental and material states of the three periods of time. One of the important points in Buddhist philosophy and one which helps us understand the real nature of mental and material space is the insistence upon the universal law of causality, or Dependent Origination. In many discourses the Buddha has repeatedly expounded this doctrine of causality. Buddhist philosophy is distinguished from almost all other philosophies and teachings by the doctrine of causality with regard to the mind as well as the body. According to the Buddha, the causal law holds good throughout the three periods of time — past, present and future. There have been causes in previous lives, hence there are effects in the present lifetime. In order to understand this we must know more about the theory of kamma. There have been causes set going in other lives, hence these causes in this present life will produce their effects in future lives; thus the wheel of causality circles round and round from past to present and from present to future. The wheel of causality never comes to an end except in *nibbāna*. The Buddha, through his penetrating knowledge, saw that there were human beings millions and millions of year ago. He saw the continuous succession of birth and death due to Dependent Origination. He stated that the beginning of beings was inconceivable, for the further back he cast his vision, the

longer the chain of successions appeared. Instead of disclosing the origin of beings he pointed out the twelve-linked chain of causality — the cause of becoming and the way to cessation. This is a very important feature of his teaching as it sets Buddhist philosophy apart from every other form of philosophy.

Ignorance causes mental formations; in other words, by non-realisation of the four noble truths the mind accumulates mental activities, good or evil. These mental activities, or kammas, give rise to consciousness in the next birth. Consciousness produces mind and body which generate the six senses. These, in turn, are the cause of contact which results in feelings. Feeling, or sensation, originates desire, which causes grasping. By reason of grasping there comes to be volitional activities again which results in birth, followed, as we all know, by old age, lamentation, sorrow and death. This is called the twelve-linked chain of causation.

When a person understands this doctrine of causality, he has assuaged doubt as to the origin of beings. In this fourth stage of purity the person devoted to the higher life has now realised the first and second noble truths; suffering and its cause; thus he understands the conditional nature of mental and material states in the past, present and future. In the light of this he sees that there is neither a doer of the deeds nor an experiencer of the results. In the past, the phenomena came into existence due to certain conditions. They attained their cessation, giving rise to a new set of phenomena *(dhamma)* in the present. They too will come to an end giving rise to another set in the future birth. When there is a clear understanding of the conditional nature of phenomena in the three periods of time according to the Dependent Origination of the twelve links, there is an end to the five kinds of doubt regarding one's past existence:

1. Was I in the past?
2. Was I not in the past?
3. What was I in the past?
4. How was I in the past?
5. Having been what, what was I in the past?

There are also five kinds of doubt regarding future life, or future existence:

1. Shall I be in the future?
2. Shall I not be in the future?
3. What shall I be in the future?
4. How shall I be in the future?
5. Having been what, what shall I be in the future?

There are also six kinds of doubt regarding one's present life:

1. Am I?
2. Am I not?
3. What am I?
4. How am I?
5. Whence have I come?
6. Whither shall I go?

As a result of understanding the conditional nature of things, the meditator will be free from these sixteen kinds of doubts because he can understand the law of causality.[1]

5. Purification of Knowledge Regarding the Right and Wrong Paths

In the fifth stage he attains the purification of knowledge or insight into the right or wrong paths. Through continuous effort the wise and strenuous meditator reaches this stage. He has based his meditation on the three characteristics. As he pursues his practice his knowledge is developed and consequently most of the defilements are destroyed. He begins to feel an inward glow.

There are ten imperfections obscuring the true insight which results from following the correct path. These are obstacles to reaching enlightenment. We should be aware of them and give them up quickly.

i. **Illumination** — is aura due to insight. When it arises the meditator may think, "I have reached the Path." When he takes what is not the Path to be the Path the course of insight is interrupted. He drops his basic meditation object and sits enjoying the illumination.

ii. **Knowledge** — When he is estimating and judging materiality and mentality knowledge may arise which is very keen, incisive and clear like a flash of lightning.

iii. **Rapturous happiness** — There are five grades of rapture: a) minor, b) momentary, c) showering, d) uplifting and e) pervading happiness.

iv. **Tranquillity** — There is no sign of fatigue; his body and mind are tranquil, light, malleable and upright.

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[1] Vism. 598ff.

v. **Bliss** — Exceedingly refined joy or bliss flood the whole body.

vi. **Resolution** — Unshakeable confidence arises in association with insight.

vii. **Exertion** — Well-balanced energy, neither lax nor strained, arises in association with insight.

viii. **Assurance** — His mindfulness is firmly established, well-assured and immovable like the king of mountains.

ix. **Equanimity** — to adversity in the mind door.

x. **Attachment** — When illumination, knowledge, etc. arise due to insight he becomes attached to them and is unable to discern this attachment as a defilement.

As in the case of illumination, so too with the other imperfections of insight. When he takes what is not the Path to be the Path the course of insight is interrupted. He drops his basic meditation object and sits enjoying the imperfection of knowledge, rapture, etc.

At times, after the appearance of these phenomena, one may begin to labour under the delusion that one has reached the goal. The well-informed and well-instructed meditator is not deluded by them. He understands that these phenomena are only incidental side products at this stage. Just as an individual whose main purpose is to get fruit from a tree is not content to pick buds, so the meditator may achieve these side products of meditation as he pursues the main goal of insight. By reaching this stage of 'budding insight' the meditator has made a real start into the development of insight. He is like a moving aeroplane on the runway. He has made a start, but is not yet airborne and smoothly flying. At this stage he realises three of the noble truths:

1. *Dukkha* exists in the world
2. This is caused by craving and desire.
3. The way that leads to the destruction of this craving is the Eight-fold or Middle Path.

Thus the knowledge gained by the decision as to taking the right path is called the fifth stage of purity.[1]

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[1] Vism. 606ff.

6. PURIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT INTO PROGRESS

After attaining the fifth stage the meditator continues his mindfulness of mental and physical phenomena to attain the sixth knowledge. This consists of eight kinds of knowledge which, when fully matured, will lead to Knowledge in Conformity with Truth, the ninth. These nine are as follows:

i. **Knowledge of rise and fall** — Being aware of the ten imperfections of insight, the meditator further develops his awareness of phenomena. As a result their impermanent nature becomes abundantly clear to him.

ii. **Knowledge of dissolution** — As he develops his awareness of rise and fall the time comes when his mind becomes concentrated on the fall only. He then observes how the composite states break up and are subject to dissolution. What is impermanent is painful and what is painful is insubstantial. He consequently loses all delight in the things to which he was formerly attached. This knowledge gained by reflection on the perishable nature of things leads to the following advantages:

a) Elimination of wrong views regarding becoming.
b) Abandoning of craving.
c) Constant application to what is suitable.
d) Purity of livelihood.
e) Elimination of anxiety.
f) Expulsion of fear.
g) Possession of patience and self-control.
h) Overcoming of dissatisfaction.

iii. **Knowledge of fearfulness** — As the meditator contemplates the perishable nature of things he sees that all states in the past have ceased and, by inference, that all future states will cease too. In the light of this knowledge, all these states appear to him as fearful.

iv. **Knowledge of defects** — The meditator seeing states as fearful sees no peace, security or refuge in the phenomenal world.

v. **Knowledge of disgust** — Seeing that there is no safe haven to which he can turn anywhere among composite states he becomes quite disgusted with them and sees nothing there fit to take hold of.

vi. **Knowledge of desire for liberation** — As the meditator finds no delight in formations and becomes disgusted with them he becomes earnestly desirous of escape from them, just as a fish wishes to escape from a net, or a frog from a snake's jaws. So the knowledge of desire for liberation arises in him.

vii. **Knowledge of re-observation** — Desirous of deliverance, the meditator continues his practice with renewed vigour and as a result the characteristics of impermanence, fearfulness etc., become fully clear to him and the knowledge of re-observation is matured.

viii. **Knowledge of equanimity** — As a result of his matured knowledge of re-observation the meditator loses fear and delight in composite states. He does not find anything to be called 'I' or 'mine'. He becomes quite indifferent towards them. With this knowledge the meditator is said to have reached the three-fold doorway leading to *nibbāna.* The knowledges of desire for liberation, the knowledge of re-observation and the knowledge of equanimity are three phases of the same knowledge.

ix. **Knowledge in conformity with the truth** — At the ninth stage the meditator reaches the threshold of *nibbāna.* His equanimity becomes stronger and more stable and in due course he attains conformity knowledge, so called because it conforms to the eight kinds of preceding knowledge and on the other hand to the Noble Path and the fulfilment of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. It is also the culmination of insight leading to the Noble Path. But technically speaking it is the very last moment in the process.[1]

7. Purification by Knowledge and Insight

At this stage the meditator is no more a worldling, but has attained to the state of the Noble Ones. At this stage he realises *nibbāna,* the cessation of composite states. He has now entered upon the Path that leads to total liberation from suffering and is assured of final salvation. However, this is still only the first of four stages of sainthood:

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[1] Vism. 639ff; Pts. 778.

i. **Sotāpanna** — In the first stage of sainthood he is known as a stream-winner. Immediately after the seventh purification there follows the first path of sainthood *(sotāpatti magga)* which performs three functions at one and the same time:

a) Comprehension of the first noble truth.
b) Abandonment of the cause of *dukkha.*
c) Realisation of the cessation of *dukkha.*

And with the attainment of the first path three fetters are destroyed:

a) Personality belief.
b) Doubt about the path.
c) Adherence to rites and rituals.

This path knowledge is immediately followed by fruition knowledge which in turn is followed by knowledge of reflection on the path of stream-winning. The saint still has to eliminate seven other fetters but is destined at most to be reborn seven more times in the world.

ii. **Sakadāgāmi** — At the second stage of sainthood the meditator overcomes the stronger forms of sensual desire and ill-will. He is known as a once-returner since he will be born at most only once more in this world.

iii. **Anāgāmi** — The third stage is that of the non-returner. By following the same course of practice he destroys completely the two fetters of sensual desire and ill-will. If he doesn't attain final emancipation in this life, he will be born in the *Brahmā* planes where he will attain his ultimate goal.

iv. **Arahant** — At the fourth stage of sainthood the remaining five fetters are destroyed: attachment to existence in the realms of form, attachment to existence in formless realms, conceit, mental distraction and ignorance. He becomes a fully enlightened or worthy one. In this life-time he attains the final emancipation. It is an inexpressible and seemingly inconceivable supramundane state of bliss born of mental purity that is called *nibbāna.*[1]

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[1] Vism. 672ff.

CHAPTER 36

IMPERMANENCE

The three characteristics *(tilakkhaṇa)* of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta* is the tripod on which rests the whole body of Buddhist doctrine. In addition to these three propositions, we might mention the fact that the *Mahāyānists* credited themselves with a further one, "All is such as it is." This statement was not intended to be a claim to novelty but, rather, was the legitimate outcome of the above three principles. The doctrine of impermanence is a most pragmatic and fundamental teaching of the Buddha. From time immemorial sages and philosophers have thought that there should be a permanent, uncaused force or entity. The world's oldest literature, the *Rgveda,* gives us a number of instances of this kind of thinking. That is why the belief in an all-pervading Creator was prevalent at the time of the Buddha. The Buddha did not find anything to substantiate this belief. He saw everything arising from a cause and that things determined by causality were impermanent and ephemeral. When we consider the human condition we realise that it is a process of becoming rather than of being. The mental process is so rapid that we are seldom aware of change but rather, due to the habitual and repetitive nature of thought, we perceive only the illusion of continuity and stability. It is like a swiftly flowing river that, to the distant observer, seems to be still and unchanging.

The Canon often alludes to the principle that "all is suffering",[1] and this in turn, only serves to underline the first proposition, "all is impermanent".[2] We would not err if we maintained that it is these propositions that distinguish Buddhism from all other religions.

The statement, "all is impermanent", can be regarded as the seal of Buddhism and is akin to the famous remark of the 6th century B.C. Greek philosopher, Herakleitos, "All is in a state of flux" or "Everything flows" *(panta rhei);* i.e. all is subject to change, to becoming. The truth of this statement as far as the phenomenal world is concerned receives ample corroboration from our sense experience.

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[1] Dhp. v 278: *Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā.*
[2] Dhp. v 277: *Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā.*

"There is no Being, there is only a Becoming. The state of every individual is unstable, temporary, sure to pass away. Even in things we find, in each individual, form and other material qualities. In living organisms there is a continually ascending series of mental qualities also. It is the union of these that makes the individual. Every person, or thing, or god is therefore a putting together, a compound. And in each individual, without any exception, the relation of its component parts is ever changing, never the same for two consecutive moments. It follows that no sooner has separateness, individuality begun, than dissolution, disintegration, also begins. There can be no putting together without a becoming; there can be no becoming without a becoming different; and there can be no becoming different without a dissolution, a passing away, which sooner or later will inevitably be complete."[1]

But why, we may well ask, is it that all things are impermanent, subject to an invariable law of change and condemned thereby to eternal becoming? It is because the universal law of change is inseparably connected with the law of cause and effect. Origination presupposes destruction and destruction presupposes origination. As the Buddha says, "Whatever exists arises from cause and conditions and perishes."[2] There is a three-fold aspect of impermanence: 1) Impermanence of the life period, 2) Momentary impermanence, 3) Impermanence of the self-nature of conditional things.

1. Today, nobody would maintain the indestructibility of matter. Buddhism maintains the eternalism of the Dhamma throughout the three divisions of time; past, present and future. "All is such as it is."[3]

With regard to the universe, there is neither beginning nor end. Indeed, it would be inconceivable that something should arise from nothing or that nothing should result from something. For the individual, there is no escape from this nature of things:

> "Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean,
> Nor on entering a mountain cave,
> Is found the place on earth where abiding
> one will not be overcome by death."[4]

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[1] Rhys Davids, *'Early Buddhism'*, pp 56, 57.
[2] Vin. i. 11, 16, *passim.*
[3] *Sadharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra.*
[4] Dhp. v. 128.

Death, the great migrator; birth and old age are the great miseries of life. We are constantly reminded in the Canon that death is the sure end of life. To the individual, the tenancy of life denotes to him the difference between birth and death states, between arising and passing away. Asaṅga, the great *Mahāyānist* philosopher of the 4th century who founded the *Yogācāra* school, says in his *Madhyāntāntānugama Sūtra,* "All things are produced by a combination of causes and conditions and have no nominal existence of their own. When this combination is dissolved then their destruction is ensured. The body of living beings consists of four great elements (earth, air, fire and water) and when these are resolved into the original elements then death ensues."

2. This kind of impermanence presupposes the impermanence of moments (Skt. ***khsaṇa***) which is a logical transition of thought and makes intelligible the changes taking place in a being at certain times, which are, in themselves, aggregates of minute changes, which are invariably imperceptible. Thus everything is constantly changing and cannot be the same for two consecutive moments. Changes in the phenomenal world are thus explained by this proposition.

