

THE BUDDHIST



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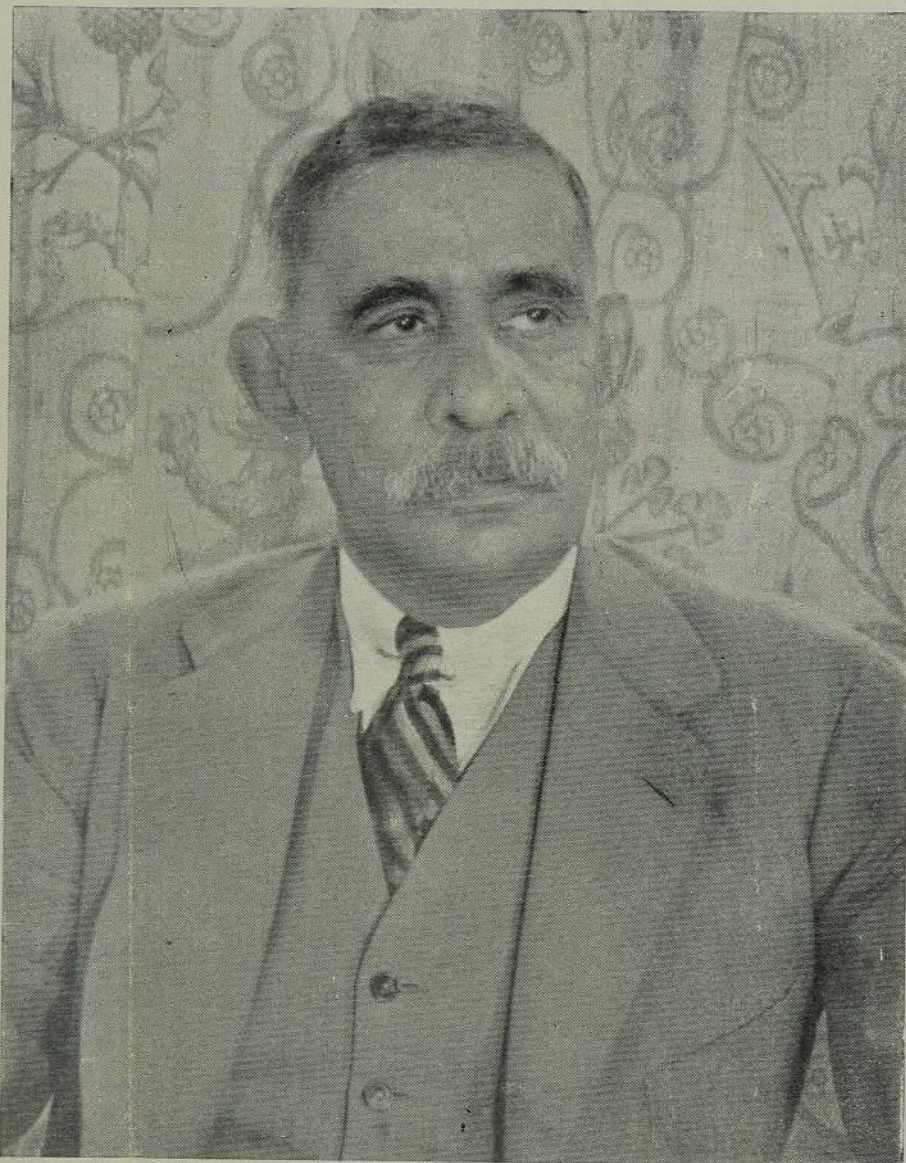
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WE MOURN THE DEATH OF



The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, P.C., Prime Minister of Ceylon,
Vice-President, Colombo Y.M.B.A. (DIED 22-3-1952).

We, in common with the whole nation, mourn the death of the Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, Prime Minister of Ceylon. Eloquent tributes to his memory have already been paid to him by the Press and the public throughout the world, such as has never been paid to a Ceylonese before, that it is not necessary for us here to say much.

For forty years he was a member of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association and for twenty-five years he was one of our Vice-Presidents.

