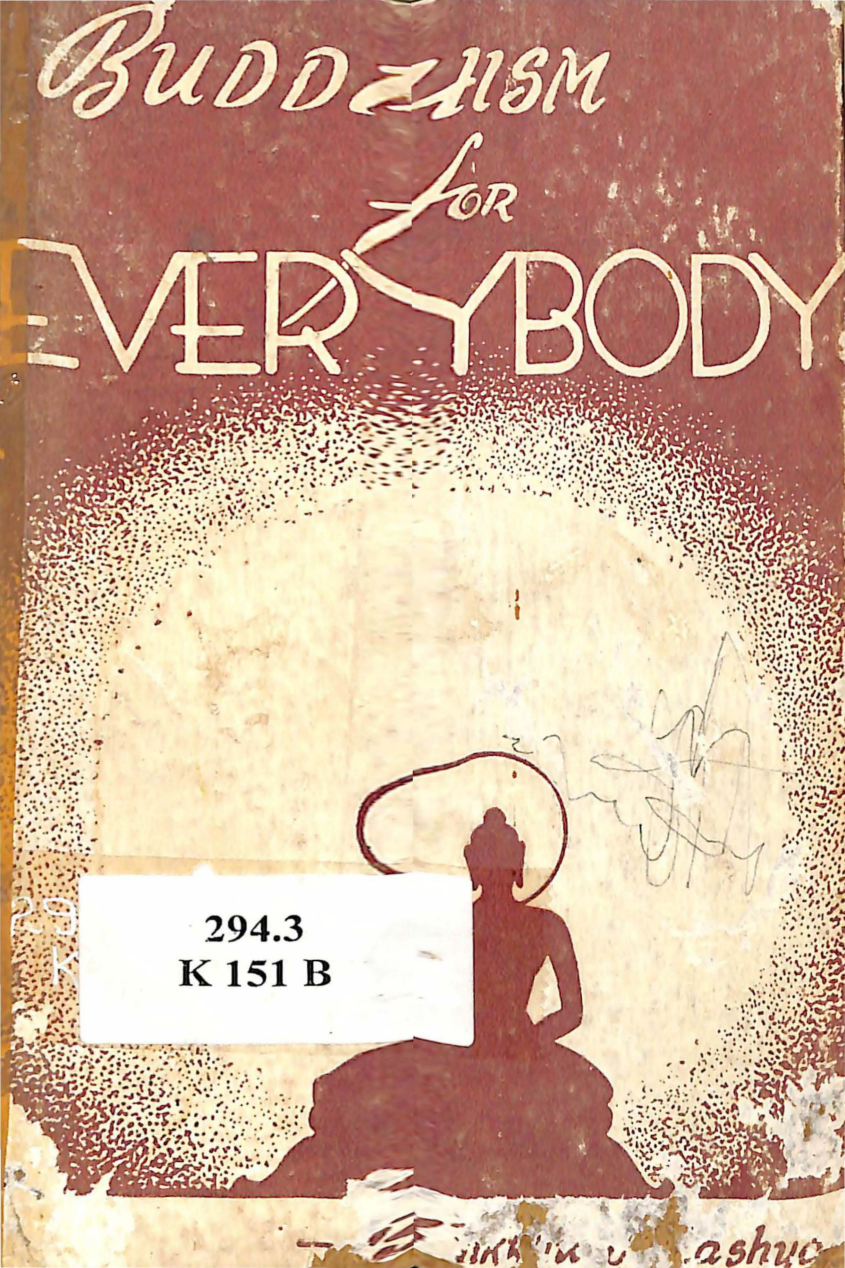
BUDDHISM FOR EVERYBODY



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BUDDHISM

for

EVERYBODY

A brief but authoritative exposition of the fundamental philosophical principles, religious practices and social ideals of Buddhism, written by a well-known Buddhist scholar for the average thinking man or woman who is looking for a philosophy and way of life in harmony with the latest discoveries of modern science.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa.

BUDDHISM *for* EVERYBODY

BY

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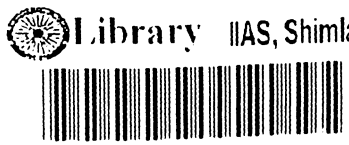

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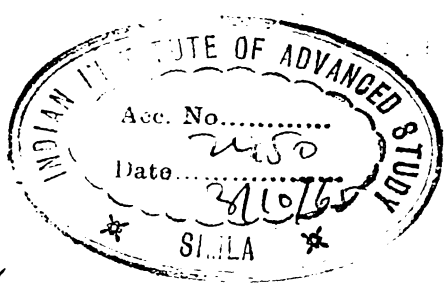

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

During my last stay in Penang in 1935 I had delivered a series of lectures on Buddhism in the temple of the Chinese Buddhist Association. Mr. Khor Hup Soon, a devoted young Buddhist, took down my lectures, compiled them together in the form of a book and got it published by the same Association.

The book was liked very much by Miss G. Constant Lounsbery, of *Les Amis du Buddhism*, Paris, to be used as a text-book for the Buddhist classes they were holding in their Society. She translated it into French and, with my approval, got it published by the Society for the purpose. It has also been translated into German and Viet Namese, and I have already given my approval for publication.

This year, brother Bhikshu Sangharatnaji, Secretary, M. B. S., Sarnath, expressed his willingness to publish a second edition of the book and requested me to

revise it and get it ready to be sent to the press. In doing that, I found it better to rewrite the whole book anew to suit particularly our readers in India. Though the contents of the book are almost the same, the new arrangement and presentation of them have required that it should appear under a different name as I have given it.

I was helped very much in preparing the present edition of the book by brother Sramanera Sangharakshita, a British Buddhist monk, who has also been kind enough to write the Preface. I thank, also, Bhikshu Sangharatnaji, of the M. B. S., for being good enough to publish the book. Upasaka Yajnavalkya, an ex-student of mine, has prepared the design of the cover. I bless him for that.

BHIKKHU J. KASHYAP,
BUDDHA KUTI,
Benares Hindu University,
17—10—1949.

PREFACE

After centuries of sleep and idle dreams the peoples of India have become not merely politically awake, but politically self-conscious. Wakefulness implies a simple awareness of external environment; but self-consciousness suggests a complex recognition of internal needs and internal resources. Political self-consciousness shades off into cultural self-consciousness. Many adventurous Indians have embarked upon the noble voyage of the Discovery of India. Really they are voyaging, although many of them may still be unaware of it, in quest of their own selves. In the bricks, stones and seals of Mohen-jo-Daro, in the rhythmic chants of the Vedic poet-seers, in the dialogues of the Buddha and in the frescoes of Ajanta, in the metaphysics of Sankara and the rhapsodies of Tyagaraja, the modern Indian mind sees not merely "portions and parcels of the dreadful past", not just mummified exhibits in the museum of a nation's memory, but it meets

and greets its own cultural and spiritual ancestors, it comes into close touch with those throbbing hearts wherefrom the rich blood still flows, albeit in feebler streams, into the veins of the living present.

And in this Voyage of Discovery the young adventurer has sometimes found, lying all unknown in the vast ocean of his country's past, little atolls and islands, and even whole countries and continents, the very names of which had completely vanished from the memory of the place wherefrom he had set sail. And sometimes it has happened that when he returned home laden with the glorious spoils of those forgotten continents both they and he were rejected with scorn by the timid souls who stayed behind as 'foreign' and 'un-Indian'. Under such a simile may be set forth the position of Buddhism and the Buddhist movement in India today.

There was a time, though, when almost the whole of India lived in the sunlight of the Buddha's wisdom and in the moon-

light of his compassion. But first corruption in the Buddhist Order itself, then a Vigourous anti-Buddhist campaign by the champions of brahminical authoritarianism, and finally the fire and sword of invading vandalism, succeeded in obliterating almost every external trace of the Religion of the Noble Ones. The sun of Buddhism set. Night descended on India, a night that was to last a thousand years. During the dark hours of those nightmarish centuries India forgot the very name of the Buddha, and even the memory of His teaching, and in forgetting them she forgot her own self. Worse than that. Even as in dreams a beautiful face which we have known and loved while awake is distorted into features of diabolical ugliness, so, during that dreadful period, were the incomparable personality and teachings of the Blessed One caricatured and misrepresented out of all recognition.

But after even the longest night the maiden dawn must at last come shyly

forth adorned with silver and with rose. And the dawn *has* come. The centuries of darkness have passed away as an evil dream. India is now wide awake and, which is infinitely richer in significance, is self-conscious. She is awake, it is true, to all the multitudinous sights and sounds of what Westerners call the 20th Century; but she is, at the same time, conscious of the thousand voices which speak to her from her own infinite past. The sweetest and clearest of all these many voices is the voice of the Buddha. To *this* voice must India listen if she would learn the path her feet must tread. To *this* voice must she hearken if she would understand the mysteries of her own heart. To *this* voice must she attend if she would speak unto the nations as she spoke before. This is the voice at whose command Asoka sheathed his murderous sword—Asoka afterwards surnamed 'the Righteous', whose Wheel and Pillar are now the acknowledged symbols of India's sovereignty. This is the voice

which taught "the wisdom that hath made our Asia mild". This is the voice which even the unquiet West, weary of its flesh-pots and its wars, is beginning to hearken to in humble silence.

In modern India there are many men and women belonging to the educated classes who long deeply to listen to this voice to study, understand and practice the teachings of the Blessed One or, to revert to the terms of the simile with which we began, to voyage to the long-forgotten continent of Buddhism and reclaim its territory as their own. To adventurers such as these the present book will be a welcome guide. It is written by one who is himself an adventurer. The author, Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap, is one of a very small group of Indians who have not only become members of the Buddhist monastic order but have also mastered the letter and the spirit of the ancient Pali texts wherein is preserved the Word of the Buddha. Through a succession of published texts, translations

and original works, the most noteworthy of which are his Hindi translations from the Sutta Pitaka and of the Milinda Panha, his Pali Mahavyakaran in Hindi and the two volumes of his Abhidhamma Philosophy in English, the Venerable Bhikshu has endeavoured to re-introduce to the Indian public the long-forgotten riches of Buddhist thought and culture. One wishes it could be said that his selfless labours had met with the reception which they deserved. But, as we have already said, the timid souls who stayed behind scornfully reject the home-returning adventurer and his cargo of glorious spoils. But such a state of affairs will not, can not, last for long. As the years slip by the glory and grandeur of the Buddha and His Teaching are being recognized with ever-growing clarity by an increasingly large number of people; and against the waxing power and strength of that recognition the overt or covert opposition of pseudo-religious reaction and orthodox fanaticism

are of no avail. Buddhism has come back to India, and it has come back to stay.