As the famous 5th century commentator, Buddhaghosa says in his monumental work, the *Visuddhimagga,* "As to the shortness of the moment, in the ultimate sense the life moment of living beings is extremely short, being only as much as the occurrence of a single conscious moment. Just as the chariot wheel, when it is rolling, rolls only on one point of its tyre and, when it is at rest, rests only on one point, so too, the life of living beings lasts only for a single conscious moment. When that consciousness has ceased, the being is said to have ceased, according as it is said, 'In a past conscious moment he did live', not 'he does live', not 'he will live'. In a future conscious moment not 'he did live' not 'he does live', he will live. In the present conscious moment not 'he did live', he does live, not 'he will live'."[1]

Is there, then, a motive power whereby things are changed? Every vehicle we see has the capacity to move but can only do so through utilising an outside force. The same observation applies to, say a windmill and even to the earth itself. Even a finger doesn't

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[1] Vism. 238.

move by itself. The power is inherent in the formula, "Origination, staying, growth and decay, and destruction." These four characteristics of existence are forever repeating themselves.

The *Sarvāstivāda,* an early school of the *Hīnayāna,* maintained the following propositions with regard to these characteristics:

i. There exists origination by which everything is brought to a state of existence from past to present.
ii. There exists staying which endeavours to make everything stay in its identical state as soon as it emerges from the present to the future state by the force of origination.
iii. There exists growth and decay where everything is dragged into the pale of old age.
iv. There exists destruction which thereby carries everything back into the past.

All things change, therefore, through the operation of these four powers. (In the first few centuries after the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha, discussion arose as to whether these four existed simultaneously or in succession. The *Sarvāstivāda,* followed by the *Theravāda,* supported the former view, whilst the *Sautrāntika* adhered to the latter.)

3. In the final kind of impermanence, that of the self-nature of conditioned things, momentary impermanence presupposes this, which is a simple, logical proposition, equivalent to that of ***śūnyatā*** ('emptiness', 'voidness').

It is easy enough to realise that everything will die, but not so easy if one considers that the process leading up to the final consummation is only achieved through every single day and night. Although *śūnyatā* may be considered the final, legitimate and rational conclusion of the first principle, that "all is impermanent", it has proved a veritable pitfall to scholars. Those from the West interpreted it as 'nothingness' or, worse still, 'annihilation', and in so doing branded the *Mahāsuññatavādins* as nihilists. However, Buddhists understand it as meaning 'perpetual changes occurring at every step in the phenomenal world'. Another great *Mahāyānist* philosopher, Nāgārjuna, in his *Mādhyamika Śastra* (ch 40) says, "It is on account of *śūnyatā* that everything becomes possible but that without it, nothing in the world would be possible."

If things were not subject to continuous change, evolution and every kind of development would cease. And if life had continued from its beginnings without the factor of death to take into consideration, what would be the result?

In his *'Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism'* (1907 edition, p 173) Prof. D.T. Suzuki says, *"Śūnyatā* does not mean nothingness, as is sometimes interpreted by critics, but it simply means conditionality or transitoriness of all phenomenal existences, it is a synonym for ***aniyatā*** or ***pratītya***. Therefore, emptiness, according to the Buddhists signifies, negatively, the absence of particularity, the non-existence of individuals as such; and positively, the ever-changing state of the phenomenal world, a constant flux of becoming, an eternal series of causes and effects. It must never be understood in the sense of annihilation or absolute nothingness, for nihilism is as much condemned by Buddhism as naïve realism."

In actual fact, the principle of *śūnyatā* concerns only the phenomenal world and we find that the explanations given by Nāgārjuna tend towards the destructive and negative aspect mentioned above. However, the question is whether the Buddha so committed himself. The answer is that he did not found a school of philosophy, nor would he have approved of those disciples who might have been tempted to do so, but rather, he pointed out a way to salvation. However, since the unsatisfactory nature of the phenomenal world must have weighed on the minds of his disciples like a terrible nightmare, the Buddha was thus justified in giving them a negative answer. Of course, his ultimate purpose was to lead his followers from this shore to the 'Further Shore' (i.e. *nibbāna*) and the possession of knowledge of what is not so, leads inevitably to an understanding of what is so, and vice versa. The negative leads on to the positive and the state of impermanence to that of permanence (i.e. *nibbāna*), as the following propositions show:

1. The principle of the universal belongs to the phenomenal world.
2. The principle of non-ego belongs to both the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds.
3. But the principle of *nibbāna,* being pure, calm, belongs solely to the noumenal world.

CHAPTER 37

THE ANATTA DOCTRINE

The Buddha gave the opinions concerning the self current in his time as; 1) "My self is minute[1] and has material qualities", 2) "My self is limitless and with material qualities", 3) "My self is minute and without material qualities", 4) "My self is limitless and without material qualities". There are also persons who would make no declaration concerning the self.[2]

The Buddha asks in what respects the self is perceived. It is seen thus, "Feeling is my self"; "Feeling is not my self, my self does not experience feeling"; "Feeling is not my self, my self does not lack experience of feeling"; "By my self are things felt, the thing that feels is my self." To those who hold these views that the feeling is "my self", it should be said that feeling may be happy, unhappy or neutral; any one of these three feelings, while it endures, excludes the other two. All of them are impermanent, conditioned, arising from other relationships, things of decay, age, destruction, annihilation. If to a person experiencing any one of them it should seem, "This is my self", then with the passing of that feeling it should also seem to him, "Gone is my self". A person declaring, "Feeling is my self", is taking the self as impermanent, a mixture of happiness and suffering, a thing coming into existence and dying away, here amongst the things of the world. Therefore, the statement, "My self is feeling", is not acceptable.[3]

On the other hand, to a person who declares, "My self does not consist in feeling, my self does not experience feeling", it should be said, "Where there is entirely no feeling, can it be said 'I am'?" Again, whether it is claimed that, "My self does not consist in feeling, my self does not lack experience of feeling", or the converse, it may also be replied that if feeling should cease utterly, in every respect, could it be said there that "I, this person, am"?

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[1] In each case the word 'minute' refers to the theory that the self is composed of atoms very much finer that those which go to the building up of material substances such as the body.

[2] D. ii. 64.

[3] *Ibid.*

None of these statements concerning feeling and the self is therefore acceptable.[1] The Buddha concludes, "From the time, Ānanda, that the *bhikkhu* ceases to regard the self as consisting in feeling or in experiencing feeling, and does not maintain, 'My self experiences feeling, the thing that feels is my self', he grasps at nothing in the world, and, not grasping, does not long for anything. Not longing for anything, he attains to his final release from self. He comes to know, 'Exhausted is birth; the higher life has come to perfection; that which should be done has been done; there will be no more of the present state'."[2]

Concerning the existence of the Tathāgata after death, the Buddha said that any statements that he did or did not exist, or both or neither, were 'Foolish theories'. Why? "As far as the contact of mind and mental objects and the range thereof, as far as language and the range thereof, as far as concepts and the range thereof, as far as intelligence and the roaming of intelligence, so far does there reach the cycle of rebirth and its turnings. Having thoroughly understood that, the *bhikkhu* is freed, and, being so freed, does not know and does not see in the same way, to him such theories are not intelligent."[3]

From the direct statements of the Law of Dependent Origination it is clear that 'life', in the usual interpretation of the term, moves as a vicious circle continuously kept in motion by a drive of anxiety that it should do so. It is necessary to bear in mind that the term 'consciousness', as used in the Law, refers to the general sense of the term, as one might say that a person is 'conscious' if he knows what is going on around him, 'unconscious' if he does not. Having established contact with an object or event, one registers judgement on it; one may find it pleasant, or unpleasant, or one may be indifferent to it. In the first two cases one wishes either to perpetuate the liaison or to destroy it; in the third, one is merely not interested. Yet, though in the main there are no fixed standards of pleasantness and unpleasantness, there are certain states which man, irrespective of time or place, dislikes, and certain others which he ardently desires. The outstanding example of the first is death, and of the second, life. Only the worst possible agonies to which a man has been subjected have made him desire death, while dissertations on happy after-lives, Elysian Fields, or whatever their appellation, have never superseded

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[1] D. ii. 66–68. [2] D. ii. 68. [3] *Ibid.*

his desire to prolong the present existence. But the present existence has never shown any security of tenure, and to make it continue, or appear to continue, indefinitely, it has always been necessary to provide a support. Hence the dominating instinct of living beings to reproduce the species, irrespective of conditions of famine, sickness or other adversity. Yet in existence, as we know it at present, since life is followed by death, or a series of lives punctuated by deaths, how much of man has ever 'lived'? What is it of him that 'dies', and what is it of him that is 'reborn'? The *suttas* quoted above supply the answer to the questions and, in the Buddhist teaching, far from living a single, isolated life, man lives a long series of lives connected with each other by a potential generated by his previous actions.

As one life draws to a close, the characteristics which would previously have been taken to constitute 'consciousness' — using the term in the general sense, as previously — disappear. There remains, however, a consciousness, sometimes referred to as the subconsciousness, but which, more accurately, is the infra-consciousness, that is the potential mentioned above which leads to blind activity, energy, the effect of which is the will to live. At the moment of conception, the first stage of the individual existence is that of the infra-conscious mind, or the blind will to live. Its next stage of development lies in that of mental and physical states, the stage of pre-natal growth with the mind and body in combination. From here onwards we have the development of the sense-organs, the making of contact with the outside world, and so on. But throughout these events, and throughout the existence just started, is the undercurrent of potential, the results of past actions, which determine the personality of the individuality in question and which is constantly making itself felt.

How far the individual can improve on this undercurrent will decide his circumstances and disposition in future lives, but there is no question of any organ representative of the individual, such as *jīva* or a soul, experiencing one existence only and fading out into some realm of happiness or misery or with its potential lost in the general mass of the world's activity. Just as modern biologists tell us there is no permanent part of the physical organism which sustains, or could possibly sustain, the whole process of life but to the contrary, that life consists in the process of growth, renewal, nourishment, and such like, which were once assumed to be the accompaniments to life, so there is no central 'self' which stands at the centre of the mentality

to which events and characteristics accrue and from which they fall away, leaving it intact, at death. The stream of consciousness, flowing through many lives, is as changing as a stream of water.

This is the *anatta* doctrine of Buddhism as concerning the 'individual' being. Extended to all the phenomena of the universe, we have a parallel to the 'Theory of Continuous Creation' as advanced by present day astronomers, this contrasting with the former periodical creation as developing from *Brahmā* or a primeval atom, or with the once-and-for-all creation as put forward by Zoroastrianism, Christianity and other monotheistic religions. The *anatta* doctrine is counted among the three characteristics of the Buddha's teaching. They are essentially present in all teachings claiming to rank as 'Buddhism'. The *Dhammapada* says:

> "All mental and physical phenomena are impermanent. Whenever through wisdom one perceives this, then one is indifferent to suffering. This is the road to purity."
>
> "All mental and physical phenomena are unsatisfactory. Whenever through wisdom one perceives this, then one is indifferent to suffering. This is the road to purity."
>
> "All things are without permanent substratum. Whenever through wisdom one perceives this, then one is indifferent to suffering. This is the road to purity."[1]

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[1] Dhp. vv 277–279.

CHAPTER 38

THE ENIGMA OF ANATTA

Buddhism propounds the theory of ***anattavāda***. It, therefore, does not believe in the existence of a permanent soul *(atta or ātman)*. The *Mahānidāna Sutta* contains the theories giving rise to the idea of soul.[1] The *Pamattaya Sutta* deals with five specific theories giving rise to the idea of soul, and in this *sutta* the Buddha points out that *nibbāna* does not depend on any one of them.[2] In the *Brahmajāla Sutta,* we come across sixty-two forms of speculation concerning the world and the soul taught by other teachers of the period.[3] Buddhism does, however, believe in rebirth based on kamma and, therefore, on moral disciplines. For the ***attavādin***, one who believes in the existence of a permanent soul, this gives rise to many questions. Down through the ages questions regarding the consistency between the doctrine of *anattavāda* and that of kamma have been raised and answered again and again and it is interesting to note that this is one of the most important topics of discussion between King Milinda and Venerable Nāgasena.[4]

One such type of discussion may be stated as follows:

"If there cannot be wholesome deeds because there is no ***atta***, self, which performs them, then an imaginary ***(parikappita)*** self also does not exist, because there is no other maker of that self."

"If there be a self even when there is no maker of it, then it must appear that there can be wholesome deeds even when there is no doer of them."

How can the former proposition be accepted and the latter rejected? Just as it can be observed that plants etc., arise from such causes and conditions as seeds, earth, water, light and so on, though no one would consider that a soul was present in them, so in the same way should it be understood that morality etc., arise by virtue of certain causes and conditions *(hetuppaccaya sāmaggī)* and not because of the presence of any such thing as a soul.

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[1] D. ii. 64–71.
[2] M. ii. 228–238.
[3] D. i. pp. 12–46.
[4] Miln. PTS, 25ff.

Those reared in Theocentric religions will ask: "How can one take a new form after death without presupposing the existence of a reincarnating entity?" and "who is it who speaks, acts and thinks?" An analogy may prove helpful: two men are standing by the side of a lake. The water is undulating as a result of the action of the wind. One of the men is not well-versed in scientific phenomena while the second man is. The former maintains that the water is being carried along by the wind but the latter says that his colleague's observation is defective since he knows that the waves are not a single mass of water being carried along but a process of vertical and rotational motions which create the illusions of horizontal movement and the continuity of individual waves.

Hence, one should understand rebirth as a process of change inherent in the collection of life-forces we call a 'being'. The sages of old, including the Buddha, actually experienced insight into their previous lives but 'worldlings' do not possess such knowledge and, as a result, are easily misled into thinking that there is an unchanging personality. The Buddha penetrated the heart of the matter, as is evident from his doctrine of Dependent Origination, and such insight was corroborated much later by physicists. In spite of all this, however, human nature being what it is, the misleading terms in common parlance of 'me', 'mine' and 'myself' still have universal currency with very few realising that they only have relevance to a conventional usage.

Such expressions as "I am", "This is mine", are expressions of egoism and are common to languages throughout the world. Springing from selfish considerations they have led to quarrels between members of one society and even to vast conflicts between nations.

The truth of ***anatta*** (non-soul, not-self, egolessness) is revealed not as religious dogma but as a philosophical perception of reality. Things and beings are seen as constantly changing their outward appearance, and yet we like to believe there is, nevertheless, something of an unchanging, durable, everlasting nature inside us which can somehow be identified as the real 'Me' or 'You'. Many extend this belief to a state outside their experience, maintaining that in some mysterious way there is a conscious intelligence which moves and has its being in the universe — a cosmic soul ***Paramātman*** or ***Brahman***, which is termed 'Absolute Reality' whilst the mundane world is regarded as illusory *(maya)* in nature. Pursuant to this concept, men are simply scattered parts of this One Reality who, out of ignorance,

separated themselves from it and they should aspire to return to it in their meditation.

Physical and mental change is mandatory in all compounded things. There is always a radical transformation throughout the stages of man's growth from infancy to old age, but somehow we feel the same. On this basis, some philosophies justify the soul theory as accounting for this continuity of identity in spite of the outward changes. Man sees himself as the same 'person' and in this lies the delusion which, in Buddhism, is called ***sakkāyadiṭṭhi***, personality-belief.