The cause of religion was always dear to his heart and his particular ambition was to make Ceylon a united nation, enjoying the respect and goodwill of the world. In the achievement of this aim he gave of his services unstintedly and devotedly.

May his memory be a shining example to generations yet unborn.



THE BUDDHIST

(Organ of the Colombo Y.M.B.A.)

“*Sīla Paññānato Jayam*”



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WHERE BUDDHISM BEGINS—AND WHY IT BEGINS THERE

By BHIKKHU SANGHARAKSHITA,
Hermitage, Kalimpong.

THAT existence was all of a piece (whether mental or material), and that the truth about existence was therefore a whole was, at least until fairly recent times, an article of faith more or less generally accepted among philosophers. Hence the conception of philosophy as system, as being the coherent explanation of the totality of phenomena. Hence the conception of the philosopher as system-builder, as the architect of a vast and elaborate structure wherein every fact would find its appointed place. From Plato and Aristotle to Hegel and Herbert Spencer, the ambition of philosophers has been to build bigger and better systems than their predecessors, just as it is the ambition of American millionaires to build bigger and better sky-scrapers. Except that the philosophers have had more justification than the millionaires, for the fact—population of the philosophical world has increased enormously during the last few hundred years, and it might therefore with some plausibility be argued that extra accommodation was by this time urgently required.

If “the truth is the whole” and if philosophy is system it follows that both are fixed and unchanging. Their universe is what William James called a block universe. Nothing ever happens in it. Nobody goes anywhere. Nobody does anything. Everything has happened and everybody gone where they wanted to go and done what they wanted to do once and for all. Time is somehow adventitious, progress an illusion, change unreal. Existence as a whole is what it

was eternally in the past and will be eternally in the future. We are frozen into it as a fly into a block of ice. *Sub specie eternitatis*, everything exists simultaneously. All the philosopher has to do is to construct an exact conceptual model of existence. Hence the appropriateness of the architectural simile. But however, clear and coherent his mental blue-print may be, as soon as he commences the work of construction the philosopher is confronted by a serious difficulty. Where is he to begin? The ordinary architect is called upon to solve no such problem; whether he likes it or not, he has to begin by laying the foundation. But our philosophers, who build with airy concepts, are not hampered by any such restraints, and may begin wherever they please, whether in the basement of the attic, down the crypt or up the steeple. Their freedom of movement is moreover facilitated by the fact that they are not sure in which direction ‘up’ and ‘down’ really are, since this would be to entertain preconceptions, and from all preconceptions their ideal of strict philosophical objectivity demands that they should be free. So which part of the building is the crypt and which the steeple will be known only when the structure is complete, when it stands foursquare (or whatever other shape it may be) in all its rigid perfection and immobile beauty to all the winds of change that blow. In the meantime it exists clearly and coherently enough in the mind of the architect, as we have already said, and with this fact must we be content. The only difficulty is the practical one

of exposition, and merely practical difficulties have never troubled philosophers overmuch.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the difficulty in which the system-building conception of philosophy finds itself inevitably involved is that of representing serially as a *succession of parts* what it conceives spatially as a *simultaneity of parts*, of expressing eternity in terms of time. Since reality is not like a ball of twine, with a definite beginning and end, which can be unrolled little by little until it forms one divisible and measurable straight line, the difficulty is in fact insuperable. The eternalist view of reality pictures it as a sort of sphere or globe, and how impossible it is to make a two-dimensional projection of a three-dimensional figure all cartographers know. But books have to be written, just as maps must be drawn, and although a philosophical work may appear to dispense with an end it can hardly dispense with a beginning. In the absence of an objectively determinable starting-point the system-building philosophers have therefore fallen back more or less unconsciously to their subjective preferences and made do with those. Descartes began with *Cogito, ergo sum*, though for no better reason than the scholastics who preceded him had begun with revelation; for, as a jovial critic once remarked, he might with equally irrefragable logic have said *Caco, ergo sum*. Spinoza took as his point of departure axioms which he thought as self-evidently true for philosophy as those of Euclid were then thought to be for geometry. But time,