This book is divided into six chapters. The first deals with the fundamental postulates of Buddhist thought—the triune principles of Anicca (transitoriness), Anatta (substancelessness) and Dukkha (misery); the second with the Four Noble Truths of Misery, its Cause, its Cure, and the Way or Regimen leading to its Cure; the third with the Noble Eightfold Path or Middle Way; the fourth with Kamma and Rebirth; the fifth with the gigantic subject of Paticca Samuppada or Dependent Origination; and the sixth with Some Salient Features of Buddhism. It is a book meant not for hasty perusal, but for attentive and thoughtful study. Every sentence is to be read, marked, learned and inwardly digested. Nevertheless, it is not a difficult book. The author has spared no pains to make it simple and clear even to those who have no previous aquaintance with Buddhism. Some knowledge of

philosophy will be helpful to the student, but it is not indispensable. Above all else, the reader should take up this book with an open mind, clean of all prejudice and preconception, and make an honest attempt to understand what the Buddha taught and why He taught it. Only then will his or her study of Buddhism For Everybody be fruitful and likely to issue, later on, into that wider knowledge and deeper understanding which is open only to those who truly love the Dhamma.

Sramanera Sangharakshit

Benares, 30th August, 1949

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa.

BUDDHISM FOR EVERYBODY

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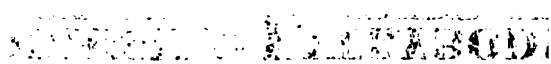

CHAPTER I

THE THREE PRINCIPLES

The three fundamental principles on which the Dhamma taught by the Buddha is based are (A) All is Impermanence, (B) All is Substance-(Soul-) less, and (C). All is Misery.

(A) All is Impermanence (अनिच्च)[1]

(a) Dynamic Reality

The universe is in a state of constant flux. Nothing remains *the same* for even two consecutive moments. Reality is not a stagnant pool but a rushing stream, a current. There is no being; there is only a becoming.

Construction (उप्पाद)[2] and destruction (निरोध)[3], these two factors are never at rest. One ripple rises up; sinking down, it causes another to rise and so on *ad infinitum*. The rising of one ripple depends upon the sinking of another, and the sinking of one depends upon the rising of another. Thus, the current flows on.

1. Anicca 2. Uppāda 3. nirodha

From the very moment a thing is built, it tends down to destruction with all certainty. The newly erected beautiful house becomes older day by day, till one day it is brought down and not even a trace of it is to be found. Each beat of our heart brings us closer to death.

'Impermanence' is not a mere philosophical dogma but a fact, a reality, which we feel and experience so very strongly in our everyday life.

It is due to our own ignorant attachment that we fail to see this truth and take the world to be the same from one moment to the next. What does it mean when we point out a thing and say "It is very *lasting*"? Does it not mean that it can serve our purpose, which is based on attachment, for a long time? What more than this?

My friend told me that he was using a particular cycle for a period of more than thirty years. During these thirty years he had so many times to change and

replace almost each and every part of it, to get it repaired, overhauled and varnished. Still, he said that it was the same cycle that he had purchased thirty years before. It is so, because his purpose of riding the cycle was fulfilled all along. And therefore he continued to identify it to be the same. Though we have to make such identifications everywhere for our practical purpose, from the standpoint of real metaphysical insight such terms as 'lasting' or 'identical' are gravest ignorance.

In the Tipitaka, whenever a disciple is said to have attained the true insight into the Dhamma he realizes : Whatever rises up is surely passing away (यं किञ्चि उप्पादधम्मं सब्बं तं निरोधधम्मं).[1] A realization of this truth can take place only when one is free from all attachment whatsoever.

As long as we have not dispelled our 'attachment' (तण्हा)[2] the 'ignorance-of-identification' (सक्कायदिट्ठि)[3] will be there, making

1. yamkiṁci uppādadhammam sabbam tam nirodhadhammam 2. taṇhā 3. sakkāyadiṭṭhi.

us incapable of realizing the true impermanent nature of things (संखार)[1].

Abhidhamma-vibhasa-sastra says, "A day of twenty-four hours has six thousand four hundred million, ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and eighty moments (खणा)[2], and that the states of mind and body (खन्धा)[3] are repeatedly produced and destroyed every moment."

Buddhaghosa says in his Visuddhimagga "Strictly speaking, the life-duration of a living being is exceedingly brief, being commensurate with the period during which a thought lasts. And just as a chariot-wheel in rolling rolls merely at one point of the tyre, and in resting rests only at one point, even so the life of a living being endures only for the brief period of one thought, and as soon as that thought has ceased, the being too is said to have ceased.

"Thus, the being of a past moment *has* lived, but *does* not live *nor will* it live; the

1. saṅkhārā 2. khaṇā. 3. khandhā

being of a future moment *will* live but *has not* lived *nor does* it live; the being at the present moment *does* live but *has not* lived and *will not* live."

(b) The Nature of Time

If reality is such, how is time to be understood ?

The idea of past, present and future comes only in connection with a thing which we take to be *Identical*: *this* was, *this* is even now, and *this* will be in future also; or *I* was there, *I* have come here, and *I* will go there. In other words it might be said that the conception of priority and posteriority about an *identity* alone gives rise to the idea of time.

But we have already seen that in this universality of impermanence identification is the gravest ignorance, and that it originates depending upon our attachment (तण्हा),[1] which the Buddha has called ignorance-of-identification (सक्कायदिट्ठि)[2]. The idea of time—past, present and

1. taṇhā 2. sakkāyadiṭṭhi

future—therefore holds good so long as this ignorance is not dispelled.

When the saint (अरिय)[1] succeeds in destroying this ignorance he sees reality in its true nakedness, free from the ideas of past or future. The Buddha has described such a saint as one who is above the bondage of time (अकप्पियो)[2]

In the Brahmajala Sutta of the Digha Nikaya, the Buddha, pointing out the cause of the errors of the 62 false views, has said that it is due to the ignorance of priority (पुब्बन्त)[3] and posteriority (अपरन्त)[4] that all those erroneous views are arrived at.

In the Milinda Panha, King Milinda asks the learned Bhikkhu Nagasena, "Sir, what is the cause of time?" To which the ready reply was, "O King, ignorance is the cause of time."

(*c*) *The Illusion of Change*

If time is denied in Buddhism as a metaphysical reality, how is change to be explained ?

1. ariya 2. akappiyo 3. pubbanta 4. aparanta

To understand this let us see what change is and how we become conscious of it.

Change is always from *this* to *that* or symbolically from X to Y. We see a small baby today lying flat on its cradle with tiny and tender limbs; after ten years we see him as a grown-up boy, running, jumping, and very talkative, and say: What a great change in him! Thus, the idea of change has come when we have abstracted from the child's life-process two points and compared them together, overlooking the numberless points which he had to pass through in between. The parents of the child, who watch him oftener, do not feel the change so much. The child himself, who watches his own personality more than anyone else, does not feel the change at all. It is only when he becomes a second person to himself, and after a like abstraction views and compares two points in him, that he feels the change to some extent. Thus, there is

of it. A ring, a cup, a coin, are all expressions—changes—of the same metal, gold. Gold remains the same gold, unchanged, in all these changes. Thus, change suggests something which remains permanent and unchanged. The Aristotelian logicians called the first 'quality' and the second 'substance'. This argument was driven forward and a permanent (सस्सत)[1] substance was begun to be believed in as the principle of things.

Some philosophers called this permanent, substance as Paramanu or atoms, Prakriti or the ultimate, Padartha or the realities, Brahma or the cosmic consciousness (those who took a spiritual view of it) and so on.

As soon as change is accepted as truth, some sort of substance=permanence (सस्सत)[1] is necessarily to be accepted. This is another phase of Sakkayaditthi.

But we have already seen that, in the light of the truth of Anicca, time and change both disappear; and where there is no

1. sassata.

change the illusion of substance, also cannot stand.

The metal, gold, is the same in a ring, or a cup, or a coin, *only when we see gold from our practical point of view*; but, in the true metaphysical light, no particle of gold is the same for two consecutive moments, as we have just seen. Gold is also undergoing the same process of Anicca. We call it gold so long as our desirous attachment (तण्हा)[1] is associated with it. When it is burnt and reduced to ashes we no longer call it gold, since our purpose can no longer be fulfilled by it.

The saint who has conquered this illusion of substance or Sakkayaditthi views the gold and the ashes in the same light.

(*b*) *The Illusion of Soul*

When the same fallacy of change is applied to man, or a living being, it results in the illusion of soul.

The common view is that we are not now what we were a moment ago. Both

1. taṇhā

physically and mentally we have changed. During the different stages of his life man undergoes radical transformation, in both mind and body. Despite all these changes we feel none the less strongly that we are the same personalities, the same identities.

A question which naturally arises from this common view is: How to explain this identity in change, this *same* in the *different?*

In answer to this question, some philosophers assumed the existence of a permanent soul in man, which preserves his identity in the course of his mental and physical changes, for it is transcendental to both mind and body. Though a man is changed, both in mind and body, his soul remains permanent and the same, so he feels that he is the same personality.

In short, a soul was found essential to be believed in to explain identity in change in man.

Let us draw logical conclusions from the above argument and see how far it is a satisfactory understanding of the problem

If a permanent factor is essential to be believed in to explain identity, it must hold good everywhere, in explaining any identity in difference, be it the identity of a chair or a house. I know my chair to be identical with the one which I purchased a year back. I know, at the same time, that it has changed a lot, for a leg of it is broken, and the varnish, too, has faded much. How should I explain the identity of my chair in a course of radical changes? Should I not, according to the above argument, believe in a permanent chair-soul, transcendental to the objective chair, which keeps the identity of the chair, behind its changes ?

Then there would be a table-soul, pen-soul, and a soul for each and every object; for, they all preserve their identity, though being changed. This is the result we logically arrive at, which is evidently absurd.

But the common conception of the different soul-theories is that soul is the

substratum of the intelligence (चित्)[1] of man. Since there is no intelligence in chair, table and other inanimate things, they will naturally object against the necessity of accepting the existence of soul in the inert things.

The Buddha has pointed out that the Anicca nature of the intelligent factor in man is rather perceived by us more vividly than that of body. It is absurd, He says, to believe in soul, a permanent factor, as the substratum of our intelligence.

The feeling of identity of 'I' does not refer to any abiding factor in us; but it rather is a great illusion created by our Sakkayaditthi. It is this ignorance of 'I'-ness that has to be dispelled.

(*c*) *What is Man* ?

If there is no soul in us, what is that in which the personality of a man consists ? What is man? What is referred to when the term 'I' is used ?

1. chit.

To understand these questions, some people are led to believe that there must be a 'central essence' or the 'very identity' in man. This they have called by the name of soul, jiva, atma etc.

But, when we consider wisely, we see that no such factor is required to be maintained to understand 'man'. Man is composed of states of mind and matter, both of which are in a flux, in which one moment gives rise to the other on and on, till the process is stopped and exstinguished in Nibbana.

What is a chariot ? What is referred to when the term 'chariot' is used ?

There is no 'central essence' in the chariot. The chariot is composed of the wheels, framework, yokes, spokes of the wheels, goad, and so many other parts. Apart from these parts here exists no chariot. The chariot exists in and with the parts it is composed of.

Just in the same manner, 'man' exists in and with mind and body. There is

no soul. The Buddha said that when people hold that they find the much spoken of soul, they really only find the bodily and mental states which are immediately experienced by us.

Let us take three examples, and try to understand in what sense the term 'I' is used by us:—

(1) When I say, "I am here", or "I was there", what does the term 'I' signify?

Here, the term is used only to signify the particular location of my body. I say, "the book is there", "the pen is there", and, with the same meaning, "I am here". Here only the different locations of the book, the pen, and 'I' are pointed to. Thus 'I', in the above example, means 'my body' and nothing else.