Paul Carus says in his book *'The Gospel of Buddhism'* "Lest the fundamental idea of Buddha's doctrines be misunderstood, the reader is warned to take the term 'self' in the sense in which Buddha uses it. The 'self' of man can be and has been understood in a sense to which Buddha would never have made any objection. Buddha denies the existence of 'self' as it was commonly understood in his time; he does not deny man's mentality, his spiritual constitution, the importance of his personality, in a word, his soul. But he does deny the mysterious ego-entity, the *ātman*, in the sense of a kind of soul-monad which by some schools was supposed to reside behind or within man's bodily and psychical activity as a distinct being, a kind of thing-in-itself, and a metaphysical agent assumed to be the soul."[1]

Buddhism is monistic. It claims that man's soul does not consist of two things, of an *ātman* (self) and of a *manas* (mind or thoughts); but that it is made up of thoughts alone.[2] The thoughts of a man constitute his soul; they, if anything, are his self, and there is no *ātman*, no additional and separate 'self' besides. Accordingly the translation of *ātman* by 'soul', which would imply that Buddha denied the existence of the soul, is extremely misleading.

Representative Buddhists, of different schools and of various countries, acknowledge the correctness of the view here taken, and we emphasise especially the assent of Southern Buddhists because in the translations from their sacred writings the term *ātman* is commonly rendered by 'soul'.

The Buddhist, the Organ of the Southern Church of Buddhism, writes in a review of *'The Gospel of Buddhism'*:

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[1] *'The Gospel of Buddhism'* by Paul Carus, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., London, 1896 p vi f.

[2] Dhp. v 2.

"The eminent feature of the work is its grasp of the difficult subject and the clear enunciation of the doctrine of the most puzzling problem of *ātman,* as taught in Buddhism. So far as we have examined the question of *ātman,* ourselves from the works of the Southern Canon, the view taken by Dr. Paul Carus is accurate, and we venture to think that it is not opposed to the doctrine of Northern Buddhism."

This *ātman* superstition, so common not only in India, but all over the world, corresponds to man's habitual egoism in practical life; both are illusions growing out of the same root, which is the vanity fair of worldliness, inducing man to believe that the purpose of his life lies in his self. Buddha proposes to cut off entirely all thought of self, so that it will no longer bear fruit. Thus Buddha's *nirvāṇa* is an ideal state, in which man's soul, after being cleansed from all selfishness and sin, has become a habitation of the truth, teaching him to distrust the allurements of pleasure and to confine all his energies to attending to the duties of life.

It should be argued that, if it is necessary to believe in a soul to account for one's continuity, then why not apply the theory to inanimate objects as well? If, however, there is no soul, then what constitutes the 'personality' of man? What am I? Although the concepts 'soul', *'ātman'* and *'jīva',* were applied to man in the *Upanishads,* upon close examination it will be found that no such factor is required or proven. In truth, mind and matter comprise 'man' and are always in a state of flux, the whole process only ceasing finally with the attainment of *nibbāna* when craving and desire, the fuel sustaining existence, are finally eliminated.

When certain parts are assembled, the nett result is a car; when the five aggregates are assembled the nett result is a man. There is no substance in the term 'car' except in a conventional sense when we wish to distinguish this particular collection of manufactured parts from some other, perhaps similar, construction. Thus, the wheels, axles, chassis, radiator, gear-box, steering-wheel, battery, petrol tank, etc., by themselves or collectively can never be described as a car until they are put together in a proper manner. Likewise, the afore-mentioned physical and mental parts comprising a man cannot be so described either collectively or singly but only when they come together through opportune circumstances. When philosophers claim

they have 'discovered' a soul, all they have truly realised is a mental delusion based upon a conditioning process — this is particularly so in the West. The term 'I' can mean any of the following:

1. "I am here", "I was there" — these signify a particular location of the individual.
2. "I think" — this relates only to the operation of the cognizant mental faculty.
3. "I said" — this connotes the active co-operation of the mind and voice.

Therefore, this term can be used in connection with the mind, body or both. Man is made up of bodily and mental processes and states. The body comprises matter *(rūpa)* which is a specialized combination of the four elements (solidity, cohesion, radiation and motion); and mind *(nāma)* — consisting of feeling, perception, volitional activity and consciousness). No 'being' exists outside of these five factors, just as a 'table' does not exist apart from the pieces of wood it is made of.

If, with reference to attributes, the matter be further examined as to whether there is a permanent entity called a soul which performs moral actions etc., the question should be asked whether a permanent soul acting in the role of agent and experiencer is conscious or unconscious. If it be unconscious it is no better than a wall, a tree, a stone or any other inanimate object. Moreover, in such a case it could not be an agent or an experiencer. Therefore, the proposition that the soul is unconscious is untenable.

Alternatively, if the soul be conscious it must be identical with consciousness. However, whichever conclusion is arrived at it is evident that consciousness is subject to change. So, it would follow that with a change of consciousness there would be an equivalent change in the soul also. It might be said that the changes which take place in consciousness do not effect the soul as the soul is a permanent thing. This is a position logically impossible to maintain for if the soul is conscious it is necessary to admit that it is either identical or co-extensive with consciousness and is, in either case, therefore, still subject to the same objection. It may then be insisted that the soul is both permanent and conscious, but from what has been said already, if the soul is permanent then consciousness must also be so. It is a position, moreover, which is contrary to all experience for consciousness clearly changes. Two things which are identical or co-

extensive in nature must follow the same laws. It is, therefore, not possible to maintain that one and the same thing could remain permanent and at the same time be subject to change.

If it is still maintained that the one is not affected by changes brought about in the other, it would mean logically that there are two different and separate things, for only in such a case would the one be unaffected by changes in the other. For example, a horse is different and separate from a buffalo, hence the changes that take place in the one do not affect the other and vice versa.

Accordingly, it would be necessary to give up this proposition and admit that soul and consciousness are neither identical nor co-extensive; and that they are two different things like other objects in the world. The proposition that the soul is conscious becomes untenable. Therefore, it is clear that neither the unconscious nor the conscious theory of soul is valid.

It may be said that identity is one of unity in diversity. This kind of unity could be one of location or of attributes. If it be the former it may be illustrated with reference to the following examples: it is observed that colour, taste, smell, etc., exist in the same object; for instance, a pot. In the same way it could be said that while soul and consciousness are different things, they yet may exist in the same location.

This, again, is not a tenable position. It may be refuted in the following manner and with reference to the same example; thus when the pot is baked it is not only the colour that undergoes change but also its other attributes of taste, smell, etc. In the same way a soul could not remain unaffected by changes taking place in consciousness, if their location is identical.

The argument may then be advanced in another form, *viz.*, that though a soul and consciousness have the same location, they are, nevertheless, two quite distinct things. Therefore, one is not affected by changes in the other. This is the argument of unity of attributes.

If this argument is sound it should hold good in the case of the pot and its attributes also. This, however, is not so. Changes for the one still mean changes for the other as stated above, the relation of soul and consciousness is here one of attributes and is the same as that between the pot and its attributes. Thus when one is overtaken by changes the other cannot remain unaffected. Therefore, this argument is not satisfactory either.

The alternative now left is to say that soul and consciousness are two different things which exist separately and that their location also differs. In this case the proportion of identity as unity in diversity is surrendered.

Further, it has to be noted here that when it is said that soul and consciousness do not exist in one and the same location, it must also be admitted that they are two separate things. In which case, therefore, the soul will necessarily be an unconscious item. This, however, comes back to the first argument and does not allow the second. So in conclusion it is shown that neither the existence nor the moral necessity for a soul can be argued.

SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

Against these explanations may be quoted the following sayings of the Buddha which appear to refer to the existence of something permanent passing from one existence to another.

> "The man who goes from this world to another enjoys the result of good actions and suffers from bad actions done by him in this life."[1]

> "A living being wandering in *saṃsāra* has to face the greatest fear of suffering."[2]

> "There are mother, father and ***opapātika*** (spontaneously manifesting) beings."[3]

> "In this cycle of birth and death the five aggregates constitute a burden and the individual is the bearer of the burden. Taking up the burden is suffering and laying it aside is happiness."[4]

> "Whatever a man does with his body, speech and mind becomes his own, and he will carry it along with him in his journey through *saṃsāra.*"[5]

> "It has been said by the great sage; if the bones of one person in the course of one world cycle were accumulated they would make a heap as big as a mountain."[6]

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[1] Abhv. 779–787.
[2] S. i. 37; Abhv. 780–787.
[3] M. iii. 52; Abhv. 780–787.
[4] S. iii. 26; ThagA. iii. 15; Abhv. 781–787.
[5] S. i. 93; Abhv. 782–787.
[6] S. ii. 185; Iti. 17; Abhv. 783–787.

> "He indeed, is the greatest of men who is free from blind faith, who is the knower of the uncreated *(nibbāna)*, who has cut the bonds of birth and death, and who has put an end to both good and evil, thereby renouncing every desire."[1]

What is the importance of these sayings of the Buddha? Do they in fact refer to the existence of a being who transmigrates from life to life?

OTHER STATEMENTS

In this connection one should also be aware of other statements of the Master which appear to be of opposite meaning. For example:

> "Do you believe in the existence of a being here? It appears that you are subject to the view of Māra. This is a heap of pure aggregates. Here there is no being as such. The word 'chariot' is used for the parts which constitute it. So also the word 'being' is used for the five aggregates which constitute a being."[2]

These and other sayings refer to pure Dhammas and not to beings although there are sayings of both meanings. In this connection it has to be remembered that the Buddha preached the doctrine in two ways with reference to ***samuttisacca*** or conventional truth; and ***paramatthasacca*** or the ultimate truth. Sayings that refer to such expressions as men, gods and so on, and which refer to the existence of beings have to be understood in the conventional sense, whereas those which refer to aggregates, sense bases and elements have to be understood in the ultimate sense.

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[1] Dhp. v 97; Abhv. 784–787.

[2] S. i. 135; Kvu. 66; Nd1. 439.

CHAPTER 39

THE BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In the 6th century B.C. a high watermark of philosophical systems was reached, such as this world has not since witnessed. In India, in China and Greece, there were being propounded enlightening systems of thought whereby man might rise superior to the flood of sorrows that is synonymous with mundane life. The northern half of India had already been invaded and settled by Aryan tribes from the North-West. The religion which they brought with them was preserved and developed by the Brahmans, the priestly caste of Aryan society. This religion was established on the traditional authority of the ancient Vedas[1] and came to depend upon the efficacy of the sacrifice. It constituted Brahmanism and had rooted deep into Indian society and spread its branches all over the country.

The supremacy and conventionality of Brahmanism was ultimately discredited by philosophical systems expounded by free-thinking Brahmans, ascetics and other sages. Those of the philosophies which were in keeping with the Vedic tradition we find recorded in the *Upanishads;*[2] they consist of various methods by which the Flood may be transcended and the Further Shore gained — by means of knowledge. The period of the *Upanishads* marks the transition from Brahmanism to Hinduism.

In addition, non-vedic systems were taught by which one might reach the Further Shore *(Nirvāṇa or Nibbāna)*. At that time among

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[1] The knowledge of the ancient scriptures. Originally there were only three *Vedas; Ṛgveda, Yajurveda* and *Sāmaveda*; but a fourth, the *Atharvaveda* was subsequently added to them. The Vedic literature developed in about 1,000 years. The earliest of this literature, the *Ṛgveda* of 1,028 hymns was composed at different times by seers *(ṛṣis)* in praise of certain gods such as *Dyaws* (Sky or heaven), *Agni* (Fire), *Surya* (Sun), *Vśās* (Dawn), *Vāta* (Wind), *Pṛthvī* (Earth). A few hymns which seem to suggest the Monotheistic view that there is one God beyond all deities and natural forces. (*cf.* Ṛv., x. 5, 27, 38, 129).

[2] A certain mystical writings attached to the *Brāhmaṇas* (i.e. *mantras* portion of the *Vedas*) to ascertain the secret meaning of the *Vedas*. In the *Muktopaniṣad* 108 *Upanishads* are mentioned, but some more have been added to this number.

many ascetics and wanderers were six well-known teachers each of whom claimed that his path was the correct and infallible way to liberation.

1. Purāṇa Kassapa held the a view wavering between anti-nomianism and fatalism.
2. Makkhali Gosāla, the founder of the Ājīvaka sect, believed that beings were subject to re-animation and not death and destruction. He added to it the doctrine that all beings were subject to a fixed series of existences from the lowest to the highest and this series was unchangeable *(niyati saṅgati-bhava)*.
3. Niganṭha Nātaputta or Vardhamana Mahāvīra who was an older contemporary of the Buddha. He had perfected himself in disciplinary practices and realised the truth as inculcated in Jainism. In his philosophy no definite statement *(syādvāda)* can be made about any subject, not even about highest truth.
4. Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta was an agnostic *(ajñānavādin)* similar to the eel-wriggler. He did not give out any definite views about the ultimate truth.
5. Ajita Kesakambala, who denied an after-life, was a material-ist. According to him there is no need to do meritorious deeds, sacrifices or to serve one's parents. There is no spiritual advancement or perfection in knowledge. There is no demerit in committing evil deeds. A being is composed of five elements; earth, water, fire, air and space. After death each of these returns to the corresponding mass of great elements while the sense organs *(indriya)* pass into space.
6. Pakudha Kaccāyana was a pluralist and a semi-materialist. Like Ajita he held that a being is composed of seven elements: earth, water, air, fire, pleasure pain and soul *(jīva)*. These seven are neither created nor evolved. They are barren and fixed as a rock. Hence there is no killer or instigator of killing. It is a form of atomism.[1]

The two most famous of the unorthodox philosophies were those put forward by Vardhamāna the Mahāvīra and by Gotama the Buddha. Their means of attainment were through knowledge plus

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[1] D. i. 53ff; M. i. 409; *cf.* M. ii. 121; A. i. 287; *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* 161–164; Basham, *History and Doctrine of Ājīvakas* pp 243ff.

compassion. They differed from one another in that: 1) the Jains (the followers of Mahāvīra) were extremists, whereas the Buddha counselled the Middle Path of moderation; and 2) in their definitions of the 'self'.

In common with the Hindus, both Buddhists and Jains subscribe to belief in the Law of Kamma (Skt. *karma*) which principle extends to the humanist sphere of moral retribution, and demands for its functioning a continuity of life-times in this or in other planes of existence. This means that death is necessarily followed by rebirth: it is a process during which the character evolves until it reaches perfection. The Buddha says how to bring about perfection:

> "By deeds, vision and righteousness,
> By virtue, the sublimest life —
> By these are mortals purified,
> And not by lineage and wealth."[1]

In so far as this personal process of development or becoming is an abstract one, it is erroneous to call it either transmigration or reincarnation.

Buddhists, Hindus and Jains are also agreed that life is characterised by imperfection, unsatisfactoriness, sorrow *(dukkha)* and by change, impermanence *(anicca, anitya).* To these two characteristics the Buddha added a third — insubstantiality, non-ego, soullessness *(anatta, anātman):* and it is by virtue of this principle of 'not self' that Buddhism differs from all other philosophies and religions. *Anatta* is peculiar to the Buddha Dhamma and is at once the basis of Buddhist altruism, and the refutation of the Hindu concept that a permanent entity such as an individual 'soul' or 'self' seeks re-union *(yoga)* with the 'Cosmic Self' or *Brahmā* and that therefore all life is one. To comprehend properly the principle of *anatta* is essential to the appreciation of the Buddha's philosophy of life — a philosophy in which no god is called to play a part. Buddhaghosa says:

> "There is no doer of a deed,
> Or one who reaps the deed's result;
> Phenomena alone flow on —
> No other view than this is right.