instead of confirming his opinion that there could be but one system of philosophy (whether that of Spinoza or anybody else) even as there is but one system of geometry, has on the contrary neatly controverted it with the discovery that there could be many systems of geometry, just as there are many systems of philosophy. Hegel made a bold attempt to solve the difficulty by identifying the dialectical movement of thought with the supposedly dialectical movement of history; but he met with no more success than his numerous predecessors. Facts stubbornly refused to be so ruthlessly conscripted into the ranks of his dialectical battalions. A crack appeared in the gigantic walls of his building which slowly widened until the magnificent edifice split in two, and the halves had to be dismantled and carted away for the construction of more useful and enduring if less imposing structures elsewhere. Since the starting-point of each philosopher was different his conclusion also was necessarily different, as well as the line of exposition by which the two were connected. Plato has conferred on the philosopher the grandiose title of "the spectator of all time and all existence," but although he tells him what to see he does not tell him from where to see it, whether to take a bird's-eye view with the transcendentalist or a worm's-eye view with the empiricist. Indian tradition considers all philosophical points of view (*darshanas*) as more or less equally valid, since Reality is ineffable, and therefore susceptible of more than one intellectual interpretation. All that is expected of any such interpretation is that it should help the person who accepts it to experience for himself the Truth which it can indicate but which it is powerless to describe. Here philosophy and religion meet. But in the West, where the intellect has generally been regarded as capable of making a fully adequate conceptual representation of Reality, the truth of one system precludes the possibility of any other system being true. The question of any pragmatic reference did not, until the days of William James, even arise. Philosophy was one thing and religion another, and the nature of the connection between them remained a matter of uncertainty, except of course to Hegel, who crushed religion on the procrustean bed of his dialectic as merrily as he had stretched physics. System there-

fore succeeded system, as century followed century, and one shaky building was put up after another, so that if today we glance backward in history the philosophical landscape appears dotted with the ruins of innumerable structures of all shapes and sizes—melancholy monuments to the luciferian pride of human intellect, which would seat knowledge in the chair of wisdom, and elevate mind to the throne of spirit.

Buddhist philosophy (and religion, for the two are inseparable, and should always go together and be called Dharma) adopts, however, an altogether different procedure, declaring that the only possible religio-philosophical starting-point is not a thought, an idea or a concept at all, but on the contrary a feeling, the feeling of pain, physical and mental suffering, *dukkha*. Nor are we given a merely theoretical definition of pain for, silently pointing to the solid and incontrovertible facts of birth, old age, disease, death, being separated from those we love, having to live with those we hate, Buddhism lets them speak to us for themselves, and they whisper in the depths of our hearts the tidings that "all this is pain." This shifting of emphasis from the cognitive to the affective modes of experience marks a change in philosophy even more radical than that brought about by the famous "Copernican revolution" of Kant, since it brings both philosophy and religion home to "men's business and bosoms" with an immediacy of impact such as no conceptual commonplace could possibly have achieved. Pain is the common ground whereon meet prince and peasant, mill-hand and millionaire, male and female, old and young, animal and vegetable, man and amoeba. Sentient existence is a great brotherhood of suffering. The same nerves that transmit sensations of pleasure can transmit sensations of pain. If it is the faith of Wordsworth that "Every flower enjoys the air it breathes," it is equally the faith of the Buddhist poet that every blade of grass "Feels with pain the string of rain." Whether we go up or down in the scale of sentient existence, backward or forward in time, inward into mind or outward into matter, where there is sensibility there is suffering, and without sensibility life as we know it cannot exist. Suffering stands out in human life as clearly as the snow-peaks of the Himalaya