(2) Let us take a second example, "I think". What does the term 'I' here stand for?

Certainly not for the body, for how can thinking attributed to body? It

stands for the cognising mind; for it is really the mind which thinks.

(3) In the third example, "I lecture", the term 'I' does not stand either for the body or for the mind, by themselves, but for a joint action of the two. The tongue (body) cannot lecture without the thinking mind, nor can mind lecture without the tongue. Lecturing is possible when the tongue and the mind co-operate.

Thus, we see that the term 'I' is used, sometimes for the mind, and sometimes for body, and sometimes for the body and mind; for, man consists only of bodily and mental states.

If further analysed, it will be found that in these states there are five factors. These five are called the five Khandhas, and are (1) रूप[1] (the four elements, the body, the senses, and sense data), (2) वेदना[2] (feeling, pleasurable, painful and indifferent), (3) सञ्ञा[3] (cognitive states), (4) संखार[4] (synthetic mental states and

1. Rūpa 2. Vedanā 3. Saññā 4. Saṅkhāra

the synthetic functioning of compound sense-affections, compound feelings and compound concepts), and (5) विञ्ञाण[1] (consciousness).

These five make up a whole which is man. Man exists nowhere outside these five Khandhas, just as the table exists nowhere outside the four legs and so many pieces of plank from which it is made.

These Khandhas are, again, not units in themselves but composites through and through, each having its own process or continuity.

No static unity can be found anywhere; there is only continuity and conglomeration.

(*d*) *Kamma*

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 Nagasena by the King Milinda, to which the reply was, "Neither the same nor diffe-

1. Viññāna,

rent". Nagasena made it very clear to King Milinda by an illustration:—

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

"Yes, the lamp might burn all night long.

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

"No, not the same flame.

"Or, is the flame that burns in the second watch of the night, the same that burns in the third ?

"No, not the same flame.

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

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

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

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

We might roughly compare here man to a lamp, with consciousness or Citta as the flame, which is undergoing a process of its own in a state of constant flux. It does not suggest that the body is permanent and stagnant; for it, also, is undergoing its own process.

Thus, the man who does a deed and the man who gets the result of it are neither the same nor different; but there is a single flow wherein one ripple gives rise to the other.

A fire lighted at one end of the field goes on and burns the other extreme also. Now, is the fire which gives the last burn the same fire which was lighted at the distant end or quite different? It is never *the same* fire, nor yet *quite different* either. But, the whole fire was a continuity=a process=a stream=a current.

Man's process of consciousness is just the same. Whatever of good or bad is

acted or thought at one end is sure to show its effect at the other end.

There is no permanent factor in man; no soul, but the mind in a flux.

(e) Rebirth

If there is no identical soul, what is that which is born and reborn ?

This is, of course, a puzzle to many. Buddhism holds that a man dying at Benares may be born as a dog at Patna, according to his Kamma. Now, what is that which leaves the body of the dying man at Benares, travels up to Patna, and enters the body of the newly born puppy ? If there is no identical soul which transmigrates like this, how can the position be understood ? How is the death of one to be linked with the birth of the other ?

Buddhism does not believe in any sort of transmigration. There is nothing which comes out of one body and enters into another.

Nature is governed by the Law of Dependent Origination (पटिच्च समुप्पाद)[1] Everything comes into existence depending on an instance previous to it, and everything must, also, give rise to an instance, depending on itself.

We will see in the chapter on Paticca Samuppada, that desire gives rise to clinging, that to existence (or the continuity of the life-process), and that to birth.

The desire of a dying man must give rise to clinging, that to the continuity of the life-process, and that to birth.

There is nothing which comes out of the body of a dying man and enters the body of the newly born puppy; but the two lives are to be understood as existing in the same process of desire and clinging, one giving rise to the other.

The Hundred Years' War between England and France, to take another simile, does not mean that one battle was going on continuously, without any break,

1. paṭicca-samuppāda

for one hundred years. That would be impossible. Really, many battles were fought, at various fields.

There was a period of a hundred years with outbreaks of war at wide intervals. Then, how is it that all these outbreaks are linked into one and called the Hundred Years' War ?

Well, though there were wide intervals between one battle and the next, the feeling of enmity for a certain cause continued to be there in the two nations. This feeling of enmity and clinging to defeat one another continued for a hundred years, so all the different fields fought at intervals and at different spots, are taken to have happened in the same process.

Just in the same way, the body of a man and that of a dog are two fields where the same war continues; for it is the continuation of the same flow of life, of desire and clinging. Change in the body cannot stop the flow. After the death of a man, the body is burned, but not the desire.

The different battles are considered to have been fought in the course of the same war, not because the *same guns* were carried from one field to another, nor because the *same soldiers* were taken from one field to another, but because they were fought in continuation of the same feeling of animosity between the two nations.

The fighting-consciousness of one field flows into the other, without a gap or break. Just so, the consciousness of a dying man flows into any other body according to his Kamma. There is no such factor which transmigrates, but it is the continuity of one fire, burnt at one end and going to the other where one flame gives rise to another, and so on.

(C) All is Misery (दुक्ख)[1]

Dukkha is just a fact which follows essentially from the truths of impermanence and substance-(soul-)lessness. There is no permanence or substance which can be held fast with any hope of security

1. Dukkha

and satisfaction. We, due to our Tanha, try to catch the world and keep it close to us; but it glides away so swiftly before we are aware of it, and thus we are left lamenting and grieving. There is no resting-place in the universe whither we can go and stand with any consolation. All is Anicca and Anatta, or impermanence and substance-(soul-) lessness.

The Buddha has said:—

Not in the air nor middle of the sea,
Nor entering a mountain cave to hide,
Nor anywhere on earth canst thou abide
Where Death shall not pursue and conquer thee.

(DHAMMAPADA 128)

We have already seen that it is only in the light of Anicca that the ignorance of soul disappears and one sees misery as it is.

And when a man realizes misery as it is, he seeks an emancipation from it.

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CHAPTER II

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

(A) The Noble Truth of Misery

(दुक्खं अरियसच्चं)[1]

The Buddha said, "O Bhikkhus ! There is the Noble Truth of Misery. Birth is misery; old age, sickness, death, association with the undesired ones, separation from the loved ones, failure in the attainment of a desired object—all are misery. In short, all the components of the five Khandhas (material and mental) are misery."

(It is becoming a sort of fashion amongst some men of the present day to condemn Buddhism by calling it 'pessimism', for it shows that the world is full of miseries, sufferings and pains. No. Buddhism is not pessimism. Pessimism believes that the world is full of miseries, *and that there is no way out of them. Buddhism, on the other hand, teaches the surest and the only way out of them.*)

1. *dukkha ariyasaccaṃ*

The materialists say. "Yes, there are both miseries and pleasures in the world. The only thing that we can do is to try as hard as we can to avoid one and win the other. The grains are covered with husks. If we want to get grains we must take the trouble of removing the husks from them. In the same way, therefore, try to obtain the greatest possible amount of worldly pleasures."

But let us see what this pleasure is which these people say we should strive for.

Suppose a very poor man, almost starving for days together, earns one rupee after his day's labour. Just imagine how happily he will return home that evening to feed himself and his family! But if a lawyer, or a doctor, earning one hundred rupees daily, by chance happens to get only one after his day's labour, how sad he would be on that day! Why? The same single rupee was an excessive joy to one man, and utter sadness to the other. How is that?

In reality, there is no objective pleasure or pain. It is *comparatively less pain* which we consider to be pleasure. It is painful, evidently, to earn a single rupee after one whole day's hard labour; but it gave pleasure to the poor man because he was in a greater distress.

To earn a hundred rupees would, again, be painful to one who daily earns a thousand. Thus, we cannot say pleasure is this or that; for that, again, is pain to others who are a degree higher in life. There are grades of pleasure and pain, no doubt, but no objective ones. A middle-class man feels himself better placed when he compares himself to a poor man; but he feels very much dejected when he compares himself with a rich millionaire. In this series of pleasures and pains, we human beings constantly go up and down. We think that there is pleasure in the attainment of a thing; we desire and cling to it. When we have got it, it loses all the charm it had, and we do not rest satisfied

with it. We seek pleasure in something else and run after that in turn. Thus, pleasure is always a station ahead of us. Although we run as fast as we can, we cannot reach it, for it too runs on and on with the same speed, always leaving us far behind in disappointment.

By this word 'Dukkha', the first Noble Truth, the Lord meant this very *run of life*, of gain and loss, hope and disappointment. Buddhism is not intended for one who enjoys this run, but for one who is tired of it and seeks to get rid of it. Those who like to run in pursuit of pleasure may do so until they are exhausted.

The world is like a pleasurable cushioned bed with painful thorns strewn on it. One who wishes to enjoy the soft touch of the cushions must be, at the same time, prepared to experience the prick of the thorns strewn on them. You can judge for yourself whether such a bed is pleasurable or painful.

The Lord Buddha declared that death, decay, lamentations and anxieties are the thorns of human life, and that it is therefore Dukkha or misery. No one can deny this, for we all feel its existence more strongly than anything else.

Since pleasures are transitory they end in pain, and are thus not worthy of being run after.

(B) The Noble Truth of the Cause of Misery (दुक्खसमुदय-अरियसच्चं)[1]

What is, then, the cause of our misery?

Many believe it is caused by the wrath of one god (monotheism) or of many gods (polytheism), due either to our own transgressions or to their arbitrary will or wills. Others attribute it to destiny or fate, or even to mere chance.

All such explanations of a thing cannot satisfy a Buddhist, for he wants a scientific explanation and not a superstitious one. A scientific cause is that which explains on reasonable grounds, and not

1. *dukkhasamudaya ariyasaccam*

by a superstitious belief in any superhuman agent—that which we ourselves can see in our lives.

The Lord said that *the cause of misery is our own Tanha or desire* (*attachment, temptation, love*). A man feels the loss of a thing the more painfully, the more he is attached to it. A man weeps and feels miserable if his house is on fire, because he loves it; but he does not so feel if the house of a stranger is burnt. Wherever there is attachment, desire, or love, there we find all sorts of miseries.

The Buddha said, "O Bhikkhus! There is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Misery. It is Desire which causes rebirth, which makes us run after the enjoyments and pleasures of the world."

Now, what is that in which a 'life' consists?

We may read a life of Shakespeare the poet, or of Napoleon the conqueror, or of Siddhattha the Buddha; but, then,

what is the fundamental factor by which each of them is guided ?

Well, the life of Shakespeare is guided by the *desire to paint human types* or characters or to express the subtle sentiments of love in song and melody. We read in his life how far he succeeded in this field and how far he met with failures. The life of Napoleon is guided by the *desire to conquer* and establish kingdoms. We read in his life to what extent he accomplished this, where he succeeded and how he failed. The life of Siddhattha is guided by the *desire to conquer misery*, and we read in His life how He left His palace for that purpose, how He practised austerities, how He meditated, and how He finally achieved Nibbana.

Thus, our life consists in our own peculiar desire and in our struggle to satisfy it. We cannot imagine a man who has no desire at all; for when we take away his desire we take away the very life of a man.