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[1] M. iii. 262.

And so, while kamma and result
Thus causally maintain their round
As seed and tree succeed in turn
No first beginning can be shown.
For here there is no *Brahmā* God,
Creator of the round of births,
Phenomena alone flow on —
Cause and component their condition."[1]

In those days Indians gave to many enlightened sages the title Buddha, Wise One. The country is said to have then abounded with earnest ascetics *(samaṇas, śramaṇas)* who wandered from place to place studying, contemplating, debating and expounding different philosophic means by which nirvāṇa might be attained. Among such wanderers and hermits the Buddha Gotama attracted many followers. Collectively the Buddha's disciples formed a *gaṇa,* group; or a *saṅgha,* community, or brotherhood. Members of other *saṅghas* of that time distinguished the teaching of the Buddha as ***Anattavāda*** — the Way of *Anatta.* In particular, Gotama's philosophy of individual attainment stressed detachment and spiritual freedom.

About a hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha differences of opinions and views arose among the monks about the actual words of the Teacher and their interpretation. When the Buddhist monks, because of their discipline and good behaviour were attracting the general public's regard and honour, greedy heretics entered the Saṅgha and interpolated and distorted the original teachings of the Buddha. In fact, the Buddha's teachings might have suffered a considerable distortion because of this infiltration of selfish people. This situation gradually lead to the formation of different sects and schools. Once the monks took the liberty to create dissension among the Saṅgha the divisions went on multiplying until the number of sects reached eighteen in the 2nd and 3rd century after the Buddha's passing away *(parinibbāna).*

The pristine philosophy of an individual pursuit of wisdom with equanimity gave way to a monastic phase characterized by the metaphysics of the monks. From this, inevitably, there soon developed a sectarian stage, the result of variant interpretations of the static *Vinaya* rules of the residential monasteries, and the elaboration of the

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[1] Vism. 602f.

Dhamma as *Abhidhamma.* Finally this lapsed into the so-called 'popular stage' which is commonly known as 'Buddhism' a religion for the masses, with faith, worship, ritual and all the other embellishments of an organisation that aims to embrace unordained followers and those who retain the attachments of the average man and woman.

The original austere way of living as practised and recommended by the Buddha Gotama was popularized largely by the incorporation of numerous indigenous beliefs and customs. A reaction against this dilution of the Dhamma, together with inability to agree over the application of *Vinaya* rules, resulted in a split in the ranks of the Indian Buddhists into two schools: *Hīnayāna* (the small vehicle, the compact raft of the South) and *Mahāyāna* (the great vehicle, the distended raft of the North). Today, the Asian countries of the southern tradition are Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos; while those of the northern are Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan. The Buddhists in India now form a very small minority. In spite of the fact that the noble philosophy of the Sakyan sage came to be elaborated by embellishments which have resulted in much flamboyant exaggeration, the modern Westerner, free of superstition and traditionalism can still benefit fully by adopting the true Buddhist way of life.

Some of the most ancient available records of the Buddha Dhamma are to be found in the books of the Pali Canon. These are divided into three sections *(piṭakas): Vinaya, Sutta* and *Abhidhamma.* The *Vinaya Piṭaka* includes the monastic rules; the *Sutta Piṭaka* consists of scripture *(āgamas and nikāyas),* anthologies and legends; the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is the philosophical, psychological and ethical teaching. The present, conventional order of arrangement of the canonical books bears little relation to their chronological sequence. The composition of these fascinating works would appear to cover a period of some three centuries, and numerous interpolations are apparent. The later additions to the Canon are either pedantic or, frankly, legendary. The whole philosophy of life as given by the great sage Gotama himself is probably most clearly represented in the lively *Aṭṭhaka* and *Pārāyana Vaggas* of the *Sutta Nipāta* anthology, supported by individual stanzas of the *Dhammapada* and the beautiful discourses and dialogues preserved in the four *Nikāyas (Dīgha, Majjhima, Saṃyutta and Aṅguttara).*

CHAPTER 40

SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

TWO MAHĀYĀNA SCHOOLS

VIJÑĀNAVĀDA

This is subjective idealism (or subjectivism) and it places all experience on the same level as dreams. In other words, it abolishes the distinction between truth and illusion because in both there is no object outside knowledge. Knowledge, according to this School, points to no external object whatsoever. There is only the self which is conceived of as a stream of ideas but none of the ideas is here regarded as having any objective counterpart. The doctrine reduces all reality to thought and so it is called ***Vijñānavāda***, or 'The Theory of the Sole Reality of Ideas'. One of the chief arguments in support of it is based upon the inseparable connection that is observed to exist between subject and object. There is no knowledge which does not refer to an object and their is no object that can be conceived except as known. The chief objection to it is that it abolishes the distinction between truth and illusion, because in both alike there is no object outside knowledge. We infer that dreams are false by comparing them with our experiences when we are awake. But, if waking experience is also false, we may ask by what experience it is to be shown to be so. Whatever the answer of the ***Yogācāra*** to this question may be, his position is untenable for he will have to admit either that there is a higher kind of knowledge which is not false or else that waking experience itself is true. Also, the subjectivist, as a consequence of rejecting external objects, must deny the existence of all selves beside his own, for if there is no reason to believe in external physical objects, then, there can be none to believe in other people, except as part of his dream. So it becomes solipsism or the theory that there is only a solitary self and that everything else is mere fancy. Such a theory cannot logically be proved to be wrong, but it stultifies all the presuppositions of practical life and puts an end to all philosophical inquiry.

The idealism of this School consists in this explanation of objects etc., as but 'states' or 'forms' of the 'mind' (the flow of ideas

which makes up the self). The assumption of these forms of the mind is due to the revival of former impressions *(vasana)* left on it by previous experience and the diversity of perception is explained by the nature of the revived impressions, and not by diversity in the objects presented. It may be thought that the original impression at least must be due to an external object. But two arguments are used to ward off this — first, it is denied that the impressions have any origin in time. They are literally without any beginning. Second, it is pointed out that the impressions are left on the mind not merely by valid knowledge caused by a corresponding object outside it, but also by mistake, e.g. the fancied perception of a ghost. To suppose that every mental impression should be finally traceable to an external object, actually existing, is to beg the very question at issue. So even if there were a beginning to any series of impressions it would not establish the existence of a *real* object corresponding to it at any time in the past.

MĀDHYAMIKA *(ŚŪNYATAVĀDA)*

This denies not only the reality of external objects but also of the self. It says that the notion of things, physical and psychical, is full of contradictions and so cannot be accepted as being real. Several arguments are put forward to support it. One is based upon the Buddhistic view of causation. According to it, nothing is uncaused (except *nibbāna*), and the *Mādhyamika* points out that the notion of an object originating is not possible, whether we regard it as existing or not before origination. In the first case, it does not require to be produced; in the latter it is impossible to produce it for nothing cannot be made to become something. It means that the notion of causation itself is a delusion, and since, according to Buddhism, there is nothing that is permanent, we have to conclude that the whole universe is illusory. Nāgārjuna, the greatest teacher of this School, says; "There is neither being, nor cessation of it; there is neither bondage, nor escape from it." The doctrine is known as the 'Doctrine of the Void', ***Śūnyavāda***.

The explanation of all experience as a delusion is only from the ultimate standpoint. The doctrine grants a sort of reality *(samvṛti-satya)* to the subject as well as the object and they are held to be real, relatively, to the activities of everyday life. It does not deny that we know, feel and act but it holds that the final significance of it is

nothing because all is void. So the term 'relativism' suits it better than idealism does. The denial of consciousness is itself a state of consciousness and therefore points to the persistence or irrepressibility of mind. It may be wondered, too, if the *Mādhyamika* can speak at all of a realm of relativity when it recognizes no reality which is absolute. Both the Jains and the Hindus have made out that this School contends that the ultimate reality is the void or vacuity-in-itself. The majority of modern scholars who have studied it have said that 'the void' *(śūnya)* here means only that it is nothing, *as it were*, since it is altogether incomprehensible. This view is supported by the *Mādhyamika* definition of the ultimate reality *viz.*, that it neither 'is' nor 'is not' nor 'both is and is not' nor 'neither is nor is not' — the ultimate has to be seen as beyond all conception and not as an absolute nothing. This is logically involved in the doctrine since the negation of everything, without implying a positive ground is not conceivable. The doctrine, according to this interpretation comes to be one accepting an Absolute, and the *Yogācāras,* also accepted an Absolute Consciousness or Universal Self in addition to the particular egos. The goal of life in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is merging in the Absolute and not annihilation.

MAHĀYĀNA AND THERAVĀDA

Mahāyānists vary a good deal in their beliefs. Buddhism is probably the most tolerant of all belief systems and it has encouraged people to 'come and see' *(ehipassiko).* The Buddha-Dhamma is dynamic, not static and it has spread to many lands: from India to Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia of the *Theravāda* (School of the Elders), to China and Japan, Tibet and Mongolia, to name but a few places. People of different intellectual levels adopted it and accepted it along with many of their own indigenous traditions. It has been said that not a drop of blood was shed in the peaceful penetration of Buddhism — it adapted and took in all-comers who realised that the Dhamma is *'ehipassiko'*.[1] *Mahāyānists* modified Buddhism in two important ways: the attainment of liberation by the individual ceased to be the ultimate aim and the one who enters into enlightenment is expected to work for the good of his fellowman. He is not

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[1] Literally 'come and see'. Buddhism invites investigation and no attempt is made to proselytise or preach to others without their concurrence.

satisfied with his own individual *'nirvāṇa'*. Such a person is a 'Wisdom Being' *(bodhisattva)* and the ideal emphasises the well-being of others. The Buddha was a *bodhisattva* in his previous lives. The ideal of the *Mahāyāna* is love and compassion. *Theravāda* Buddhism, which most scholars agree is much nearer to the original teaching of the Buddha, says that Buddha was a human being essentially, while *Mahāyānists* deify him and some Schools adopted worship of him as a way to salvation (notably, the Pure Land School). One might argue that one can work for the good of all beings best by attaining *nibbāna* but *Mahāyānists* would dispute this with vigour. *Mahāyāna* was very much influenced by Hinduism and there are pantheons of *bodhisattvas*, similar to theistic Hinduism with its pantheon of gods and goddesses.

CHAPTER 41

THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

Self-discipline was the essence of Buddha's teaching. Throughout his life the Buddha emphasized that one should seek deliverance through one's own effort. Although he helped his disciples by his superior experience, he did not wish to be looked up to as a saviour. He asked his disciples to look upon the Dhamma as their guide and themselves as their own refuge. They, however, came to regard him more as a divinity than a human teacher and considered his mercy more important than his insistence on self-endeavour in attaining salvation. This faith in his compassion brought into being the cult of Buddha worship which began with the veneration of the places that had been hallowed by him. His relics were also held sacred and venerated, and finally the Buddha image itself came to be worshipped.

The teaching of Buddha seems to have been spread mainly in the Indo-Gangetic Valley during his life-time. The devastating battle of Kaliṅga with its great massacres and bloodshed and the consequent conversion of Asoka (3rd century B.C.) is a landmark in the history of Buddhism. The patronage of an emperor so great and powerful provided a strong stimulus to the spread of Buddhism in India and abroad.

Being a zealous Buddhist, Asoka took great interest in the well-being of the Buddhist Saṅgha and took measures to safeguard it against schisms. He erected memorial columns in different parts of the land and inscribed simple rules of morality on them, as for example, loving-kindness to man and beast, truth, respect for the elders, care for the destitute and non-acquisitiveness.

Under the auspices of Asoka, a Third Buddhist Council was held in Pātaliputta (now Patna). This council of the *Theravādins* led to the compilation of the ***Kathāvatthu***. It is said that when this council ended, Asoka sent missionaries in different directions as far as Macedonia, Syria and Egypt in the West, and Sri Lanka in the South to propagate the *Theravādin* doctrines. His own son or brother, Mahendra, is believed to have gone to Sri Lanka to preach the Law of the Buddha and so also his sister, Saṅghamittā.

One of the significant factors leading to the spread of Buddhism during the 1st century B.C. and later was the support extended to it by foreign rulers, the most important among whom were Menander and Kaniśka. Menander, who flourished about 115–90 B.c. was an Indo-Greek king with a vast dominion. The ***Milindapañha*** or the

Questions of Milinda (which is a quasi-canonical Buddhist text) shows clearly that this ruler was greatly interested in the Buddha's teaching. Kaniśka, the best known of the Kuśān kings, flourished in the second century A.D., and from Puruṣpura (modern Peshawar), his capital, ruled over a large part of India. He is also credited with the conquest of Afghanistan, Samarkand, Yarkand and Khotan. Kaniśka was eclectic in his religious outlook but his special inclination was towards Buddhism. Under his auspices was held the Fourth Buddhist Council wherein the main activity was the collection or composition of the *Sarvāstivāda* texts.

The early centuries of the Christian era were a turning point in the doctrinal development of Buddhism which had grown by this time into a vast religious organization. It split up into as many as eighteen religious sects by about the second century B.C. The differences between the various sects became more and more pronounced with the progress of time. By about the first century A.D. two clear-cut ways of Buddhist religion came to be recognized, namely, the *Hīnayāna* and the *Mahāyāna*. The *Hīnayāna* continued to follow the old Pali texts and the *Mahāyāna* developed mainly through Sanskrit writings the philosophy of Buddhism. The *Mahāyāna* or Northern types were kaleidoscopic in diversity, endlessly subdivided into sects, and prolific of doctrines of which many diverge from the original teaching.

The cardinal tenet of the *Mahāyāna* was that Gautama Buddha was not a human teacher as the *Hīnayānists* held but an eternal principle that appeared on earth for the salvation of mankind. The *Mahāyānists* gave to Buddhism also a new concept of the *Bodhisattva* who is considered as a being with universal love and compassion. He refuses *nibbāna*, though fully entitled to it, until all the sentient beings from man to the smallest insect are delivered. *Bhakti* or devotion to Buddha and the *Bodhisattvas* became an essential part of the *Mahāyāna* religious life.

Mahāyāna Buddhism gradually took form in Northern India, Tibet and China after the third century B.C. The prestige of Indian learning enhanced by Buddhism facilitated the acceptance of various Hindu philosophies in Tibet and China. Some of the doctrines so introduced included the very teachings against which the Buddha had rebelled; ultimately, *Mahāyāna* Buddhism came to embrace almost the entire gamut of speculative human thought. Prominent among *Mahāyāna* missionaries was Bodhidharma,[1] an Indian Buddhist

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[1] Bodhidharma discouraged the reading of the Canon and laid stress on meditation by means of which enlightenment could be attained. He had five successors who were held in great esteem by emperors of the T'ang dynasty.

patriarch, who left India for China in 526 A.D. and is credited with introducing Zen (contemplative Buddhism) into Japan. He is the central figure in the legend of the heavenly origin of tea: whatever the role of Bodhidharma, monks certainly used tea to keep themselves awake during night-long vigils of meditation.