against the cloudless blue Autumn sky. Only our infatuation with transitory pleasures prevents us from seeing the fact steadily and whole. Even when we ignore the existence of pain we tacitly admit that it is there, and the more studiously we ignore it the more damning does the admission become, until one day we are violently torn from whatever pleasure we were clinging to, and confronted with the fearful visage which we had avoided for so long. Even the conceptualization of pain into "the sense of limitation" or "the feeling of finitude," useful though they may for some purposes be, is only too often an attempt to gloss over the uncomfortable fact of suffering. Pain is pain, the pain of a cut in the finger or a kick in the shins, or a knife in the back or a bullet in the chest, of smoke in the eyes or mustard gas in the lungs; the pain of tooth-ache and stomach-ache; the pain of a wife's infidelity or friend's ingratitude, of a parent's lack of understanding or a child's indifference; the pain of not getting what you want to get, of losing what you don't want to lose—all this is pain, a feeling, not a concept, something to be immediately experienced, not something to be thought about. And this is where Buddhism begins. It would be impossible for it to begin anywhere else.

Although philosophers may themselves be unaware of the fact, all philosophizing begins with the experience of pain, even though philosophical systems may not. Buddhism solves the problem of where philosophical exposition is to begin by identifying the psychological starting-point of philosophical activity itself with the logical starting-point of philosophical exposition. Philosophy and religion must begin with pain because that is where philosophizing begins. In fact, it is where all the most important activities of life begin. Men philosophize for the same reason as they eat and drink, make love and marry, write books, paint pictures, go on journeys, commit murder and suicide, cheat and steal, work and play—because they feel dissatisfied with their present mode of existence, their immediate experience, and this feeling of dissatisfaction is what we call pain. Mankind progresses for the same reason that the amoeba evolves—from irritation. There was never any flower of human achievement

but some great sorrow lay at its root. The discovery of this fact, so fearfully obvious yet so flagrantly ignored, together with the recognition of all the momentous consequences which stem therefrom, was a stroke of philosophical genius of the first magnitude, and one which could certainly have never been achieved save by cognition of an altogether supernormal kind, it being the first work of nothing less than Enlightenment Itself to proclaim to the world the Noble Truth of the Universality of Suffering.

Here the old charge of pessimism (a term for which there is, significantly enough, no Indian equivalent), trumped up against Buddhism ever since it became known in the West, is usually dragged in, and to the same oft-repeated question the same almost equally oft-repeated answer must be made. "Is Buddhism pessimistic?" "If by pessimism we mean the simple recognition that there are ugly facts and uncomfortable experiences in life then Buddhism may with justice be described as a pessimistic religion, and not Buddhism alone, but every religion that is not content to be a mere mythology of hopefulness, and every man and woman who is prepared frankly to admit the existence of facts which are experienced by all. But if by pessimism we mean the bleak doctrine that there is no way of mitigating the evil of life, that existence is irremediably bad, that the next best thing to not being born is to die quickly, then Buddhism is most emphatically not pessimistic. It could be called pessimistic (though only in the first sense in which we have used the term) only if it stopped short at the First Noble Truth. Even then it would not be untrue, but only partially true. But since Buddhism goes on to enunciate the Second Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Third Truth of its Cessation, and the Fourth Truth of the Way to its Cessation, it is only with the grossest injustice that it can be described as pessimistic. Problems are never solved by ignoring them. The frank recognition of a difficulty is the first step towards overcoming it. As well call a doctor a pessimist because he diagnoses the disease of a patient he wishes to cure as describe Buddhism as pessimistic because it recognizes the existence of the suffering it intendsto remove.