Wherever there is desire there is the clinging to its realization, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments. Thus the process of life goes on. Where there is no desire there is no clinging, no life, no old age, no death.

The process of life goes on so long as desire, which is its guiding factor, is there. A mere change in the physical body cannot stop it, however great that may be. Death is but a change in the physical body. The life-process must go on, if desire is there, even after death. The Lord said, therefore, "Desire is the cause of rebirth (तण्हा पोनोभविका).[1] That is, it maintains the continuity of the life-process even after death, and makes us run after the enjoyments and pleasure of the world.

Thus, desire or Tanha is the cause of misery. If we want to get rid of misery, the only way is to conquer our own

1. Taṇhā ponobhavikā.

desire. When there will be no desire, there will be no life or misery.

(A) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Misery (दुक्खनिरोधं अरियसच्चं)[1]

With the annihilation of desire the life-process, with all its misery, does no more continue. This is Nibbana, an emancipation from all sorrows and sufferings.

So long as the electric current is flowing, the fan continues to move. Switch off the current, and the fan stops. The cause being absent, there is no effect

Just in the same way, with the stoppage of desire, the life-process ceases to proceed on. It is foolish to ask, "What becomes of a man after attaining Nibbana?" For it is just the same as to ask, "What becomes of the movement of the fan when the current is switched off ?' There is no movement of the fan, because there is no current. There is no suffering, because there is no desire.

1. *dukkhanirodha ariyasaccam*

(D) The Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Misery

(दुक्खनिरोध-पटिपदाअरियसच्चं)[1]

The way out of misery is threefold—पञ्ञा, सील, *and* समाधि[2]

(*a*) पञ्ञा (*Higher Wisdom*)

Panna is to understand that the cause of misery is desire and that it is to be vanquished completely. This understanding will inspire one to follow the path leading to the desireless state.

(*b*) सील (*Ethical Discipline*)

The Buddha has compared desire to burning fire. This desire-fire is fed and kept burning by the fuel of our own vices (अकुसल)[3] The more vices we commit, the brighter does the desire-fire blaze.

A boy sees a beautiful pencil of his class-mate, and gets the desire to have it. He reflects, "Should I steal it? No, that would be a crime. Moreover, if I am caught, I will be hated by my friends as

1, *dukkhanirodha-paṭipadā-ariyasaccam.* 2. Paññā, Sīla and Samādhi. 3. akusala.

a thief. The teacher may punish me severely, also." Even then he cannot check the desire of having the beautiful pencil, and quietly steals it. Next time he sees a Parker fountain pen of his mate and again becomes desirous of having it. This time, the resistance is not so strong as before, because the desire was made stronger by the first vice of stealing, and he steals the pen. In this way, the more he steals the stronger the temptation to steal becomes. Thus, all the vices we indulge in tempt us to repeat the same again and again, and make our desire stronger and stronger.

The first thing, therefore, is to keep ourselves away from all vicious and sinful deeds. This is called 'Sila' by the Buddha. "Sabba papassa akaranam" means not to do any sinful act. If we practise Sila and do not commit any sin, our desire-fire will not get fresh fuel to go on burning with. This is why the Buddhist ethical

precepts are all in the negative. *Do not* feed the desire-fire with the fuel of sins.

But the sins, being committed by us for numberless lives, from time immemorial, have already made our desire very intense. We may not add to its strength by committing new sins; but, even then, it is sufficiently strong to keep up the flow of life for ages and ages. Its intensity is therefore, to be counteracted and gradually made weaker.

(*c*) समाधि (*Mental Discipline*)

This we can do by meditation (समाधि).[1] By meditating on universal love and friendship, for instance, we can weaken the sentiments of enmity, hatred and envy. By meditating on the transitoriness of worldly pleasures, we can weaken our temptation to run after them.

A thief knows that to steal is a very bad crime, yet he seeks opportunities of robbing others, and never misses it if he gets

1. *Samàdhi*

one. Why? Why does a man, knowing perfectly well a thing to be bad, nevertheless run after it ? Well, it is so because, by constant repetition of the act, the impression has become so strong that we fail to check it, though wishing very much to do so. A man weeps when he receives the evil results of his evil-doing and would like very much to escape from them. But again, after a time, he forgets everything and commits the same crime. Such is the power of the temptations over us. If we want to make these temptations weaker, meditation is the only way. If a criminal wishes to give up the crime he is used to *he should meditate daily on the evils of it.* He will then be able to make its temptation weaker, and one day he might be free from the crime.

The best object of meditation is 'Anicca and Dukkha'. Everything in this world is Anicca or impermanence and Dukkha or misery.

Nations grow and die out; empires are founded and decay; mighty palaces are built and lost in the dust—such is the way of the world. Beautiful flowers blossom and attract all who pass by; but only the next day they fade and dry up. Their petals all drop down one by one and soon they are forgotten altogether. All enjoyments and high attainments of the world are only a moment's show. One who takes pleasure in them has to lament and weep when they are lost, and undergoes much suffering. Since nothing lasts in this world one should not take delight in it. We should meditate on this transitoriness of the world and the various miseries it contains.

The Anicca-Anatta-Dukkha nature of existence is to be 'realized' in the Samadhi, after which the disciple is free from the bondage of the temptation of desire. He runs no more after the things of the world. He accumulates no Kamma, and is not reborn after this life. He is emancipated, freed from the cycle of birth and death.

Thus, the Buddha has taught:—Desire is the cause of misery. To get rid of misery desire must be finally and fully annihilated. This understanding is पञ्ञा[1]. Do not add to the strength of desire by committing sins, that is सील[2]. Obtain concentration of mind and 'realize' the truth in immediate intuition, that is समाधि[3]. These three, when analyzed for a clearer understanding, comprise eight factors, thus:-

पञ्ञा		
1.	Right	Understanding
2.	,,	Resolution
सील		
3.	,,	Speech
4.	,,	Action
5.	,,	Livelihood
समाधि		
6.	,,	Efforts
7.	,,	Mindfulness
8.	,,	Absorption

1. paññā 2. Sīla 3. Samādhi

CHAPTER III

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The practice of spiritual life begins with the right understanding of the doctrine propounded by the Buddha, together with a real philosophical grasp of the nature of man and the universe as taught by Him. This right understanding is called Samma Ditthi, which inspires the disciple to overcome all obstacles and fulfil the path that leads to the ultimate realization. This firm determination of the disciple is called Samma Sankappa. These first two are the cognitive and volitional factors of the Noble Eightfold Path (अरियो अट्ठङ्गिको मग्गो) [1]. They are included in Panna or Higher Wisdom. Let us discuss more fully about them.

(A) पञ्ञा[2] (Higher Wisdom)

(*i*) *Right Understanding* (सम्मादिट्ठि)[3]

Right Understanding consists in a clear comprehension of the principles of

1. ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo 2. Paññā 3. *sammādiṭṭhi*

Buddhism, which, it can be said, are included under the following three heads: Firstly, the understanding of the Anicca-Anatta-Dukkha nature of existence, secondly of the Four Noble Truths, and thirdly, of Kamma and Paticca Samuppada. The first two we have already dealt with in Chapters I and II and the third will be dealt with in Chapters IV and V. The clear understanding of these basic principles will keep before the eye of the disciple the ideals he is aspiring to realize.

(*ii*) सम्मासङ्कप्प[1] (*Right Resolve*)

Right Resolve follows Right Understanding and consists in obtaining the firm determination to renounce all the things that stand as obstacles in the way of realizing the latter's ideals. The Buddha said "O Bhikkhus ! A householder or a householder's son listens to the Doctrine expounded by the Buddha. Having listened to the Doctrine expounded by the Buddha he gets a strong faith in

1. *sammāsaṅkappa*

Him, and he thinks: "The household life is a stuffy life, the life of the monk like the open sky. It is not possible for one leading the household life to fulfil the pure life of holiness. I must therefore get my hair and beard shaved off, don the yellow robe and take up the life of homelessness." This resolution of renunciation in pursuit of the sublime deliverance is Samma Sankappa.

(B) सील[1] (Ethical Discipline)

The Buddha has taught one who has thus taken up the life of holiness to avoid the two extreme ideals of life—one extreme being that of "Eat, drink and be merry"; the other extreme that of the ascetics of indulging in various sorts of self-tortures. These two extreme ideals of life were expounded by two extreme sects of thinkers. The first did not believe in a life after death; for them death was the end of man. This naturally gave them a hedonistic outlook.

1. sīla

While you live, live happily;
Borrow, drink your fill of ghee.
When of this body doth remain
But dust, will it come back again ?

This was the famous verse of these thinkers.

Quite contrary to this the ascetics believed in the existence of a transcendental 'self' to which the body is a bondage. To realize the 'self', they said, one has to annihilate the physical senses, for which they devised different practices of self-torture, as keeping fast for days together, lying down in the burning sun, immersing themselves in water on wintry nights, and similar practices. The Buddha had Himself tried both of these before His Enlightenment. As a prince He had all the mundane pleasures at His disposal; and as an ascetic He had practised the hardest penances in the Uruvela forest. He had seen that neither of these could give Him the peace He was searching for. He found out that the true path lay in the

middle of these two extremes. Having avoided the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-torture, the Middle Path is the path of self-discipline and self-conquest.

This self-discipline is begun with the practice of three ethical rules of Right Speech (सम्मावाचा[1]), Right Action (सम्माकम्मन्त[2]) and Right Livelihood (सम्मा-आजीवो[3]).

(*iii*) *Right Speech*

Right Speech consists in refraining from falsehood (मुसावाद[4]), from back-biting (पिसुण[5]), from harsh speech (फरुसा वाचा[6]), and from idle gossip (सम्फप्पलाप[7])

(*iv*) *Right Action* (सम्माकम्मन्त[2])

Right Action consists in refraining from taking life (पाणातिपात[8]), from taking a thing that is not given (अदिन्नादान[9]), and from sexual misconduct (कामेसु मिच्छाचार[10])

1. sammāvācā 2. sammākammanta 3. sammā-ājīvo 4. musāvāda, 5. pisuṇa. 6. pharusā vāca. 7. samphappalāpa 8. Pāṇātipāta, 9. adinnādāna, 10. kāmesu micchācāra

(*v*) *Right Livelihood* (सम्मा आजीवो[1])

Right Livelihood consists in refraining from all sorts of ignoble occupations, such as trading in arms, in living beings, in flesh, in intoxicants, and in poisons.

These rules must not be taken as commandments of the Buddha, which we are bound to accept without understanding the value of them in the course of our endeavour to fulfil the Path leading to Nibbana. These rules if violated will give rise to complications in the psychic life, as a result of which it would be difficult to attain that concentration (समाधि[2]) of mind in which alone the true wisdom (पञ्ञा[3]) will dawn. The Buddha has said, "The practice of Sila is conducive to the attainment of Samadhi, and the practice of Samadhi is conducive to the attainment of Panna."

(C) (समाधि[2]) (Mental Discipline)

A pure conduct, thus realized, says the Buddha, serves as the ground (पतिट्ठा[4])

1. *sammā-ājīvo.* 2. samādhi. 3. Paññā. 4. patiṭṭhā.

of the structure of mental discipline to be built over it. But before we discuss the factors comprising Samma Samadhi, let us first consider in brief what the nature of our mind is.