Mahāyāna Buddhist sects include some that worship Buddha, notably Amida or Amitābha. The intellectual and moral fibre necessary for the attainment of enlightenment appear to lie beyond the capacity of ordinary folk, and the doctrine of *Bodhisattvas* was designed to meet this human failing. A *Bodhisattva* is a saintly person who almost attains enlightenment but turns back at the threshold, as it were, because of his wish to save all other living beings. He vows to remain in the cycle of birth and death until the last being is saved and becomes a divine being with the power to save those who manifest faith in his merciful benevolence. Amida — probably a mythical figure — is deemed to be the greatest of *Bodhisattvas* and is equated with a great heavenly Buddha by his worshippers. To his Western Paradise he gathers all those who call upon his name in faith. Thus Amida sects exhibit close analogies to Protestant Christianity: 'Salvation by grace' and 'Justification by faith', doctrines which antedated the Protestant Reformation by several centuries. Some *Mahāyāna* sects practically dispense with Sakyamuni in favour of Amida or some other *Bodhisattva* and in other systems the founder of Buddhism appears as one of the Heavenly Buddhas. Fortunately, there has been little or no political conflict or persecution of heterodoxy.

Some superficial comparisons of Buddhism and Christianity may facilitate understanding, although such comparison is difficult, and perhaps misleading. The following should be read with a strong caution against the limits of generalisations; any Christian will feel that Christianity is misrepresented just as any Buddhist might feel that the picture of Buddhism is inaccurate.

Both religions originated in the teaching of individual founders and have subsequently developed doctrines concerning their founders. Both religions have shown strong ascetic tendencies, and both have holy Orders of monks and nuns. They both utilize ordained male priests; both have held general synods to authenticate their teachings; both rely to a large extent on written scriptures; believe in heavens and hells, conduct rituals and administer sacraments. They both revere sacred relics, images of saints and make use of sacred chants, prayer beads, incense and candles. As regards their doctrines; both accept doctrines of the miraculous birth of their founders and place great emphasis on the value of love, compassion, charity and other good

works. They also both claim universal validity and have carried out missionary enterprises thus spreading their noble traditions of art and architecture into many lands. Among the sincere devotees of either faith are thousands of admirable individuals — men and women of integrity whose devotion and heroism command universal respect.

There are, nevertheless, some noteworthy differences. Whereas some Buddhists believe in many gods, others are more agnostic and some sects are clearly atheistic; Christianity insists upon belief in one supreme God upon whom all human welfare depends. Christians teach that men live but once and that his soul thereafter passes eternity in heaven or hell. Buddhists teach that all living beings undergo endless births in heavens, hells, in animal realms or in the human realm until they attain the Buddhist goal of release from rebirth. Buddhists regard even gods as subject to rebirth. Christians regard God as omniscient, omnipresent and eternal.

Sri Lanka

The history of Sri Lanka starts with the colonization of the island in the 5th century B.C. by Prince Vijaya from Bengal. Though it would not be unreasonable to suppose that Vijaya may have introduced the elements of Buddhism into Sri Lanka, the religion, however, did not have any wide popularity here until the time of Devānampiyatissa (3rd century B.C.). Tissa was contemporary with Asoka and had friendly relations with the Indian Emperor. He warmly received Thera Mahinda and other monks who were sent by Asoka to preach Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Thera Mahinda chose to arrive in Sri Lanka on the very day of the Poson festival, the full-moon of the month of Poson, since it was a day for the people to amuse themselves with sports usually played on that feast-day and he wanted the king and the people to be in a happy mood favourable for receiving the noble message of the Buddha.

First of all, Thera Mahinda satisfied himself regarding the fitness of the Sinhalese king, Devānampiyatissa, to receive the doctrine. He then gave the teaching contained in the *Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta*[1] on the elephant footprint simile.

In this sermon, the Buddha tells Brahmin Janussoni how the wise disciple comes to the conviction that the Blessed One is fully enlightened, that his doctrine is well-taught and that his disciples have reached the right path. Janussoni was a very rich Brahmin of high rank in Sāvatthi. This discourse is a warning not to rush to hasty

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[1] M. i. Sta. 27.

conclusions as to what is the highest spiritual development and who the person is who is most developed spiritually, namely the Buddha. In respect of everything there are degrees and grades and one should not think that anything belongs to the highest grade without sufficient conclusive evidence. An ordinary man, on entering a forest might see a large footprint and come to the conclusion: "Indeed, it is the footprint of the great royal elephant!" But the skilled elephant tracker looking at the same footprint would think: "This is not necessarily the footprint of the great royal elephant; there are also stunted elephant cows who have such large footprints." The skilled elephant tracker follows the track until he sees the great royal elephant for himself; only then does he come to the conclusion: "Indeed, this is the great royal elephant!"

Similarly, only by going through the various stages of spiritual development himself should one come to the conclusion: "Indeed the Buddha is the Fully Enlightened One!"

At the end of the discourse, it was said that the king with his forty thousand followers was established in the three refuges. The king was so impressed with this sermon that he caused a splendid preaching hall to be erected within the precincts of the palace. Thereafter, Thera Mahinda delivered several other sermons. The commentary on the *Vinaya,* the *Samantapasādika,* records that Mahinda preached the *Petavatthu, Vimānavatthu, Saccasaṃyutta* and the *Devadūta Sutta.* On the second day after his arrival he preached the *Āsivisopama Sutta* in the Nandana Park and no less than 2,500 people are said to have realised the Dhamma.

King Devānampiyatissa sent a mission to India to bring a branch of the Bodhi tree under which Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment. When it reached Sri Lanka, he planted it in Anurādhapura with due pomp and ceremony. According to tradition, monks from different parts of India came when the foundation stone of the *stūpa* was laid.

The reign of Vaṭṭagāmani Abhaya (103–102 B.C)[1] is an important epoch in the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The *Tipiṭaka* which was preserved so long in memory was committed to writing by the monks of the Mahāvihāra, Anurādhapura. Abhaya built a new monastery known as Abhayagiri which became a very important centre of Buddhist culture. Fa-hien gives an interesting account of this monastery which had, as he records, five thousand monks as against three thousand in the Mahāvihāra.

Sri Lanka had grown by this time into a very important centre of Buddhism — a position which she maintains even today. The

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[1] He was restored to the throne again from 89–77 B.C.

reputation of Sri Lankan monasteries as centres of learning attracted scholars from far and wide. Buddhaghosa, the celebrated Buddhist scholar, visited Sri Lanka in the 5th century A.D. during the rule of King Mahānāma (410–432 B.C.). He had studied in the Mahāvihāra for some time before he undertook the translation of the Sinhalese commentaries. In the 8th century the capital was moved from Anurādhapura to Polonnāruwa due to political reasons arising from Tamil aggression.

BURMA

The early history of Buddhism in Burma is obscure. If the Sinhalese tradition is believed, two monks, namely, Soṇa and Uttara, were sent by Emperor Asoka (*c.* 273–236 B.C.) to preach Buddhism in Suvaṇṇabhūmi which is generally identified with Burma. In any case, there is no evidence of any widespread popularity of Buddhism in the land during such an early period. On the basis of literary as well as archaeological sources it may be reasonably presumed that Buddhism was gaining in popularity in Lower Burma during the early centuries of the Christian era. The arrival of Buddhaghosa with a large number of Pali books in Thaton in the 5th century A.D. might have provided a great stimulus to the spread of the religion in the land. The archaeological excavations at Hmawza, have yielded a number of sculptures, terracottas and tablets of about 6th – 7th century A.D. These objects and the Chinese accounts provide ample evidence of the popularity of Buddhism in Prome and neighbouring places during the period under review.

The reign of King Anavratha (Anuruddha) of Pagan (11th century A.D.) is a landmark in the history of Buddhism in Burma. A zealous convert, he made ceaseless efforts to collect Buddhist relics and scriptures. He led an expedition to Thaton and ended up by carrying to Pagan not only loads of holy scriptures and other sacred objects, but also a number of Talaing monks who were known for their profound knowledge. He exchanged religious missionaries with Sri Lanka and obtained from there copies of the complete *Tipiṭaka,* which were collated with the texts obtained from Thaton. Anavratha was a great patron of art. As a result of his efforts and patronage, Buddhism became the religion of the whole of Burma. The example of Anavratha was followed by his successors.

An important event in the history of Buddhism in Burma was the establishment in *circa* 1182 A.D. of the Sinhalese *Nikāya* by Capoṭa, who received his ordination in Sri Lanka. Rivalry continued

between the Sinhalese and Burmese *Nikāyas*[1] for three centuries but ended with a peaceful reconciliation.

As in Sri Lanka, and several other countries in South-East Asia, Buddhism is still a living force in the life of the Burmese people.

THAILAND

Buddhism seems to have been introduced to Thailand during the first or second centuries of the Christian era. Before the occupation of the Menam Valley by the Thais, Thailand under the name of Dvāravatī formed a part of the Cambodian Kingdom. the art of Dvāravatī shows a marked influence of Gupta sculpture and painting.[2] About the middle of the 13th century the Thais became masters of Thailand and Laos. This brought to an end the political sway of Cambodia over them. The Thai rulers were great patrons of *Thera-vāda* Buddhism. The art of Thailand from this time onwards was inspired by Sinhalese traditions.

NEPAL

The early history of Buddhism in Nepal is wrapped in obscurity. Although Gautama the Sakyan Prince was born in 544 B.C. at Lumbini in the Nepalese Terai, 15 miles from his father's palace in the city of Kapilavatthu, it is not known how far his thoughts influenced the people of Nepal as a whole during his life-time. It was the missionary activities of Asoka (*c.* 273–236 B.C.)[3] that introduced

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[1] *Nikāya*, a Chapter of the Order of monks. There are currently two main *Nikāyas* in Thailand and about five each in Burma and Sri Lanka. The differences are mainly in the ways of interpretation of the *Vinaya* rules for monks. There is no difference in the doctrine preached by different *Nikāyas* unlike the more significant differences between different Schools of Buddhism.

[2] Dvāravatī was a flourishing kingdom at the time of Hung Hsang in the first half of the 7th century A.D. In the 8th and 9th A.D. both Siam and Laos were part of Cambodia. Both the Brahmanical religion and Buddhism flourished side by side in all of these regions.

[3] It is believed that in the 3rd century B.C. Asoka, while still a prince, quelled a rebellion among one of the races of Nepal and restored peace and order. His later visit to Lumbini and the erection of an inscribed pillar to commemorate the birth of the Buddha is an important landmark in the history of Buddhism. Thereafter one of his daughters (Cāramatī) married a Nepalese nobleman and built several *stūpas* and monasteries. Vasubandhu, a great Buddhist philosopher of the 4th century is said to have visited Nepal for the propagation of the *Sarvāstivāda*.

and propagated the Buddhist faith on an extensive scale for the first time in Nepal. It is believed that some of the surviving *stūpas* here were originally dedicated by Asoka. The *Bodhnātha* and the *Svayambhūnātha stūpas* are probably of Mauryan origin. During the middle ages, and in particular after the fall of Nālandā, Nepal became an important centre of Tantrik Buddhism. Nepalese sculptures and paintings reveal the influence of the Indian style.

AFGHANISTAN

Culturally, Afghanistan may be considered a part of India during the early period of her history. Buddhism seems to have been introduced here as early as the time of the Mauryas who exercised an effective control over the region. During the early centuries of the Christian era, it was included in the domain of the Kuśāṇs and became an important centre of Gandhāra art as is evident from the archaeological remains at Begram and Bāmiyān. The exquisite style of the Begram ivories has earned the admiration of all art connoisseurs.

TIBET

The Tibetans were originally the followers of an animistic religion called Bonpo. Buddhism found its way to Tibet in the 7th century A.D., when the ruler Srong-Tsan-Gam-po married a Nepalese Buddhist princess. Gam-po was a progressive ruler and maintained a close contact with India. He is said to have sent a messenger called Thonmi Sanbhota who studied Buddhism in India and also adapted the Indian alphabet to the need of writing in Tibetan. However, religious activity can be said to have begun in earnest with the arrival of Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava in Tibet in the 8th century A.D. Padmasambhava introduced Tantrik Buddhism here and built the monastery of Samyé (bsam-yas) about thirty miles from Lhasa. The second period of Tibetan Buddhism which marks the rise of successive sects was inaugurated by Dīpaṅkara Śrīgñāna (also known as Atīśa) in the 11th century A.D. His reformed teachings based upon the *Yogācāra* traditions led to the establishment of the Bka-gdams-pa school (School of the Oral Precepts) which enforced celibacy upon the monks and discouraged magic practices. The later history of Tibet records an uninterrupted continuity of Buddhism with an extensive art and architecture.

CAMBODIA

Cambodia was pre-eminently a Hindu colony in the beginning. Buddhism came to the land during the 5th century A.D., but it did not occupy any dominant position until the time of Yaśovarman who ruled in the 9th century A.D. Yaśovarman established a *Saugatāśrama* meant specially for the Buddhist monks, and formulated elaborate rules for the guidance of the monastery. The rise of King Jayavarman VII (1181 — c. 1220 A.D.) is a landmark in the history of Buddhism in Cambodia. Jayavarman, for his extreme devotion to Buddhism, came to be known after his death as Parama Saugata. His munificence to Buddhist institutions was remarkable.

The early Buddhist art of Cambodia was purely Indian in inspiration. From the 9th century A.D., however, it was the classical Khmer art that became most dominant. Among the important Cambodian temples mention may be made of the Bayon Central temple of Aṅgkor Thom built by Maśovarman (9th century A.D.) and the one built at Aṅgkor Wāt about 1125 A.D.

VIETNAM

Buddhism seems to have been introduced in Vietnam (Campā) during the early centuries of the Christian era as is evident from the discovery of a fine bronze image of Buddha in the *Amarāvatī* style at Dong-Duong. The Chinese chronicles bear evidence that the religion continued to flourish here even subsequently. The Chinese sacked the city of Campā in 605 A.D. and carried away no less than 1,350 works. From the evidence of I-tsing we know that several schools of Buddhism, namely, the *Āryasammitīya* and the *Sarvāstivāda* existed here. The religion occasionally enjoyed the patronage of kings and high officials of Campā also. King Jaya Indravarman established a temple and a monastery at Dong-Duong in 875 A.D. After the conquest of Campā by the Annamites from the north, it was the Chinese form of Buddhism that became predominant here.

INDONESIA

India's cultural contact with the Malay Peninsula and the East Indies goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era. In the beginning, the Brahmanical faiths seem to have been more popular in these regions than the Law of Buddha. Fa-hien during his visit to Java early in the 5th century A.D. found very few Buddhists there, although the number of 'heretics and Brahmanas' was enormous. The popularity of Hinduism in Java and neighbouring states during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. finds confirmation in the inscriptions of King

Pūrṇavarman of Western Java and also those of King Mūlavarman of Borneo. However, Buddhism came to occupy a prominent position in several of these states within a century or so. I-tsing, who visited Sumātrā more than once, remarks that the islands of the Southern Sea were some very important centres of the Buddhist religion.