It is easy, though, to make the mistake that Buddhism is concerned only with the removal of suffering, and it is a mistake which certain Buddhists frequently make. Just as the particular kind of pain incidental to bodily existence is a symptom of physical ill health, so is the wider and more inclusive pain of existence itself a sign that there is something radically wrong with life as a whole. In both cases we are confronted not simply with the straight forward task of relieving pain, but also with the infinitely more difficult and complex one of re-adjusting the unbalanced somatic or psychological condition which is its cause, thus rendering the patient physically or spiritually healthy, hale or whole. Suffering is important not for its own sake, but only because it is a sign that we are not living as we ought to live. Buddhism does not encourage morbid obsession with suffering as though it was the be-all and end-all of existence. What we really have to get rid of is not suffering but the imperfection which suffering warns us is there, and in the course of getting rid of imperfection and attaining perfection we may have to accept, paradoxically enough, the experience of suffering as indispensable to the achievement of final success. True it is that by the experience of pain we are compelled to enter upon the Path, and true it is that when we arrive at the Goal there will be no more pain; but if we think that following the Path means nothing more than the studios avoidance of painful experiences we are making a mistake of astronomical dimensions, and plunging headlong down the path of a spiritual selfishness so utterly diabolical that it is frightful to contemplate even the idea of it. The essence of Buddhism consists not in the removal of suffering, which is only negative and incidental, but in the attainment of perfection, which is positive and fundamental. The Bodhisattva is not afraid of suffering. He accepts it joyfully if he thinks that it will assist him in the attainment of his great goal of "Enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings." The Christian mystic would continue to love God even though cast down into Hell, for he loves God for His own sake, not for the sake of any reward, not even happiness (though he is not unhappy, for

love is happiness). It is only the spiritual individualist, the typical Hinayanist of Mahayana Buddhist tradition, who 'loves' God for the sake of escaping the pains of Hell. Not for our own sake, not even for the sake of 'others,' should we seek to attain the Divine, but simply and solely for its own irresistible sake.

The fact that Buddhism takes as its starting-point not a concept but a feeling has not only a philosophical but also a religious significance. It solves at one stroke a problem of methodology and a problem of practical spiritual living. It is a well-known fact, and one to which we have alluded more than once in our writings, that the theoretical understanding of religious doctrines is one thing, the practical application and realization of them quite another. "Five Latin words," says Aldous Huxley, sum up the moral history of every man and woman who has ever lived.

*Video meliora, proboque ;
Deteriora sequor*

"I see the better and approve it; the worse is what I pursue."* If man was in truth a rational animal, as the philosophers of the eighteenth century believed he was, knowing would be indistinguishable from doing, understanding equivalent to practising. But he is on the contrary a desiderative animal, a creature of desires, like any other animal, except that in his case the great root feelings of love and hate (in the sense of attraction to pleasant, repulsion from painful, experiences) have branched out into innumerable derivative forms called emotions—; and since it is his emotions, his desires, his experience of pleasure and pain, which ultimately determine his behaviour, it is only by somehow appealing to an utilizing them that human behaviour can be influenced and changed. Most of all must have religion, which seeks to work in human nature the most radical of all possible changes, be able not only to scratch the rational surface but also to penetrate the desiderative depths of the psyche. By beginning with the fact of pain Buddhism involves the whole emotional nature of man from the very outset. Recognition of the First Noble Truth comes not as an agreeable intellectual diversion but as a terrible emotional shock. The Scriptures say that one feels

* *Stories, Essays and Poems*, p. 405. For the details of the derivation of all emotions from love and hate, and those from desire, see Bhagavan Das, *Science of the Emotions* (Third Edition), Chapters III (B), IV and V.

then feels like a man who suddenly realizes that his turban is in flames. Only a shock of this kind is strong enough to galvanize the whole being into action. The most astonishing intellectual discovery is no more than an agreeable titillation in the region of the cerebral hemisphere. Only when a man feels strongly will he act effectively. It is for this reason above all

others that Buddhism starts not with a concept but a feeling, not with intellectual postulation but emotional experience. Perhaps it is for this reason that the spiritual dynamism and creativeness of Buddhism have never been exhausted, but flowered again and again through the ages, growing not weaker but stronger, not withered but more fresh and

beautiful, as the years passed and the centuries flew by on silent wings. And if there is to be in this century, as it seems reasonable to surmise, a particularly glorious efflorescence of the religion of the Enlightened One, it will be made possible only by the correct and thorough understanding of where Buddhism begins, and why it begins there.