The Nature of Mind

We are constantly knowing a thing and then forgetting it.

While walking along the road, we may happen to recognize a certain man and know him to be such; but as we pass on the memory of him fades away gradually into oblivion. By that time some other object, say a cart or a house, occupies the focus of our attention and we become aware of that. As we pass on still further, that memory too fades away as above, giving place to some other.

Thus, we always know a thing and then forget it; know another, and forget that, too, and so on and on. From our very birth this process of knowing and forgetting is continuously flowing without any gap whatsoever.

Even when we cease to receive impressions from outside, as while asleep, this process is not stopped. For then, our previous impressions themselves rise and pass away.

But we do not forget everything in the same way. A thing which draws our attention more strongly is forgotten very slowly, for it continues to vibrate in our mind for a pretty long period of time. A thing, on the other hand, which does not draw our attention with any strength, but only comes to pass before us, is forgotten very quickly.

Thus, while going along the road, the sight of an elephant lasts long enough to occupy our mind even after we have passed on to a great distance; but an ordinary man, with no peculiarity in him, is forgotten as soon as he is out of sight.

Though we forget, sooner or later, all the things that we know, nevertheless they do exist in our mind. They are not altogether lost to us. Everything that is

forgotten is as if stored up in the mind. Our mind is a great and wonderful store, wherein each idea and impression we received from our very birth is kept arranged in its proper place. Everything that we thought, felt or acted does exist there.

We can and do actually revive any one of them when we require it.

Thus, there are two factors which our mind consists of:

(1) Knowing, feeling and acting in the living present, and (2) the great storage of all forgotten ideas and impressions.

The psychologist call the first the *conscious* and the second the *sub-conscious.*

People generally think that what is in the conscious is living and active, and what is forgotten or has sunk down into the sub-conscious is lying dead and dormant. This is a great misconception. Every idea lying in the sub-conscious is, on the other hand, always active and struggling to come and occupy the conscious,

and they do come up at once as soon as they get an opportunity. Bergson says, "That which we felt, sought, willed from infancy is here now, bending over the present moment, which goes merging into it and pressing against the gate of consciousness which would leave it without." The Buddha has also said the same thing: That our present personality is the outcome of all which we did, felt or thought from the very beginning.

The personality of a thief differs from that of a saint because they have acted and thought differently in the past. What is past is not past and gone, but extremely lively in the living present. Our past actions and thoughts follow us "as closely and surely as the wheels follow the feet of the oxen, or the shadow follows its object."

A man is, therefore, verily how he has painted his own sub-conscious, where every touch of thought he ever made is present, expressing itself in its own way. This

is exactly what is the life or the self of a man. We are what we have produced ourselves to be.

Apart from the mind which consists, as we have already seen, of the conscious and the sub-conscious, there is no other, transcendental, factor like soul or atma.

We are our own mind. A man is pure when his sub-conscious is full of pure thoughts and impressions, and a man is impure when his sub-conscious consists of all evils and vices.

The sub-conscious exercises great power over the conscious. The thief may wish very much to refrain from stealing, but is unable to do so because of the powerful urge of the temptations working in his sub-conscious. Thus the real problem of training the mind consists in the realization of a mastery of the conscious over the sub-conscious. This can be done by the three factors of Samadhi—Right Efforts (सम्मा

वायामो)[1], Right Mindfulness (सम्मा सति),[2] and Right Concentration (सम्मा समाधि).[3]

(vi) Right Efforts

Right Efforts are four in number, namely, the effort to prevent the arising of evil thoughts that have not arisen (संवरप्पधान),[4] the effort to eliminate evil thoughts that have already arisen (पहानप्पधान)[5] the effort to cultivate good thoughts that have not arisen as yet (भावनप्पधान)[6], and the effort to conserve the good thoughts that have already arisen (अनुरक्खणप्पधान).[7]

(vii) Right Mindfulness

The word Sati means constant awareness. This is a sort of sense that the practitioner is taught to develope within him, which is ever vigilant in keeping a watchful eye on the states of his own personality. Whenever we see a beautiful sight or hear a charming sound we are generally led

1. sammāvāyāmo 2. sammāsati 3. sammāsamādhi 4. sanvara-ppadhāna 5. pahānappadhāna 6. Bhāvan ppadhāna. 7. anurakhanappadhāna.

away unawares by them. This is so because of the dominating influence of the previous impressions accumulated in the sub-conscious.

'Sati' has been compared to the unfailing vigilance of the doorkeeper who does not fail to notice any one who comes in or goes out. 'Sati' stands at the gate of our mind and with an unfailing vigilance does not allow any undesirable thought to enter. The Mahasatipatthana Sutta of the Digha Nikaya describes in full how this 'mindfulness' has to be developed and perfected.

In almost all the systems of meditation, both of the East and the West, the practitioner has to withdraw his thoughts from without and focus them within. This is what is commonly known as Atmachintan or self-reflection. And, since 'self' consists of the states of mind and body (the five khandhas), self-reflection is to be practised on these as its object. Thus

the first three practices of mindfulness are:- Reflection on the States of Body (कायानुपस्सना),[1] Reflection on the Feelings (वेदनानुपस्सना)[2], and Reflection on the States of Mind (चितानुपस्सना)[3].

(*a*) *Reflection on the States of Body*

In reflecting over the states of body the practitioner is taught to start with focussing his attention on his own respiration. He is not required to exert, even in the least, to make his breath long or short. He has simply to watch it as it goes in and comes out. This practice, when followed peacefully for some time, makes the mind serene and he feels very light. This is called Anapana Sati in the Pali terminology, and is described as one of the best objects for the practice of meditation. It is prescribed chiefly for those who are of distracted mind and weak memory. Even those who do not wish to take it up as a religious practice

1. kāyānupassanā 2. vedanān-upassanā 3. cittānupassanā

may successfully follow it and improve their memories.

The other object of Kayanupassana is the movement of one's own body. The practitioner learns not to be forgetful but to be ever aware of the slightest movement of his limbs or of all the body. When he goes, stands, sits, sleeps, eats, drinks or does anything, he learns to be constantly aware of it.

Some people are very absent-minded when they walk about or do anything. They might, while walking along the road, dash against some one passing by or even fall under the wheels of an oncoming vehicle. But the driver of a fast car in a busy street cannot afford to be unmindful even in the least. This is the kind of watchfulness that we have to cultivate and it should become so engrained in us that it should not require the least exertion, but should be, as it were, second nature to us. This is beneficial to us not only in our everyday life but is absolutely

necessary for the practice of higher stages of mental discipline.

(*b*) *Reflection on the States of Feeling*

Feelings may be either pleasurable, painful or neutral. The practitioner learns to be constantly aware of these as they arise and pass away. It is seen that one is very often carried away by a pleasurable feeling and disturbed by a painful one. The practice of Sati on the states of feeling keeps one aware at the influx of any such feelings and enables him to maintain his own equilibrium of mind.

(*c*) *Reflection on the States of Mind*

Love, hatred, joy, depression, hope, fear and all such states of mind arise and exercise a very dominating influence on us, so much so that we forget ourselves and are carried away by them. Such distraction under the influence of these states is a hindrance in the way of mental discipline. This can be overcome by the practice of constant awareness (*sati*). One

who has developed Sati is fully aware, for example, when anger arises in him. He is not led away by it but overcomes it like a charioteer who reins back his steeds when they become restive and run astray. The power of an emotion over us decreases as our mindfulness (*sati*) increases.

There is another advantage in this practice. When we sit for meditation, for instance, we often find that the mind runs about in all directions. It is more restless than a monkey, even. But if we simply watch it as it jumps from one thought to another it will gradually become still and, eventually, concentrated.

(*a*) *Reflection on the States of Things*

Besides the practice of Sati on the above three states there is also the practice of Sati on the states of things (धम्मानुपस्सना)[1]. The practitioner learns to be constantly aware of the nature of the Four Noble Truths

1. dhammānupassanā

(अरियसच्चानि)[1], of the nature of the Six Spheres of Sense (आयतन)[2], and the five Aggregates (खन्ध)[3]. It means, in short, to practice constant awareness of the Truth taught by the Buddha about man and the universe The development of this kind of Sati is necessary in keeping the practitioner from being mislead by wrong views.

(viii) Right Absorption (सम्मासमाधि)[4]

With the mental discipline achieved by the practice of 'Right Efforts' and 'Right Mindfulness', the practitioner sets himself to the attainment of a state that transcends the normal discursive understanding and reaches a mystic state of mind known as 'samadhi' in almost all systems of Indian philosophy and religion. We will see how Buddhist 'samadhi' surpasses all and achieves the highest sphere of realization.

We have seen already that it is our 'desire' (*tanha*) that is at the root of all

1. ariyasaccāni. 2. āyatana 3. khandhas 4. *sammāsamādhi*

evils. It is due to 'desire' that a man accumulates kamma and is born and reborn again and again, and has to undergo all sorts of sufferings. How to annihilate this desire? This can be done, says Buddhism, only by realizing the Anicca-Dukkha-Anatta nature of existence.

By studying religious books, or even by independent thought, one can very well understand, even without a doubt, that everything is transitory (*anicca*), soulless (*anatta*) and full of misery (*dukkha*), and that it is not worth running after. But this understandine alone is not sufficient to give us deliverance from the bondage of desire. A great scholar or a wise philosopher is very much liable to fall victim to the temptations of desire. This is so because, though they have got the understanding, they have not got the 'realization' of it. This 'realization' dawns upon the practitioner in his 'samadhi,' in which he gets an immediate intuition into truth.

The Buddha has taught how to attain 'samadhi'. The first thing that the practitioner has to do is to overcome the distracting factors that stand in the way of attaining the 'concentration' necessary for samadhi. These distracting factors are sensual passion (कामच्छन्द)[1], ill-will (व्यापाद),[2] sloth-and-torpor (थीन मिद्ध)[3] distraction-and-worry (उद्धच्च-कुक्कुच्च)[4], and perplexity (विचिकिच्छा)[5]. Under their influence it is not possible to concentrate upon anything. It is not easy to overcome them and attain samadhi. One has to undergo a long and strenuous training to achieve this stage. Buddhism teaches fully how to do it. When it is achieved and samadhi is realized, the yogavacara is able to perform many miracles (इद्धि).[6] But these miraculous powers have not much spiritual significance in the way of attaining Nibbana. They come automatically to him with the perfection of

1. kāmacchanda 2. vyāpāda 3. thīna-middha 4. uddhacca-kukkucca 5. vicikicchā 6. iddhis

his concentration. The practitioner is taught not to be allured by them but to strive on for attaining the passionless state of mind in which he is free from the bondage of all shades of 'desire' and attains Nibbana.

The 'yogavacara' is able to destroy the different 'fetters' that keep man in 'bondage'. The first three fetters that are destroyed are (1) (सक्कायदिट्ठि)[1] (as already explained above, pp. 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14 (2) (विचिकिच्छा)[2] (doubts) and (3) (सीलब्बत-परामास)[3] (clinging to ceremonial observances with the hope of obtaining purification thereby). With the cessation of these he becomes a 'saint' and is called Sotapanna (=one who has entered the stream that leads to Nibbana).