The king of Srī-vijaya was a great patron of the faith and there were more than one thousand priests in his city. The school that was most popular there was the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* although the *Sammitīya* and other sects were not entirely unknown.

It is not definitely known when Buddhism first reached Malaysia but it is known for certain that in the 7th century A.D. Buddhism was introduced from Java to Malaysia. It existed predominant in Malaysia until the coming of Muslim traders in the 15th century.

The most glorious epoch of Buddhism in those regions was the rule of the Sailendra emperors (8th – 9th centuries A.D.) who held political sway over nearly the whole of Suvaṇṇadvīpa comprising the Malay peninsula, Sumātrā, Java, Bali, Borneo and other islands. The Sailendras were staunch patrons of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and maintained a close contact with India, especially Nālandā. The copper plate inscription of the reign of King Devapāladeva, found in the course of excavations at Nālandā, refers to the erection, by King Bālaputradeva of this dynasty, of a Buddhist monastery at Nālandā. With the Sailendra rule is also associated the history of the construction of several Buddhist temples in Java.

China

According to a Chinese tradition, Buddhism was introduced into China as early as 217 B.C. But there is no authentic evidence in support of this. The official and positive account is that in A.D. 65 the Emperor Ming-Ti of the Han dynasty sent into Khotan a deputation of eighteen persons, who, accompanied by two Indian monks, Kaśyapa Mātaṅga and Dharmaraksa, came back in the year 67 with a collection of Buddhist works. Kaśyapa and Dharmaraksa were placed in the monastery of Lo-Yang where they translated several Buddhist works into Chinese. This marks the beginning of Buddhist activities in China. Some of the prominent monks from India visited China during the 4th and 5th centuries and helped to spread the popularity of Buddhism there by translating and expounding Buddhist texts and philosophy. The activities of these monks created a deep impression upon the mind of the Chinese people and many Chinese scholars came forward to support the cause of Buddhism.

Tao-ngan, who flourished in the 4th century A.D., carefully studied the translations of the Buddhist texts and wrote a series of

commentaries on them. His example was followed by his disciples among whom the name of Hui-Yuan deserves special mention. Hui-Yuan founded a monastery at Lushan and established there a school known as the School of the White Lotus. He also introduced into China the cult of Amitābha which played an important part in the history of Far Eastern Buddhism. The next important epoch in the history of Buddhism in China is marked by the visit of Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma, according to a Chinese account, was a prince of Kāñchī (South India). He became a monk and went to Indonesia to study the Dhyāna School of Buddhism. From there he went to China and established a school of thought according to which meditation or the cultivation of one's own thought alone can lead one to enlightenment. Bodhidharma's teachings were popularized by his able follower, Chi-K'ai.

Buddhism continued to flourish in China under the patronage of the T'ang and subsequent royal dynasties. The religion, however, lost much of its force with the introduction of Lamaism in northern China about the 13th century. This brought formal rites to the forefront and relegated the real religion into the background.

KOREA

Buddhism was introduced to Korea in the 4th century A.D. at a time when the country was divided into three provinces: Koguryu in the north, Pakche in the south-west and Silla in the south-east. Buddhism was first brought to Pakche by an Asian monk called Mārānanda. Silla was the last province to embrace Buddhism about thirty years later. Buddhism has received royal patronage almost throughout Korea's history. Buddhism was at the height of its power in the 11th century A.D during the Wang dynasty and it had been spreading under the influence of the kings of the Silla dynasty. During that time several famous scholars went to China in order to study Buddhist philosophy. Among them were: Yuan Ts'o (613–638 A.D) of the Fa Sian sect, Yuan Hiao (617–670 A.D) and Yi Siang of the Houa Yen sect.

After the 11th century, Buddhism, which had hitherto been a religion of the aristocracy became the faith of the common people through the efforts of a number of monks. During the Yuan dynasty the Mongolian Empire gained sovereignty over the Wang dynasty and Korean Buddhism was much influenced by Lamaism. After the decline of the Mongolian Empire, the Rhee dynasty of Korea accepted Confucianism which dislodged Buddhism from its predominant position but it continued to flourish as the religion of the masses. Modern Korean Buddhism is, in fact, Zen tinged with a belief in

Amitābha Buddha or Maitreyya Bodhisattva. Mahāyāna Buddhism first flourished in China and gradually travelled to Japan via Korea.

JAPAN

By the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. when Buddhism began to filter into Japan from Korea, centuries of development had enriched, altered and obscured the original orientation of Buddhism. In the absence of any historical criticism of source documents it was almost impossible to discriminate the original contributions of Sakyamuni among the vast bulk of Buddhist literature. A few of the early Japanese sects followed *Hīnayāna* teaching, which was unknown in China and Korea. Subsequently the various *Mahāyāna* sects appeared in Japan. More than once, a Japanese ruler has dispatched loyal monks to China to find some new type of Buddhism that would not indulge in political intrigue. In each instance, the outcome was the establishment of another *Mahāyāna* sect in Japan. In addition to these, several indigenous Japanese sects developed. Despite sharp controversies within sects, there has been a minimum of hostility between the many sects. In modern times the stronger sects actually contribute towards the maintenance of temples and traditions that represent the weaker sects, lest these monuments to history perish.

Buddhism came to Japan through Korea in the 6th century A.D. The progress of the religion was somewhat slow in the beginning, as one of the two parties struggling for political power was opposed to its introduction. It, however, received court sanction as soon as Prince Umayado or Shotoku defeated the anti-Buddhistic Mononobe family and became regent to the Empress Suiko. Shotoku was a man of remarkable qualities and he did for Buddhism in Japan what Asoka did for it in India. He drew up Japan's first Constitution and declared Buddhism to be the ultimate object of faith. He sent many students to China to study Buddhistic doctrines, and himself wrote commentaries on *Mahāyāna* texts such as the ***Sadharmapuṇḍarīka*** the ***Vimalakīrti sūtra*** etc. Among his other achievements, mention may be made of the construction of a large monastic establishment at Höryūji, which was embellished with paintings recalling the Ajanta style.

The examples of Shotoku were also followed by emperors of the subsequent period. The Emperor Shomu and his wife declared themselves to be servants of the Buddhist faith. During their reign a Buddhist temple was built in each province. The Todaji temple

dedicated to Vairocana became the main shrine of Nara. Side by side there also arose a syncretic movement leading to a compromise between Shintoism (the original native cult of Japan) and Buddhism. The Shinto goddess, Amaterasu, was declared to be a manifestation of Vairocana. This example of combining the worship of the native deities with that of Buddhist deities was followed in almost all parts of the country to the advantage of Buddhism.

The next period of Buddhism in Japan marks the rise of two influential sects, the Tendai and the Shingon, founded by Saicho (767–822 A.D.) and Kukai (774–835 A.D.) respectively. Their object was to nationalize Buddhist doctrines in order to make Buddhism a religion of the masses. Their efforts, as we know, met with remarkable success.

Various other movements and sects came into existence subsequently. Among them the Jodo sect (founded in 1175 by Genku, better known as Honen), the Zodo-shin sect (founded by Shinran) and Zen Buddhism with its various branches deserve special mention. The followers of the Jodo sect place an implicit faith in the saving power of Amitābha. Even the recitation of his name entitles one, according to them, to gain access to his paradise after one's death. The teachings of the Jodo-shin affirm that all living beings shall be saved on account of the vow taken by Amitābha. Hence, the religious practices in ordinary life are nothing but the expression of a grateful heart. Zen Buddhism lays great stress on contemplation which alone can lead one to enlightenment.

In modern Japan the **Tendai** sect no longer holds the pre-eminent place that it maintained in the ninth and tenth centuries. The 'reformed sects' of **Jodo** and **Jodo Shinshu** established in the twelfth century and devoted to worship of Amida, claim the largest numbers of adherents. The Zen sect imported from China in the later years of the twelfth century wields great influence and the indigenous sect of Nichiren, which dates from the thirteenth century is popular in Eastern Japan. To the average Japanese Buddhist, however, sectarian distinctions mean little; he generally worships at any place that is deemed holy and is careful not to miss any Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine when on a pilgrimage. As one educated gentleman commented, "You know, some of them might have power, it is best to worship all of the gods." Many forms of Buddhism can be seen in different parts of the world. Their doctrines and practices are innumerable and often contradictory. In the course of two thousand five hundred years

Buddhism has spread throughout India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Indo-China, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. The protean forms of modern Buddhism stem from thinkers in every part of southern and eastern Asia. Often the teachings of the founder are submerged beneath doctrines evolved in subsequent centuries. The numerous sects and diverse doctrines, are still, however, recognized as Buddhism despite the fact that it cannot be said of any one doctrine or ritual, "This, and only this, is Buddhism."

The spread of Buddhism over Asia provides one of the great sagas of human history. Zealous missionaries from India carried the doctrine, the philosophy and the art to every part of the vast continent; their influence transformed many a savage tribe into a civilized people; they imparted the mysteries of writing and opened the gates to learning, while their new ideals of human worth won support. Regional isolation fostered the rise of diverse Buddhist traditions; the Tibetan lama contrasts with the bhikkhus of Sri Lanka, and both differ from the married priests of Japan.

We have mentioned above how Buddhism spread in the continent of Asia. We learn from the Asokan inscriptions that missionaries were also sent to the kingdoms under the Greek rulers Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (B.C. 285–239) and Magas of Cyrene (B.C. 252–244). It did not remain confined to Asiatic countries alone. As a result of long researches, scholars have come to the conclusion that the gospel of the Blessed One went as far as the Mediterranean countries and Africa.

Buddhism became a world religion without resorting to persecution. Its success was mainly due to the indefatigable effort and dedicated labour of the Dhammadūta Bhikkhus. Professor P. Lakshimi Narasu says: "The disciples of the Great Teacher have always considered others first and themselves afterwards. Forgetful of home, ready to meet death, indifferent to renown or failure, they have laboured to open the minds and eyes of those deceived by false teaching. To spread the holy doctrine they travelled over land and sea, crossed through snowy mountains and sandy deserts, braved all toils and dangers."[1]

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[1] *'The Essence of Buddhism'* p 41.

CHAPTER 42

BUDDHIST COUNCILS

THE FIRST COUNCIL

Three Councils *(saṅgīti)* were held to draw up the canonical texts in the purest form. The first Council was held at Rājagaha immediately after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. The First Council settled the Dhamma and *Vinaya*. The Venerable Mahākassapa presided over the assembly of five hundred[1] in which Upāli and Ānanda played an important role. The Council was necessitated by the determination of the disciples of the Buddha to preserve the purity of his teachings.

Mahākassapa was not present at the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha at Kusinārā. While he was proceeding from Pāvā to Kusinārā with a large retinue, news of the decease of the Master was brought to him by a naked ascetic of the *Ājīvaka* sect. The *thera* Subhadda exhorted the monks, who were vociferous in their lamentation, "Do not grieve, we are now free from that great ascetic who used to admonish us for our unbecoming conduct! We will now be free to do as we wish without any hindrance." This irreverent remark filled the Venerable Mahākassapa with alarm for the future purity of the Dhamma preached by the Master. The remarks of Subhadda were a clear indication for the convening of a Council for the fulfilment of this noble objective. It may be observed in this connection that Mahā-kassapa was not the only person to have such thoughts. There were many others who felt that with the passing away of the Master, the Dhamma he had taught would disappear.

After some deliberation, the town of Rājagaha was selected for the meeting of the Council, which was held near the Sattapaṇṇi Cave. The cave was situated on the side of Mount Vebhāra. The meeting actually took place in the second month of the rainy season. Vener-able Mahākassapa took the initiative and chose 499 other monks to form the Council. The number of the monks was chosen in pursuance of a vote by the general congregation of monks assembled on the occasion of the Master's *parinibbāna*. There was however some protest regarding the omission of Venerable Ānanda; he was accepted as a result of a motion put forward by the monks. The procedure

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[1] Vin. ii. 284f.

followed at the council was a simple one. With the permission of the Saṅgha, Venerable Mahākassapa put questions on the *Vinaya* to Venerable Upāli. All the questions related to the four offences of defeat *(Pārājika)* as well as to the question as to who would be guilty and who innocent of these offences. In the same manner the text of all the remaining *Vinaya* rules was agreed upon at the Council.

Next, Venerable Mahākassapa put questions on the *Sutta Piṭaka,* including all the five *Nikāyas,* to Venerable Ānanda. The answers given by Ananda gave the occasions of the sermons and the person or persons with reference to whom they were given. These answers settled the corpus of the *Sutta Piṭaka.*

In fact, there was considerable agitation over the admission of Venerable Ānanda to the Synod. Venerable Mahākassapa is said to have entertained misgivings on his admission on the grounds of his failure to reach *Arahantship,* which he did not actually reach until the eve of the Council. But in spite of this achievement Ānanda was admonished at the Council on several points as follows:

1. He neglected to ask which were the minor and lesser training rules when the Buddha advised him that after his passing away the monks could repeal them if they wished to. This was due to being overwhelmed with grief at the imminent passing away of the Master.[1]
2. He had to press the corner of the Master's robe with his feet while sewing it as there was no one to assist him.
3. He permitted women to worship the body of the Master first.
4. He was under the spell of Māra (the evil one) when he forgot to request the Master to live on to the end of the aeon *(kappa).*
5. He interceded to plead for the admission of women to the Order out of compassion for Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

Another important business conducted at the First Council was the passing of the highest penalty on Venerable Channa who was the charioteer of the Master at the time of his great renunciation. Due to this he was extremely arrogant. The penalty imposed was one of complete social boycott.

There is an account in the second volume of *Dulva*, the Tibetan Vinaya of the *Sarvāstivādin school.* According to that account the fixing of the Canon took place in the following order: 1) *Dharma* by

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[1] See *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta,* D. ii. 154.

Ānanda, 2) *Vinaya* by Upāli, and 3) *Mātṛkā (i.e. Abhidharma)* by Mahākāśyapa himself. So according to the *Dulva Abhidharma* was also established at the First Council. Fa-hian and Hiuen-thsang[1] also mention the First Council and the latter mentions the redaction of *Abhidharma* by Mahākāśyapa.

Summary — The First Council achieved four results:

1. The settlement of the *Vinaya* under the leadership of Upāli.
2. The settlement of the text of the Dhamma under the leadership of Ānanda.
3. The admonishment of Venerable Ānanda.
4. The punishment of Venerable Channa.

THE SECOND COUNCIL

The Second Council was held at Vaisāli a century after the passing away of the Master. The monks of the Vajji country were in the habit of practising Ten Points *(dasa vatthūni)* which were regarded as unorthodox by Yasa the son of Kākaṇḍaka. In the presence of the supporters of the Vajji monks he declared these practices to be unlawful and immoral. The Vajji monks, however, pronounced the penalty of *Paṭisāraṇīya kamma* upon him. This formal act of the Saṅgha commands the offender to apologize to a lay-person or person he has offended. Yasa defended his own view and by his eloquent advocacy won the lay supporters over to his own side. This increased the fury of the Vajji monks who pronounced the punishment of *Ukkhepaṇīya kamma*[2] upon Yasa, which meant his virtual expulsion from the Saṅgha.