The next two fetters are (4) कामराग[4] (sense-desire) and (5) पटिघ[5] (ill-will). When the 'saint' is able to make these very weak, he attains the stage of Sakadagami

1. Sakkāyaditthi. 2. Vicikicchā. 3. Silabbata-parāmāsa. 4. Kāma-rāga. 5. Paṭigha.

(=one who takes only one birth more if he has not attained Arahantship). When the saint annihilates these fetters completely he becomes an Anagami (=one who is reborn in a higher plane and attains Nibbana there alone without returning to this human frame).

With the cessation of the remaining five fetters, namely, (6) रूपराग[1] (desire to live in the material world), (7) अरूपराग[2] (desire to live in the subtle formless world (8) मान[3] conceit (9) उद्धच्च[4] (mental disequilibrium) and (10) अविज्जा[5] (ignorance), he becomes an Arahant (=one who has won the complete emancipation from the round of death and birth). Of him the Buddha has said :--

खीणं पुराणं नवं नत्थि संभवं
विरत्तचित्ता आयतिके भवस्मिं
ते खीणबीजा अविरूळिहछन्दा
निब्बन्ति धीरा यथायं पदीपो

1. Rūparāga 2. Arūparāga 3. Māna 4. Uddhacca 5. Avijjā

The old is withered out,
the new becomes not;
The mind desireth now
no future birth.
Whoso have utterly
destroyed the seeds
Of all existence,
whose desires are quenched,
Exstinguished are those
wise ones as this lamp

CHAPTER IV

KAMMA AND REBIRTH

(A) Kamma

(a) The Buddhist View of Kamma

Some religions have tried to explain the working of Kamma by a theory of retribution. They believe that there is an omniscient and omnipotent deity who keeps a complete record of all the good and bad actions of every man and woman in the world and, after their death, passes upon them His judgement of either reward or punishment, and sends them either to heaven or to hell. If there is no such deity, they say, then who is he who rewards us for our good actions or punishes us for our bad ones ?

Buddhism does not recognize this retributive explanation of Kamma. Buddhism maintains that Kamma has its own law, that it is in the very nature of things that bad kamma has a degenerating

and good kamma a regenerating effect upon the personality of the doer.

Taking life, stealing, immorality, lying, slandering, harsh speech, gossip, lust, aversion and wrong views are the ten actions of body, speech and mind that produce bad resultant kamma. These actions are rooted in the three bad tendencies, namely, 'greed' (*lobha*), ill-will (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), which constitute the animal aspect of our being. Even the lower animals are instinctively led by these tendencies to mate, to run after food, to fight and to do other such things. A man whose actions are mostly guided by these lower tendencies developes in himself a dull and instinctive consciousness, like that of the animals. The rational and noble aspects of his personality become atrophied. With a consciousness such as this, he is likely to be reborn as an animal, the nature of which he has already acquired by his own kammas.

The ten good actions of body, speech and mind are abstention from the ten bad actions stated above and the practice of the corresponding virtues, such as self-sacrifice , giving in charity, leading a pure life, speaking words which are true, beneficial, gentle and useful, and cherishing thoughts of renunciation, good-will and right views. These actions are rooted in the tendencies of self-sacrificingness (*alobha*), lovingkindness (*adosa*) and higher-wisdom (*amoha*), which constitute the rational and noble aspect of our personality. One who cultivates these will be reborn as a human being or amongst that species of gods whose nature he has cultivated by his kamma.

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 entire span of one's life, is transmitted as his kamma to his next birth. The Buddha has said that a man's present personality is an outcome of all which he did, felt or thought from the very beginning, not only from the infancy of his present life, but from the innumerable previous lives he had led before it. A man is verily how has painted his own picture, wherein every touch of thought he ever made on the canvas of his own character is indelibly present, expressing itself in its own way.

(*b*) *The Process of Kamma*

But where is this great accumulation of kamma stored up in us ? The same question was asked to the Buddhist saint Nagasena by king Milinda, to which the answer was :—

"O King; Kamma is not stored somewhere in this fleeting consciousness or in any other part of the body. But, dependent

on mind and body, it rests manifesting at the opportune moment, just as mangoes are not stored somewhere in the mango tree, but dependent on the mango tree they lie springing up in due time."

It would be a mistake to think that consciousness retains the impressions as a box holds the different articles put into it. It is rather, like all other things of the world, a continuum, a process, each moment renewing itself dependent upon the conditions that present themselves. And in so doing, each moment transmits its impressions to the succeeding moment, which in turn passes them on to the next moment together with its own contribution to the process. These impressions, also, are not static, but are undergoing a process of their own, continually acting and reacting upon one another. The present moment of consciousness has thus arisen big with the kammas accumulated from the beginingless past.

The student reads volume after volume for his examination and goes on receiving the knowledge gained through them. As he carries on writing in the examination hall, all that he has studied flows from the tip of his pen, because that moment of his consciousness is rich with all the knowledge which it has inherited from its predecessors.

(c) *Kamma Not the Only Factor*

The difference in temperament, intelligence and character in different individuals is to a great extent due to this difference in the kammas they have amassed in their own ways; but heredity and enviroment are also very much responsible for determining the differences among men. Buddhism recognizes fully the extent of the influence which these factors excercize upon us. It is totally wrong to believe, as some do, that kamma is the only factor determining our destiny. The Buddha has emphatically denounced the

view that everything is due to our previous kamma. "If so, then, owing to a previous kamma, men will become murderers, thieves, unchaste, liars, slanderers abusive.....and of wrong views. Thus, for those who fall back on the former kamma as the sole reason there is neither desire to do, nor effort to do, nor necessity to do this deed or abstain from that deed." (Gradual Sayings, Vol. I, p. 157.)

(*d*) *How Kamma Works*

The impressions of good and bad actions, as we have just seen, go on accumulating as our kamma, and they are continually acting and reacting upon one another, in a process of constant flux. As they are so numerous and so diverse it is very difficult to say how they act and react amongst themselves and produce a certain resultant. Perhaps only the omniscient Buddha would be able to trace the connection between a particular resultant and its kamma. We can understand

only the most general manner in which they work.

A thought that one has directed towards some one else reacts upon oneself in its own way. A thought of hatred and animosity directed toward the enemy is reflected upon the thinker and makes him apprehend danger and evil from outside. A psychologist has pointed out very rightly that the coward is one who is under the influence of the impression of his own thoughts of ill-will and animosity. Similarly, thoughts of generosity and loving-kindness that we have towards others are reflected upon ourselves and make us better and happier. Grimm gives a general description of how the different kammas react upon us.

"Whoso, devoid of compassion, can kill men or even animals, carries deep within himself the inclination to shorten life. He finds satisfaction or even pleasure in the short-livedness of other creatures. Short-lived germs have there-

fore some affinity which makes itself known after his death in the grasping of another germ which then takes place to his own detriment. Even so, germs bearing within themselves the power of developing into a deformed body, have an affinity for one who finds pleasure in ill-treating and disfiguring others.

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

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

"It is, of course, only a consequence of the above that a change of sex may also ensue.

"Thus it is related in the Digha Nikaya No. xxi that Gopika, a daughter of

the Sakya house, was reborn after her death as Gopaka Devaputta, because the female mind had become repulsive to her, and she had formed a male mind within herself."

Consciousness is thus constantly affecting the body and bringing about changes therein in its own way.

(B) Rebirth

(*a*) *Consciousness a Continuum*

The moments of consciousness flow on, in a continuum, rolling up within themselves all the impressions that come in their way, and the being of the man hangs as it were at the very edge of the process. We say 'moments of consciousness' not because there are so many distinct dots in the process, but because by this expression alone we can elucidate the nature of the continuum. There is no gap between one moment and the other. One moment begets the next and passes on all it had inherited from the pre-

ceeding moment. Thus each moment, it may be said, we are born anew, beget and die out.

But whence does this process start ? Does it start from our childhood? Buddhism points out that the process of consciousness is continuing from eternity. The Buddha has said, "O Bhikkhus ! The beginning of this existence is not to be seen." (अनमतग्गो अयं भिक्खवे संसारो)[1] It is from eternity that we are taking births after births, and gathering all sorts of kamma that we get by our good and bad actions. It would be very wrong to believe that the personality starts its career from one's childhood. If it were so, different men would not have differed so much in their intelligence, merits and other acquisitions, as we have seen above.

And, does this process cease altogether when we die? It has already been pointed out that this process would certainly come to an end if one dies after annihilating

1. Anamataggo ayam bhikkhave sansāro

all desire, and has no accumulation of kamma in him. But if one is still in the bondage of desire and is accumulating kamma, his personality will continue to proceed on in a birth hereafter.

(*b*) '*Patisandhi*' *and Transmigration of Soul*

Just as there is no gap between two consecutive moments of consciousness in our present life, so there is no gap between the last moment of consciousness in this birth and the first in the next. These two moments come in the same continuum. The dying moment of consciousness begets the moment of consciousness in the womb at the time of conception, and passes on its heritage of kamma to that. In Pali terminology this is called by the name of Patisandhi which means connecting the last link of this birth with the first of the next.

This dynamic view of personality in Buddhism is different from the static conception of a 'self' or 'soul' which migrates

from body to body. In Buddhism there is no transmigration of soul. There is no 'rebirth' in the sense that the same unchanging self is born again and again. But here there is a personality in constant flux, kept moving on by the impulse of desire from birth to birth. This explanation refutes the common criticism of Buddhism that it denies the existence of the 'soul' but nevertheless teaches the doctrine of 'rebirth'.

The belief in an unchanging soul transmigrating from body to body leaves no room for the possibility of it being defiled or purified by our actions, for how can anything affect that which is unchanging? The Buddha has said, "If O Bhikkhus, there were an unchanging soul distinct from our mind and body, no religious life would have been possible." The Buddhist explanation of ever-evolving personality makes it very clear how each moment, by our own thoughts and

actions, we are contributing towards our own improvement or degeneration, and is thus the explicit or implicit foundation of all ethical and religious life.

CHAPTER V

PATICCA SAMUPPADA

(A) The Doctrine of Paticca Samuppada

(*a*) *Introductory*

The doctrine of Paticca Samuppada is the real foundation on which the entire philosophy of Buddhism is built. The Buddha Himself has said, "O Bhikkhus ! One who understand Paticca Samuppada does understand the Dhamma, and one who understands the Dhamma understands Paticca Samuppada." (Digha Nikaya, Potthapada Sutta.) Santarakshita, in his encyclopaedic philosophical treatise the Tattvasangraha, offers his adoration to the Buddha as the 'Great Sage' Who has preached the doctrine of Paticca Samuppada. The three fundamental principles of Buddhism—all is impermanence, all is substance-(soul-) less, and all is misery—are really derivative forms of this very doctrine.

The central point of the doctrine is that there is nothing which is not produced depending on cause and conditions. All states of mind and matter are being produced depending on other states of mind and matter which, in turn, are produced depending on still other states. There is nothing that can arise of its own accord or lead an isolated life, quite independent of everything else. The lamp keeps on burning depending on the oil, the wick, the oxygen in the atmosphere, and so many other positive and negative conditions. The oil depends upon the temperature, which must be neither cold enough to freeze it nor hot enough to evaporate it; and the temperature, in its turn, depends upon the latitude and elevation of the place, and on the season of the year and time of day. In the same way, the wick depends upon the strands of cotton from which it is made, and the oxygen upon the chemical elements of which it is composed.