The ten points[3] were as follows:

1. The practice of carrying salt in a horn *(siṅgiloṇakappa)*. This practice is contrary to *Pācittiya* 38 which prohibits the storage of food.
2. The practice of taking meals when the shadow is two fingers broad *(dvaṅgulakappa);* i.e. when it is after noon. This is

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[1] S. Beal, *'Buddhist Records'*, i. pp lx–lxi; pp 162–164; J. Legge, *'Records of Buddhist Kingdoms'*, p 85.

[2] This formal act of the Saṅgha suspends the monk's participation in the *Pāṭimokkha* recital and other formal acts of the Saṅgha.

[3] Cūḷavagga Ch XII, Vin. iii. 294ff, 305.

against *Pācittiya* 37 which forbids the taking of food after midday.

3. The practice of going to another house and taking a second meal there on the same day *(gāmantarakappa)*. This is contrary to *Pācittiya* 35 which forbids eating after being satisfied.
4. The practice of observing the Uposatha ceremony in various places within the same monastic compound *(āvāsakappa)*. This is contrary to the rules of residence in a monastic compound *(sīma)*.
5. The practice of obtaining consent for a formal act of the Saṅgha after it has been done *(anumatikappa)*. This is contrary to the monastic discipline.
6. The practice of using customary practices as precedents *(āciṇṇakappa)*. It is only allowable to do so if the customary practices are already allowable, but not if they are not. There is no freedom from offence if one is following the custom of one's teacher who is also wrong.
7. The practice of drinking buttermilk after meals *(amathita-kappa)*. This is contrary to *Pācittiya* 35 which forbids eating after being satisfied.
8. The practice of drinking fermented toddy *(jalogiṃ pātuṃ)*. This is contrary to *Pācittiya* 51 which forbids the use of intoxicants.
9. The practice of using a rug with no border *(adasakaṃ nisīdanaṃ)*. This is contrary to *Pācittiya* 89.
10. The practice of accepting gold and silver *(jātarūparajataṃ paṭiggahanā)*. This is contrary to *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* 18 which forbids the acceptance of gold and silver.

Venerable Yasa declared these points to be unlawful. After the sentence of excommunication had been passed on him, he went to Kosambi and sent messengers to the *bhikkhus* of the Western country and Avantī and the Southern country inviting them to assemble and decide the question in order to arrest the growth of irreligion and to ensure the preservation of the *Vinaya*.

Next, he proceeded to the Ahogaṅgā Hill where Venerable Sambhūta the rag-robe-wearer dwelt and expounded the Ten Points advocated by the Vajjian monks. About the same time, sixty *Arahants* came from the Western country and eighty-eight from Avantī and the Southern country. These monks declared the question to be hard and subtle. They proceeded to meet Venerable Revata of Soreyya and

enlist his support. They placed the issue before Venerable Revata and each one of the Ten Points was declared to be invalid by him.

Meanwhile, the Vajjian monks also went to Venerable Revata who was then at Sahaji in order to enlist his support for them, but he refused. However, they urged his disciple, Uttara, to take up their case, but he too refused. At the suggestion of Revata, the monks returned to Vaisāli in order to settle the dispute at the place of its origin. Seven hundred monks met in a Council, but there was much rambling talk and fruitless discussion. In order to avoid further irrelevant discussion, the matter was referred to a Committee consisting of four monks from the east and four from the west. Bhikkhu Ajita was appointed as the seat regulator. Venerable Sabbakāmi was elected as President. The Ten Points were put one by one and they were declared unlawful. The questions were stated again and the same decision was arrived at in the full assembly of the Council. The unanimous verdict of the assembly declared the conduct of the Vajji monks to be unlawful.

The Council was held in the reign of King Kālāsoka, a descendant of Ajātasattu. Kālāsoka, though formerly in favour of the Vajjian monks, was prevailed upon to give his support to the Council of Theras. After the final judgement, the seven hundred monks engaged in the recital of the *Vinaya* and Dhamma and drew up a new edition resulting in the *Piṭakas.*

THE THIRD COUNCIL

The Third Council was held at Pātaliputta under the aegis of Emperor Asoka. He was won over to Buddhism within a few years of his ascension to the throne. The occasion for the Third Council was supplied by the need to establish the purity of the Canon which had been imperilled by the rise of different sects and their rival claims, teachings and practices. The Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, who is reputed to have converted the Emperor to Buddhism, was pained to observe the corrupt practices that had crept into the Saṅgha and the heretical doctrines preached by sectarians of various descriptions. He succeeded in subduing the heresies and expelling the sectarians from the Saṅgha. The most significant outcome of the Council was that it restored the true doctrine and propounded the *Abhidhamma* treatise, Points of Controversy *(kathāvatthu)* during the session of the Council.

The Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa elected a thousand monks of the Saṅgha who were well versed in the three *Piṭakas* to make a

compilation of the true doctrine. For nine months he worked with the monks and the authentic *Tipiṭaka* was completed. This Council was held in the same manner and with the same zeal as those of Mahā-kassapa and Yasa. In the midst of the Council, Venerable Moggali-putta Tissa set forth the *Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa* wherein the heretical doctrines were thoroughly examined and refuted. Thus ended the Third Council in which a thousand monks took part.

One of the momentous results of this Council was the despatch of *Dhammadūta* monks to different countries for the propagation of the *Saddhamma*, the true dhamma. It is to a large extent due to these Dhammadūta activities that Buddhism became the predominant religion of a large portion of mankind.

The Council of Kaniśka

The Fourth Council was held under the auspices of King Kaniśka who was a powerful king of the Śaka or Turuska race. He was esteemed as highly by Northern Buddhists as Asoka was by the *Theravādins*. It is almost certain that the date of the Council held under his inspiration and patronage was about 100 A.D. The place of the Council was, according to one authority, Jalandhara; and according to another, in Kashmir. The *Theravādins* do not recognize this Council and there is no reference to it in the Chronicles of Ceylon. One of the results of the Council was the settling of the dissensions in the Saṅgha. The king built a monastery for the accommodation of 500 monks who were called upon to write commentaries on the *Piṭakas*. The proceedings of the Council were thus confined to the composition of the commentaries.

Councils in Sri Lanka

According to the Chronicles and other traditions of Sri Lanka, three Councils were held in Sri Lanka.

The first of these was held during the reign of King Devānam-piyatissa (247–207 B.C.). This Council was held after the arrival of the Buddhist monks, headed by Arahant Mahinda, a son of Emperor Asoka. According to tradition, sixty thousand *Arahants* took part in the assembly and as desired by Arahant Mahinda, the Venerable Ariṭṭha, a Sinhalese Thera, recited the Canon. Ariṭṭha is considered to be the first Sinhalese pupil of Mahinda. The Council took place at the site of the *Thūpārāma* in Anurādhapura.

In spite of this, the next Council, which was held during the time of King Vaṭṭagāmani Abhaya (101–77 B.C.) is considered, by

the *Theravāda* school, to be the FOURTH COUNCIL. According to the Sinhalese tradition, not only was the *Tipiṭaka* rehearsed, but its commentaries were revised. The learned *Mahātheras* decided to hold this Synod so that the entire Canon and the commentaries might be committed to writing. At the end of the Council, texts, along with the commentaries, were inscribed on palm leaves.

As many as 500 learned monks took part in the deliberations under the Venerable Rakkhita Mahāthera as president. This is called the Alokavihāra Council as it was held at Āloka Cave in the village of Matale in Sri Lanka.

About a century ago, in 1865 A.D., another Council was held at Ratnapura in Sri Lanka under the Venerable Hikkaḍuve Siri Sumaṅgala. It continued for five months and was patronized by Iddamalgoḍa Basnāyaka Nilamé.

COUNCILS IN THAILAND

The *Saṅgītivaṃsa,* written by Somdej Phra Vanarat during the reign of King Rāma I in B.E. 2332 (1789 A.D.), records as many as nine Councils. Of these nine Councils, the first three were held in India, the fourth to seventh in Sri Lanka and the eighth and ninth in Thailand. The history of the first five Councils is the same as that of the Ceylon Chronicles. The last two councils, as described in the *Saṅgītivaṃsa,* were not Councils in the true sense of the term.

The Sixth Council, as mentioned in the *Saṅgītivaṃsa,* was held during the reign of King Mahānāma in B.E. 516 (in Sri Lanka) in which only the commentaries were translated from Sinhalese into Pali by Venerable Buddhaghosa.

The Seventh Council is said to have revised only the commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka* and these were recited in the Council held under Venerable Mahākassapa of Udumbaragiri as President. This took place in B.E. 1587 in the reign of King Parakramabahu the Great. This Council, which took place in the Royal palace, lasted a year.

The Eighth Council was convened by King Srīdharmacakravarti Tilaka Rājādhirāja, the ruler of Northern Thailand, in Chiengmai, his capital. The Council was held in Mahābodhi Ārāma between 2000 and 2026 B.E. and continued for a year. All the learned monks in Thailand took part in this Council.

The Ninth Council was held in Bangkok in B.E. 2331, after a war between Thailand and a neighbouring kingdom. The old capital of Ayōdhyā was destroyed by fire and many books and manuscripts of the *Tipiṭaka* were reduced to ashes. Under the royal patronage,

218 elders and 32 lay scholars assembled together and continued the recitation of the *Tipiṭaka* for about a year.

COUNCILS IN BURMA

The first three Councils having been held in India and the fourth in Sri Lanka where the Pali books were committed to writing, the FIFTH COUNCIL was held in order to prepare a uniform edition of the Pali Canon and to record it on marble slabs. This great Buddhist Council was convened at Mandalay in 24 B.E. (1871 A.D.) under the patronage of King Mindon Min, and 2,400 learned monks and teachers participated. The Elders Jāgarābhivaṃsa, Narindābhidhaja and Sumaṅgala Sāmi presided in turn. The recitation and recording of the *Tipiṭaka* on marble continued for about five months in the royal palace. Various available editions of the *Tipiṭaka* were used for comparison and collation by the learned *Mahātheras,* and the recording was done with painstaking care on 729 marble slabs, especially selected for the purpose.

The SIXTH COUNCIL was inaugurated in May 1954, in Rangoon, with the collaboration and participation of the learned *Mahātheras* of various countries of the world, particularly India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Bangladesh.[1] The Venerable Abhidhaja Mahāraṭṭhaguru Bhadanta Revata presided. Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw took the role of chief questioner, the central role in clarifying the *Tipiṭaka.* About 500 monks from Burma, well versed in the *Tipiṭaka,* took part in re-examining the texts of the *Tipiṭaka.* Similar groups of learned monks were organized in each of the Buddhist countries to examine their texts. The Great Council that was inaugurated in 1954 was to go on until the completion of its task at the full-moon of *Vesākha,* 1956. That was the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's *Parinibbāna.* In this Council the texts of the *Tipiṭaka* with their commentaries and sub-commentaries were revised and edited and brought out in printed form; 118 volumes in Burmese script.

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[1] The author of this book had the privilege to participate in this Council.

CHAPTER 43

THE HISTORY OF THE PAGODA[1]

Prince Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment at Bodhgayā in India and thereafter preached his method of liberation during the 6th century B.C. It is recorded in the Pali texts[2] that he passed away at the Malla princes' park in Kusinārā, and when his body was cremated only fragments of the bones remained. The Mallas laid these sacred relics in a golden chamber in their council hall and then paid homage in veneration of them.

When the news of the Buddha's passing away reached King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the Liccavis of Vesālī, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Koliyas of Rāmagāma, the Veṭhadīpa Brahmin and the Mallas of Pāva, each sent messages to Kusinārā, demanding the right to receive a portion of the relics. At first the local Mallas were inclined to resist. Then the Brahmin Droṇa addressed the assembly: "I beg you, sirs, to hear me. The Enlightened One taught us always to practise forbearance; it would be unseemly if strife should arise, with war and bloodshed, over the custody of the Buddha's remains — that best of men! Let us take the friendly way and agree to share them out in eight portions, so that far and wide reliquary memorials might be raised and mankind, seeing them, may find faith in the Omniscient One."

This wise advice was approved and Droṇa was commissioned to see to the division and apportionment of the relics. After the relics had been divided the Moriyas of Pipphalīvana came to know of the Buddha's passing and made a similar request for a portion but by then it was too late and they could only obtain a portion of the ashes left from the wood of the pyre. Brahmin Droṇa was given the golden urn which had originally contained the remains. Then all those who had obtained a share of the relics built pagodas over them in their respective cities. So altogether ten pagodas were built; eight containing

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[1] Pagoda, *dāgäba* (Sinhalese), *stūpa* (Skt.), *thūpa* (Pali) *cetiya* (Pali) and *caitya* (Skt.) are synonyms. Pagoda — a Buddhist tower in China, Burma etc. and *dāgäba* have been derived from the word *dhātugabbha* (Skt. *dhātu-garbha)* = womb of relics.

[2] D. ii. 156f.

relics, one containing the ashes from the pyre and one containing the golden urn.[1]

In the course of time further subdivisions were made and relics were taken to various parts of India and into neighbouring countries, where pagodas were erected for them in their turn.

Little remains from this very early era; most of the oldest surviving pagoda sites date from the 3rd century B.C. — following the conversion and patronage of emperor Asoka. According to inscriptions, Asoka, the last major emperor of the Mauryan dynasty in India, renounced armed conquest after a particularly bloody conquest of the Kalingas in the Eastern coastal region of India and became a Buddhist, adopting the policy of 'conquest by Dhamma (righteousness)'; this was the great turning point in his career.

Asoka was constant in honouring every aspect of the Buddha's teaching. He encouraged compassion and peace amongst the masses and, as stated in the older chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* erected 84,000 pagodas in as many townships.[2] This emperor's vigorous patronage of Buddhism during his reign furthered its expansion in and beyond his territories, and many of the pillars remain on which he published decrees in the form of Buddhist religious instruction. Because of his use of the more durable building materials then in use, the oldest surviving Buddhist monuments date from this period. The most important are the pagodas he had built to enshrine relics, ashes and different offerings to commemorate the Buddha, his predecessors and disciples.

The pagoda symbolizes peace, harmony, compassion and the noble and exemplary qualities of the Buddha. As such it is venerated by the Buddha's followers and admirers alike. The name by which it was originally known was ***stūpa*** in Sanskrit or ***Thūpa*** in Pali, from which, via the Hindi *'top'*, English has acquired the term ***tope*** for this kind of reliquary construction. Its meaning has now been extended from those structures in which religious relics are kept, to any religious building, more particularly temples, of roughly the same shape, throughout the Buddhist world.

There was once in South India a gold coin known as a pagoda, which has a tangential relation to Buddhist lore. The proverbial phrase "shake the pagoda tree" means much what a Westerner would understand by having a 'money tree', and is equivalent to the

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[1] D. ii. 164–168.

[2] VinA. 41ff.

legendary 'wish-fulfilling tree' of the East. A representation of this plays its part in the ***Kaṭhiṇa*** celebrations at the end of the Rains Retreat in Buddhist countries: a triangular slatted frame on a raised axis (looking somewhat like a Christmas tree) festooned all over with bank-notes!