Here, the flame of the lamp is only a phenomenon that has arisen depending on conditions; it is not a substance, not a reality. It is therefore Anatta. The great Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna has used the word Sunyavada to mean this very truth. By the word Sunya he does not mean to say that it is nothing, but what he wants to inculcate is that it is not a substance. He has expressed himself very clearly when he says, "There is no dharma (thing) which is not produced by causes and conditions. Therefore there exists no dharma of which it cannot be said that it is substanceless." (Madhyamika Sastra, Chapter XXIV, Karika 19.)

The doctrine of Paticca Samuppada further holds that no conditions are static but that they all are dynamic through and through. The flame of the lamp, the oil, the wick, all are in a state of flux and Anicca. Since it is Anatta and Anicca it cannot be an object of consolation to us. One who is attached

to it will have, as it passes away, to meet with nothing but misery.

(*b*) *The Chain of Cause and Effect*

The words Paticca Samuppada literally mean 'Dependent Origination', which may be expressed by saying, "Depending on that, this originates," or, "On that becoming, this becomes."

There being clouds in the sky, it rains. It having rained, the road becomes slippery. The road becoming slippery, a man falls down. The man having fallen down, becomes injured.

Here, a shower of rain depends on the clouds being in the sky; the road becoming slippery depends on the shower of rain; the fall of the man depends upon the road becoming slippery; the injury of the man depends upon his fall.

Thus, if there had been no clouds in the sky, it would not have rained; then the road would not have become slippery; then the man would not have fallen down;

then he would not have received the injury.

In this chain, we see, one incident depends upon one previous to it, and gives rise to one after it. Everything that we find in the world can be brought under a chain of cause and effect like this. Nothing can originate without depending on something else previous to it; and no originated thing can be conceived of, which does not give rise to something else in its turn. Thus, the process goes on. Anything can be traced upwards to where it originated and downwards to that which originates depending on it.

The particular sciences do nothing but try to trace an event upwards and downwards in the phenomena they are concerned with. Thus, Botany tells us that a good growth of the tree depends upon a suitable manure, and a suitable manure depends upon such and such constituents being in it, and so on. Physics

tells us that the movement of the engine depends upon the power of steam, and steam depends upon water and fire.

In this way, we can take even the pettiest thing in the world, and it can be traced upwards and downwards in the same manner, for Nature is governed by the Law of Paticca Samuppada, or, "Depending on that, this originates." There is no break in the process. The events flow continuously in a series, one giving rise to the other. As one ripple in a stream Causes another, and that, also, yet another, so the flow of causation goes on.

(c) *The Question of First Cause*

But here an objection can be raised as to what is that which was the First cause, or as to where the process of causation ends.

Really, science has never cared to find out the first cause or the last effect. Knowledge grows in proportion to our ability and labour in searching for it.

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 we evidently see that any such belief in a superstitious explanation is inimical to the advancement of knowledge. The primitive man believed that the wind blows because the Wind God goes in a 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 had 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.

The Law of Paticca Samuppada does not investigate into the First Cause, for the very conception of a First Cause means a total check in the progress of knowledge.

(*d*) *Paticca Samuppada Not the Law of Causation*

Paticca Samuppada is not, as some people erroneously suppose, the Law of Causation as understood by the mediaeval 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 to be untenable. According to the Law of Paticca Samuppada two events cannot be considered as quite distinct from each other, for they are links of the same pro-

cess, 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 mediaeval logicians 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 intention in the potter to produce a pot, the pot would not have been produced. All of these are indispensable for the production of the pot. If even one of them were absent, the pot could not have been produced. What right have we to say, therefore, that clay is the cause of the pot? It is simply arbitrary on our part 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. The most appropriate 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 Samuppada.

(B) How It Explains the Cycle of Lives

Buddhism applies the Law of Paticca Samuppada to explain how a man gathers kamma in this life and due to that is reborn after death. The process of the cycle of birth and death is called 'bhavacakra' and is symbolically represented by a wheel with twelve spokes. As the spokes of the wheel move round and round, so the twelve links of the cycle of lives are repeated again and again. Due to ignorance a man does all sorts of good and bad actions, gathers kamma and is reborn after death. And again he goes on doing the same actions and continues being born and reborn.

The twelve spokes of this cycle are:— depending on ignorance (अविज्जा)[1] there arise the activities of life (संखार)[2]; depending on the activities (that yield vipaka)

1. avijjā 2. saṅkhāra

there arises 'patisandhi' consciousness-(विञ्ञान)[1] in another birth after the expiry of this life; depending on patisandhi consciousness there arise the mental and the physical states of being (नामरूप);[2] depending on the mental and physical states there develope the six senses, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind (सलायतन);[3] depending on the six senses there arises contact (फस्स)[4] with the object; depending on contact there arise the different kinds of feeling (वेदना);[5] depending on feeling there arises a craving for the object (तण्हा);[6] depending on craving there arises grasping (उपादान);[7] depending on grasping there arises the process of life, (भव);[8] the process of life flows on into another birth (जाति)[9] after death; and birth is followed by decay, death, grief, lamentation, ill, anxiety and all trouble. Thus does originate the whole body of evils.

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1. viññāna 2. nāmarūpa 3. salāyatana 4. phassa 5. vedanā 6. taṇhā 7. upādāna 8. bhava 9. jāti

This explains :—

(a) That there was a previous life of the being in which, due to ignorance (*avijja*), he did all kinds of good and bad actions. This is called 'atitakamma-bhava,' the process of active life in his previous birth.

(b) Due to the resultant of this he gets 'patisandhi' in the present birth, which gives rise to mind and body, upon the basis of which there develope the six senses, which come in contact with the objects, as a result of which the subject gets pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings.

This much is the process of the present life as a result of the previous kamma. This is called 'paccuppanna upapatti-bhava,' the process at the time of taking birth.

Then, due to the feelings, he gets craving and grasping, and keeps on the struggle of life, doing all kinds of good and bad actions. This is the active part of the

present life called 'paccuppanna kamma-bhava,' the process of his activities in the course of his present span of life. These yield resultant, and

(c) he gets 'patisandhi' in some other life according to it, which is again followed by decay, death and all evils. This is the future resultant of the present 'called anagata upapatti-bhava,' the process of life in the future as a result of the present.

Thus the cycle of Paticca Samuppada takes into consideration four sections from the previous, the present and the future lives—one in the first, two in the second, and one in the third. These four sections are called the four sankhepas, each consisting of five constituents.

There are three junctions (*sandhi*) in the process of these four sections, namely, (1) that of the previous activity with the present resultant, (2) that of the present resultant with the present activity, and

(3) that of the present activity with the future resultant.

The twenty constituents coming under the four sections are called the twenty 'modes' (आकार).[1] These may be studied under the diagram given in the next page—

The constituents of Paticca Samuppada	The three successive lives	The four sections and twenty modes	The three junctions
1. Ignorance (avijjā) 2. Good and bad activities (saṅkhāra)	Past	I Atita Kamma Bhava 1. Avijjā 2. Tanhā 3. Upādāna 4. Bhava 5. Saṅkhāra	
3. Paṭisandhi conscious- ness (viññāna) 4. Mind and body (nāmarūpa) 5. The Six Ayatanas 6. Contact (phassa) 7. Feeling (vedanā)	Present	II Paccuppanna Vipaka 6. Viññāna 7. Nāma-rūpa 8. Salayatana 9. Phassa 10. Vedanā	I
8. Craving (taṇhā) 9. Grasping (upādāna) 0. The process of life (bhava)		III Paccuppana Kamma Bhava The same as I	II
11. Birth in the coming life (jāti) 12. Decay, death and all evils (jarāmaraṇa etc)	Future	IV Anagata Vipaka Bhava The same as II	III

CHAPTER VI

SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF BUDDHISM

(1) *Religion and Dhamma*

The word 'religion' is derived, etymologically, from the Latin *re*, meaning 'again', and the root *ligere*, meaning 'to bind'. It therefore connotes a rebinding of ourselves with some thing, person or state, from whom or from which we have in some mysterious manner become separated. This etymological derivation of the word is reflected in definitions of religion such as that of Kant, who held it to consist in the acceptance of duty as a divine command, of Caird, who thought it meant the self-surrender of the human spirit to the Divine, and of Max Muller, who considered it to imply, amongst other things, the belief in a divine power and the hope of future life. Besides these three well-known definitions of religion

there are numerous others; but all of them follow the same pattern. They all agree in regarding 'religion' as consisting primarily in the belief in some divinity as the creator of man and the universe and as the supreme source of religious authority, and in devotion and prayer as the means of invoking the grace of that being.

None of these common characteristics of the various 'religions' are, however, to be found in Buddhism. The Buddhadhamma is in every respect singularly distinct from all these systems of thought. For it regards belief in a supreme being as one of the gravest errors, and reliance on the efficacy of devotion and prayer as a serious obstacle. It would be more correct to describe Buddhism as a progressive scheme of self-discipline and self-purification for the attainment of the passionless state of Nibbana. This scheme is based neither on blind belief nor idle speculation, but upon the sound philosophy of cause and effect, i.e. that

being present this arises, that not being present this does not arise, a brief outline of which has already been given in the chapter on Paticca Samuppada. When we reflect impartially upon such facts as these it at once becomes obvious that there is a wide gulf of difference between Buddhism and 'religion'. This difference may be put in a nutshell by saying that a 'religion' is something to be accepted and believed, while Buddhism is something to be understood and practised. lthougAh Buddhism is usually referred to as though it was some sort of 'religion', which it plainly is not, it would be more correct to describe it by the term which it uses to describe itself—Dhamma. This word indicates that Buddhism is a progressive scheme of self-discipline and self-purification, that it is based on a truly philosophical conception of existence, and that it culminates in the attainment of the Highest Good.

(2) *Buddhism and Faith*

Faith is the basis of all those religions which believe in the existence of an almighty deity. Faith in this deity as the creator of the universe and as the rewarder and punisher of man, in the priest as his accredited representative, and in the revelation or sacred book as his message to mankind, is the starting-point of them all. The new convert is urged to have faith in these and it would be regarded as a blasphemy if he ventured to ask why he should have faith. Unless one has faith, these religions maintain, it is quite impossible to be rid of sins and evils. Some sects even go so far as to believe that a man with strong faith will go to heaven irrespective of what his personal conduct was.

This religious faith is a blind faith. In some systems of religion it has given rise to what is known as bhakti or devotion. Although it was originally regarded simply as a means to an end, that is,

emancipation, devotion eventually came to be regarded as the end itself. Some religions tend more and more to regard bhakti as the ultimate goal.

The Buddha has denounced blind faith and pointed out that since it is a form of ignorance it cannot help us in any way in our self-purification. He always emphasized that one should believe in a doctrine only after having understood it thoroughly. He therefore declared, "O Bhikkhus, the bhikkhu is endowed with confidence based on understanding." This confidence is called Saddha in Buddhist terminology. The understanding whereon it is based may sometimes be weak and sometimes strong, but it is never blind. The Buddha has aptly compared Saddha to the confidence which a patient has in his doctor or a student has in his teacher. The more benefited the patient is by the treatment of the doctor the more Saddha he gets in him and the more enthusiastically he follows his prescriptions. Similarly

the more easily the student learns his lessons and the more successfully he passes his examinations, the more confidence does he get in the wisdom and ability of his teacher. But if the prescription of the doctor does him no good the patient begins to lose his Saddha. Thus Saddha is never blind, but always keeps its eyes open and is constantly vigilant to mark whether the doctor's prescription or any other thing claiming its allegiance acts in the way it is supposed to. The Buddha has said "O Bhikkhus, accept the words of the Tathagata only after you have examined them yourself, don't accept them simply due to the reverence you have towards me." This kind of Saddha is obviously sane, healthy and rational. Not only does it leave no space for bhakti or devotion but it automatically precludes every other form of unbalanced emotionalism. Buddhism asks us to believe it only after we have understood it. Faith in the Buddha is useless if we do not practise His teachings.

(3) *The Buddha Not a Saviour*

The Buddha has said "O Bhikkhus, it is for you to exert and practise, the Tathagata only points out the way." In Buddhism the Buddha is not regarded as a messiah, nor as a saviour, but as a Teacher, a Sattha, Who, after realising the Truth Himself, has taught it to us. He was a man just like ourselves, who in the course of innumerable previous lives struggled to attain the perfect state of Buddhahood. This lofty ambition was at last fulfilled when He was born as Siddhattha Gotama, the son of Suddhodana of the Sakyas. The Buddha has never said "Abandoning all duties come unto me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins" (*Gita* XVIII, 66) or "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*New Testament*). On the contrary, He has said:—

"Evil is done by self alone, by self alone is one stained; by self alone is evil left un-

done, by self alone is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on one's own self. No man can purify another." (Dhammapda 165). Everything depends upon one's own exertion and the Buddha has therefore taught the noble gospel of the conquest of the self by the self. If a man does not exert himself no one else in either heaven or earth can help him.

The Buddha had a matchless personality and was an incomparable teacher. In the Tipitaka we find beautiful stories of how His profound wisdom and sublime compassion converted a devilish robber like Angulimala, a charming and wealthy courtezan like Ambapali, and a vile leper begging for alms in the street like Suppabuddha. All these examples show that the Buddha had tremendous personal magnetism and unequalled powers of persuasion with which He was able to draw innumerable beings into the right path. The Buddha is the *Purisadammasarathisattha devamanussanam'ti* or "Charioteer of men

to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men." But Buddhism nevertheless maintains that the final realization depends only upon the individual exertions of His followers and on no other factor. The Buddha has shown us the path, but we ourselves must tread it.

(4) *The Pali Canon Not a Revelation*

Most of the theistic religions have scriptures of their own which they believe to be a direct revelation from an infallible supreme source, and they maintain that these scriptures must be accepted as the highest authority in the religious sphere. They cannot tolerate even the mildest criticism of the numerous inconsistencies and errors which these books contain. The revealed scripture of one religion often differs from that of another and it is therefore obvious that they have originated from different sources. Moreover since they contradict each other on different points it is impossible that they should all

be right, and very likely that they are all wrong.

The Buddha, on the other hand, most emphatically warned His disciples against blindly putting faith in the authority of any book or tradition. To the Kalama nobles He said "Now, Kalamas, do not ye go by hearsay, nor by what is handed down by others, nor by what people say, nor by what is stated on the authority of ycur traditicnal teachings. Do not go by reasoning, nor by inferring, nor by augument as to method, nor from reflection on and approval of an opinion, nor out of respect, thinking a recluse ust be deferred to. But, Kalamas, when you know of yourselves: 'These teachings are not good: they are blameworthy : they are contemned by the wise: these teachings, when followed out and put in practise, conduce to loss and suffering' then reject them." (*Anguttara Nikaya*, I, 188.)

The Buddhist scriptures are contained in the Pali Canon which the disciples of the Buddha compiled at Rajagaha under the patronage of king Ajatasattu immediately after the Parinibbana of their great Master. It is quite possible that in the course of the twenty-five centuries which have elapsed since then there might have crept in some interpolations 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 Buddhist reads these books in order to understand the teaching of the Lord Buddha and to get inspiration to follow the path taught by Him. They are not regarded as a divine revelation, but simply as the advice of a great religious Teacher to His disciples. They are not to be accepted and believed, but to be understood and practised. They appeal not to blind faith but to the practical intelligence.

(5) *Bhikkhus are not Priests*

Almost all the religions have priests of their own, whose duty it is to perform the various rites, rituals and ceremonies in which those religions believe. They are supposed to be the agents or representatives of God. In some religions the priestly office is inherited by birth, while in others it is dependent upon initiation by other priests. Priests are usually held in high esteem by their co-religionists, are fed, clothed and housed sumptuously (some of them possessing wives, servants, palaces, jewels, political power etc.) and are given fees for performing various religious rites and ceremonies. In birth, marriage, death, sacrifice, war and all other such occasions of private or public life the priests are called upon to invoke the blessings of God. In these sacerdotal religions people think that they cannot approach God except through the medium of the priests.

In Buddhism, however, no such priestly mediation is necessary. The Buddhist

does not aspire to win the favour of any Deity, and therefore can well afford to dispense with the services of a priest. His ultimate goal is self-purification, self-discipline and self mastery. This can be obtained only through one's own efforts and exertions and if he does not strive himself no one else can possibly help him. The Buddhist Bhikkhus have renounced all worldly ties and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the attainment of self-purification. By virtue of their purity of life and strict self-discipline they are the best persons to preach the Doctrine and inspire the people to follow the path taught by the Buddha.

(6) *Rationlism and Toleration*

The Buddha never tried to win the confidence and faith of the people by making them believe in supernatural agencies and superstitious dogmas. On the other hand, He always appealed to their sense of understanding and reason and especially warned them against accepting anything

that was not susceptible of a scientific explanation based on the law of causation. Superstitious beliefs in the blissful nature of Brahman the Buddha compared to the attempt of a man building a staircase in the empty air. Buddhism leaves no room for superstition and dogma. It is true that the Buddha, also, exhibited miraculous powers of yogic attainment, but that was not anything mysterious, miraculous, since He explained how it was possible for everyone to attain them through the practise of mental discipline and cultivation of psychic powers. Buddhism explains all phenomena of man and nature not by dogmas but by rational application of the law of causation.

It was due to this rational outlook of Buddhism that it is free from religious fanaticism and blind intolerance. Buddhism has spread in the world solely because of the merits of its own doctrines and the lovingkindness of its missionaries, never by forcible conversion or persecution. Dogmatic people become intole-

rant if they are criticized, rightly or wrongly, by their opponents. The Buddha has specially warned His disciples not to fall victim to such weakness, but to be patient and examine whether a criticism raised against the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Sangha has any truth in it or not. While the Buddha was going from Rajagaha to Nalanda with His retinue of monks He halted at the royal garden of Ambalatthika to spend the night. There a mendicant of another sect, Suppiya Paribbajaka, was talking ill of, and finding fault with, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. The Bhikkhus overheard what he was saying and reported it to the Buddha, and the Lord said "O Bhikkhus, if anyone talks ill of Me, of the Dhamma or of the Sangha, you should not get offended, nor be disturbed by that. If you get offended or disturbed by that, it will be bad for you yourself.....rather you must investigate into it and find out whether it is untrue and baseless."

(7) *Buddhism and Caste*

Caste system has been the greatest curse in the social life of India. It has divided the nation into watertight compartments and has based the structure of society on the feelings of difference and distinction. Each caste thinks itself superior to others and takes pride in this fancied superiority. The Brahmins constitute the highest caste but still amongst them there are scores of sub-castes, each one claiming to be superior to the others. Such a state of affairs has made it impossible to build up a united nation in India. Because of the caste system India could not be one, and therefore fell an easy victim to any invasion from outside. A handful of invaders entered the country and trampled the people under their heels from one corner to the other, but the caste distinctions of the Indians did not allow them to make a united stand. Those who could not bear the humiliation of caste distinction were compelled to leave

the Hindu society and they became sworn enemies to Hinduism. Still the Hindus did not pay any heed to the evil. The present division of India and the great bloodshed caused in recent times are undoubtedly the outcome of long prevalent caste distinctions.

The Buddha, Mahavir, Nanak, Ram Mohan Roy and Gandhi, all eminent reformers of India, directed their best efforts to the abolition of this evil of caste distinction. But still the Hindus are clinging fast to it, although thoughtful people have fully realized that the future is very dark if this evil is not eradicated.

The Buddha was the first man to raise a voice against caste distinction and preach social equality for all as far as two thousand five hundred years back. In the Brahmanadhammika Sutta of the Sutta Nipata He has said "Between ashes and gold there is a marked difference, but between a Brahmana and a Chandala there is nothing of the kind. A Brahmana

is not produced like fire by the friction of dry wood; he does not descend from the sky nor from the air, nor does he come out piercing the earth. The Brahmana is brought forth from the womb of a woman in exactly the same way as a Chandala. All human beings have organs exactly alike; there is not the slightest difference in kind. In plants, insects, fishes, snakes birds, quadrupeds the marks that constitute the species are abundant, whereas amongst men this is not the case. Neither the hair, nor the formation of the skull, nor the colour of the skin, nor the vocal organ, nor any other part of the body exhibits any specific differences."

Throughout the history of its stay in India Buddhism stood resolutely against the evil of caste distinctions, and never made a compromise on this issue. This was due to the fact that the Buddha had built the Sangha on principles absolutely free from questions of caste distinction. He has compared His Sangha to a mighty

ocean in which great rivers from different directions fall and lose their identity and become one, for the Bhikkhus joining the Order from different castes and classes of society forget all their differences and feel one and the same (Udana, V. 5, Vinaya, ii. 9.). Such was the great strength of the Buddhist Order.

The story of the ordination of Upali the barber is another outstanding example of how the Buddha tried to abolish caste differences. Upali the barber followed his kshatriya masters who had come to the Buddha to ask for ordination. The Buddha gave ordination first to Upali and then to his kshartiya masters, and thus gave the barber a senior status in the Sangha. His own kshatriya masters had to worship and pay their homage to Upali. The Pali Canon is full of such stories which show that the Buddha and His great disciples like Moggallana, Kassapa and others tried their utmost to bring home the futility of caste distinctions.

(8) *The Practical Use of Religion*

The Buddha has compared the Dhamma to a raft—*Kullupamam bhikkhave dhammam desemi, santaranattham no gahanattham* or "I teach you, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma like a raft to be used to cross over (the stream of existence), not as something to hold fast to." 'Holding fast' is to adopt a label of either this 'ism or that, without caring to practise what it propounds. This has been the root cause of the different wars and bloodsheds committed in the name of religion. All religions teach love and peace; and if people had cared to practise that these evils in the name of religion would not have been possible. So the Buddha has said the essence of the Dhamma lies in the practise of it. Throughout His life the Buddha kept on inspiring His disciples to practise Sila, cultivate Bhavana and realize Panna. Even the last words the Buddha uttered were *Appamadena sampadetha* or "Do ye abide in heedfulness."

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