The pagoda has something of the pyramid about it. Like those of Egypt, it developed as a receptacle for the remains of the revered dead; like those of Central America, it became a grandiose temple with cosmological significance. The shape of all is supposed to have developed from ancient burial mounds, or something like those stone piles of primeval Greece, the original 'Herms', in which the spirit of the god Hermes, 'he of the stone-heap', was supposed to dwell.

Among the pagodas built by Asoka still in existence, are those in Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Kusinārā and Sānchi. Perhaps the most celebrated in India is that erected by Kaniśka near Peshawar in the 2nd century of our era to enshrine a collection of the Buddha's relics. An earlier, though problematic, example is one excavated at Piprāva, twelve miles south of the Buddha's birthplace at Lumbini, in 1897. A Pali inscription around the funerary coffer it contained claims that it housed the ashes of the Buddha enshrined by his own clan, the Sakyans. Upon a base 15ft high and 116ft in diameter rested a dome 35ft high and 68ft in diameter. Beneath the solid brickwork was discovered a massive coffer hollowed from a single block of hard sandstone and weighing some 1,527 lbs. Inside were five assorted vessels containing disintegrated ash with a small admixture of bone, and pieces of jewellery left as keepsakes by his near relatives. The contents were subsequently presented to Calcutta museum which, I believe, later sent portions to interested Buddhist countries.

With the spread of Buddhism, pagodas began to be built in other lands as well and are still to be found in all those countries it touched, including some (Indonesia for example) in which the practice of Buddhism has long since ceased to exist. One of the best known reliquary pagodas outside India is the Ratnamāli Cetiya in Anurādhapura, Sri Lanka. Another notable example is Burma's huge Shwedagon Pagoda, standing on ground some 168ft above Rangoon and itself rising another 368ft to a tapering pinnacle — higher than London's St Paul's Cathedral. The entire edifice is covered with gold, housed inside its solid brickwork are relics of the Buddha. Its imposing effect is enhanced by the fact that the road dips before

climbing the slope, so that the building looms up above you as you approach it.

The pagoda is not only a testimony to the peace and compassion of the Buddha but may also symbolize the invisible axis joining the centres of the earth. The Japanese refer to the four columns at the corners of their pagodas as the pillars of the sky. This cosmic diagram, fixed in architectural form, was thought to be an emanation of the precious relics enshrined within. The concept of the building as a magic diagram and of its animation by what it houses probably had its origin in the altar of Vedic India.

Without doubt the most imposing of the cosmological pagodas in the shape of a ***maṇḍala*** is at Borobudur in Java. Rising from a square base 502ft across are a series of four terraces adorned with richly carved decorative panels and many other sculptural features. These lead up to a central platform where three circular terraces covered with 72 *stūpas*, each containing a larger than life-size seated Buddha, surround a great central *stūpa*. The whole is about 400ft high and is set on a small hill in the middle of the plain surrounded by volcanoes. To travel up from its foot is to tread symbolically the path of spiritual advancement. The base (and its accompanying bas-reliefs) represent the realm of desire *(kāmadhātu);* from this one ascends to the realm of form *(rūpadhātu)*, represented by the terraces and their depictions of incidents from the lives of the Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas;* above this again is the formless realm *(arūpadhātu)* in which the *stūpas* very properly conceal the form of the Buddha.

In our own day the tradition of the purely symbolical pagoda has been given new life by those responsible for the Peace Pagodas, and for the first time they are now being built in countries where the Buddha is little acknowledged. It used to be that for those of the West the word 'pagoda' conjured up a building which, however exotic or charming, was connected with superstition and heathen ways. It has been the distinction of those in the Peace Pagoda movement to free it of this taint and give the word a fresh and more positive significance, for now it is associated with that active spirit of devotion which manifest itself in caring for the welfare of all the world's beings. As such it provides a focus for all nations and creeds round which to rally in their fight for survival and in defence of the true spiritual values which all share, based on the perfection of love and compassion. Rather than shrines of a past Enlightened One or symbols of his virtues, they are the inspiration of Buddhas to be.

CHAPTER 44

BUDDHIST METAPHYSICS

With regard to cosmological questions, Buddhism adopted those prevalent and accepted theories rather than attempting to formulate new ones.

Time was expressed in terms which may be usefully compared with the theories of the *Jaina* and *Sāṅkhya* schools and, although the facts of evolution and devolution were equally-well described in all Indian schools of philosophy, it was the Buddhist school which gave minute details of conditions and peoples living in the four world periods.[1] Since such cycles are apt to repeat themselves, there is no evidence that Buddhism referred to a Creator. Hence it has been said:

> "For here there is no *Brahmā* god,
> Creator of the round of births,
> Phenomena alone flow on —
> Cause and component their condition."[2]

Buddhism contains neither a divinity nor a theology. *Brahmā* was conceived as a personal god, residing in the *Brahmā-loka,* who occasionally visited the Buddha to ask for advice. In this connection, therefore, we should recall the epithet of the Buddha; 'Teacher of gods and men' *(satthā devamanussānaṃ).*

Since a deification of the Buddha is not possible, the universe, on that account, ceases to be *theocentric;* the whole of 'creation' is seen as self-created and self-creating and beings found on earth are not necessarily unique creatures in a limitless solar system. In addition to this, it should be borne in mind that there can be no *one* or First Cause, but rather several, mutually inter-dependent causes and conditions.

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[1] As formulated in Hindu literature; the four ages *(yugas)* were so called after the four throws of an Indian dice game: *Krita yuga* — the 'Golden Age', 3,456,000 years; *Treta Yuga* — 1,728,000 years; *Dvipara Yuga* — 864,000 years; and *Kali Yuga* — the present 'Black Age' which began on Friday 18th February, 3102 B.C. and will last 432,000 years.

[2] Vism. 603.

On the question of ontological reasoning, Buddhism rarely concerns itself with 'Thusness' *(Tathatā)*. All conditioned things are selfless. The Realist School *(Sarvāstivāda)* propounded the atomic theory whereby particles making up the so-called substance of life were seen to exist only for infinitesimally short moments, being always in a state of flux. 'Momentary destruction' *(kṣṇa-bhaṅga)* was always held by the inclusion in the *world*, in addition to the individual, as being also in a state of constant arising and passing away or, in one word, becoming *(bhava)*.

The concept of voidness (Pāli, *Suññatā*, Sanskrit, *Śūnyatā*) was meant to imply not just emptiness or nothingness but in a higher sense, a state devoid of all conditions characterizing life. hence the paradoxical equation: *suñña-asuñña* — a state where anything can exist devoid of its attributes.

Again, 'true reality is no reality' or 'true character is no character' — such terms should be interpreted in their ordinary sense whilst the adjective in each case determines the real meaning. Hence, one arrives at a twofold meaning: the relative versus the absolute.

With regard to psychological questions, Buddhism has always firmly adhered to the principle of no-soul *(anatta* or *anātman)*. There is no 'real self', immutable and immortal and, in general terms also, there can be no essence that can be unchanging or eternal. In all things, therefore, no substance, no permanence, no duration.

No special eschatological theories were elaborated by the Buddhists as all beings were viewed in the light of an eternal flux of becoming. Death implied birth and vice versa. By attaining to complete release of mind, of all earthly desires, one would have attained to the end of self-creation, as all desires are born of self and 'freedom from passion' *(rāgakkhayo)* connotes at one and the same time the freedom or liberation from a *self*-centred personality.

Buddhism does, however, have much more to say on epistemology than most other philosophies. For sources of cognition, Buddhism has recourse to the world of the senses, inference and intuition. Thus, sense data, reason and inner experience all provide our contents of knowledge. We can, in addition, have recourse to the experience of Enlightenment *(Bodhi)*. It should, of course, be emphasised that the states of calmness and equilibrium are unattainable without purity of conduct; this must come prior to the completion of insight (i.e. the perfection of intellect and wisdom, perfect enlightenment).

The Buddha, as a man, taught men to become perfect. This, in terms of an equation, meant:

Principle of self-creation = goal of life ideal;
Realisation of life-ideal = Buddhahood or *Arahantship.*

But, naturally, enlightenment is unthinkable unless an Enlightened One arose originally to define what exactly constituted that term.

There are three interpretations as to what is meant by the Middle Path: between two extremes of 1) self-indulgence and self-mortification, 2) between eternalism and nihilism and 3) between optimism and pessimism.

Such a middle position equals a third extreme tending to neither one or other side representing, as it does, a step higher on the ladder of dialectics. Eventually the stage is reached when an idealistic synthesis takes place transcending the remaining two paths and *this* equals the highest truth.

Nāgārjuna's methods of dialectical argument are particularly notable. He followed the Buddha's method of first evaluating worldly or mundane truth by comparing it with higher (not necessarily the *highest*) truth. He then set beside it still higher truth whilst relegating the previous conception of truth to the level of common-sense truth. Eventually, following logical conclusions, the higher truth becomes absolute or ultimate truth which can be comprehended by all.

Nāgārjuna employed the 'eightfold negation' in an absolute sense in his philosophy: production and extinction, permanence and annihilation, unity and diversity, coming and going (arising and passing). One must not forget his method of demonstrating the nature of truth using all examples to hand and employment of the classic 'discriminating method from the fourfold thesis': positive, negative, both, neither. 'Yes' and 'No' being regarded as unsatisfactory and inadequate terms, the Buddha himself employed the foregoing method when answering opponents: e.g.,

1. "Is the world caused by the self?"
2. "... by another?"
3. "... by both?"
4. "... by neither?"

Buddhist logic is not a formal logic of thought but one of dispute or debate, an investigation of cause, the art of argumentation

and refutation.[1] The aim of Buddhist thought was the establishment of the 'Kingdom of Truth', its foundation being for the benefit of a *Cakkavatti* a 'Wheel-turning' or universal monarch.

At the time of the Buddha it would have been impossible to 'Set in Motion the Wheel of the Law' without reference to some of the fundamental principles of Brahmanism. The attributes of the *Brahmā* were 'thinking' *(cit)*, 'joy' *(ānandam)* and 'Being' *(sat)*; in terms of the Brahman (a 'universal principle' according to the Upanishads) these became: 'all-knowing' *(cit)*, 'blissful' and 'Self-extant'. The comparable Buddhist principles are:

1. Soullessness of all elements,
2. Impermanence of component beings and elements,
3. Unsatisfactoriness *(dukkha)*, of all conditioned things,
4. and occasionally a fourth — *nibbāna* is bliss.

These, as detailed below distinguished Buddhism from all other schools of Indian philosophy:

1. It opposed the Brahmanical theory of a permanent being, an individual immortal soul and existence of a universal or cosmic soul, spirit or creator.
2. All existence is transitory, in a state of flux and change. The continuity of flowing waves might give the *appearance* of permanence but such is illusory.
3. Because of 1) and 2), no permanent enjoyment could be expected in the mundane world. *Dukkha* must be accepted as such because this is the beginning and end of conditioned things (the alpha and omega of *saṃsāra*). Since there is no escape, one cannot shun its existence, hence Buddhism opposed the unreal Brahmanical concept of joy.

The perfection of insight equals the perfection of enlightenment, therefore the Buddha taught a *weltanschauung* in the Four Noble Truths and ***Paṭicca-samuppāda***, Doctrine of Dependent Origination; and self-culture *(bhāvanā)*, i.e. meditation in order to awaken insight in the individual.

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[1] *Hetuvidyā* — 'The science of cause'; *vibhajjavādin* — the Buddha as an 'analyst' or 'logician'. (At the time of Emperor Asoka, the *Theravāda* was distinguished by the name of *Vibhajjavāda)*. See also the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*, Publ. Pali Text Society, London, 1965, p 26.

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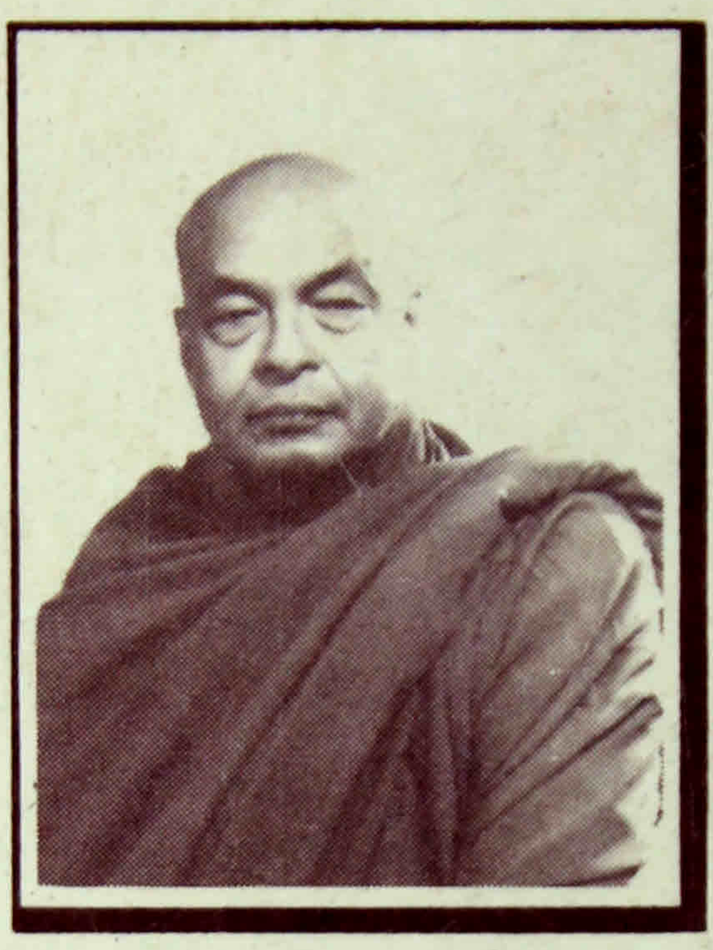
HAMMALAWA SADDHĀTISSA



Venerable Dr. Hammalawa Saddhātissa (M.A. Ph.D, D.Litt) was born in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1914. He was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1926. Proficient in Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Hindi, he studied at the Universities of Benares, London and Edinburgh. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh in 1963.

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He was renowned for his translation of Sanskrit and Pali works into English. His critical study of the *Upāsaka-janālaṅkāra* and the *Dasabodhisattuppattikathā* (the Birth-Stories of Ten Bodhisattas) and the *Nāmarūpasamāsa* (the Summary of Mind and Matter) published by the Pali Text Society, London, are well-known among Pali scholars. Among his numerous contributions to the clear understanding of Buddhism are: ***Buddhist Ethics, The Buddha's Way, The Life of the Buddha,*** and the translation of the *Sutta Nipāta* which have won world-wide recognition as authoritative books in their field.

He contributed numerous articles to journals throughout the world, which have been collected and edited to form the present book — ***Facets of Buddhism.*** These articles, which are mostly of wide appeal, represent only a portion of the Venerable Saddhātissa's life's work; much of his precious time was dedicated to editing Pali works for the Pali Text Society, notwithstanding the fact that he was constantly in demand for pastoral duties.

Eight more articles have been compiled as: ***Pāli Literature of South-East Asia*** providing a wealth of reference material for research on this subject.