RECONCILIATION OF ANATTĀ AND REBIRTH

DOCTRINES of Rebirth and Anattā never went hand in hand in the pre-Buddhistic philosophical systems. The notion of an Attā (Soul) which passes from one life to another and thus runs through a long journey of transmigration has been in popularity the only reconcilable principle with that of Rebirth. This conception, however, has not been exclusively limited to the boundaries of India, but has been the primitive and traditional acceptance of the peoples of Africa and America, Egypt and Australia. In Africa and America children were buried by the wayside, usually by the side of their mothers in order to promote their associations in the future lives. The West Africans believe in a spirit of the dead that haunts about in the places that were dear to him. Central Australians are of opinion that the children are the re-incarnations of the parents. As has been observed by J. G. Frazer, in New South Wales, dead bodies have been clasped by kinsmen in order to keep the souls warm. The significance of these examples is not only that the acceptance of the soul idea has been popularly known but also that this notion inspired the people with some kind of life relationship.

It is now the attempt of Buddhists, to establish this life relationship without any such permanent element of a soul transmigrating. Buddhism in the first place does not accept any kind of attā if by attā we mean a permanent, eternal and unchanging entity which passes from one birth to another. It is, however, not our endeavour here to establish the doctrine of anattā or soullessness since it would involve much of our time and space; but

it is our endeavour here to firstly accept the principal Buddhist tenet of anattā and then try to establish the possibility of a series of lives in existence.

The term "Rebirth" used as an equivalent to "punabbhava" has been a misnomer. When one speaks of rebirth, it infers an acceptance of the rebirth of something and thence the uninitiated are constrained to term this something as something substantial, thus qualifying it to be analogous with the conception of a soul. "Punabbhava" implies a continued existence, and this, no doubt, confronts us with the question of "the continued existence of what?" It is nothing but the continued existence

By

V. PANDITA

of this life process. The life process is one—the one being constituted of many illusory parts and assumed breaks. It is a "santati" or a flow.

It has been a problem to the philosophers that a unity of the personality cannot be established without any permanent locus of existence which continues to exist in a series of lives. But the unity of personality is to be established to consist not in the persistence of an unchanging and identical locus of experience, but in the continuity of a series of experiences. One may, of course, call for evidence to establish this continuity of a series of experiences to which we could

only say that towering personalities are not the results of a single birth with the play of a single stroke of chance.

Next there arises the question as to how a being undergoes the series of experiences and also as to what the term being actually connotes. "In the Milindapañha, which is a text of unblemished orthodoxy, we see that the question of continuity and moral responsibility is energetically put. The text asserts with extreme precision the doctrine that the only individual is the collection of changing aggregates, but it recognises the necessity of continuity of consciousness in change throughout life and to the next life, the death and the new life being made simultaneous."¹ The idea is helped by a wealth of illustrations such as of the milk that turns to curd and ghee and so forth.

In the above illustration we notice that the ghee is not entirely the same as the original milk nor is it an entirely different thing from the milk. Similarly the person that continues to exist is said neither to be the same as the aggregates nor yet as quite distinct from them. The relationship is, in fact, inaffable. Now, the khandhas (aggregates) that go to form a being are nāma and rūpa (name and form). A being is thus a psycho-physical organism. This nāma rūpa may next be equated to the five khandhas, i.e., rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sankhāra and viññāna. All this constitutes a being and it is nothing but proper to infer that rūpa (form) passes away at the dissolution of the body. The physical organism thus comes to an end. But then what happens to the physical side of the being? Some may suggest that the physical

¹ Keith—Buddhist Philosophy.

side of a being is the mere derivative of the amalgamated physical organism. But on the other hand, some have taken this consciousness or *viññāna* to be transmigrating. Such an instance has been recorded in the *Majjhima Nikāya* with reference to *sāti*. The error in *sāti*'s argument is perhaps not that he assumed consciousness as transmigrating, but that it transmigrates unchanging (*anaññā*). If this assertion be correct, then it follows that it is the thought process that links up two lives and this is probably established by the principles of *Abhidhamma*.

Working back our way to the process of rebirth, it has been established that three factors should co-ordinate to bring about the birth of a being. Science has accepted two of these principles, *i.e.*, the union of the cells, but the third factor *gandhabba* of which we speak has not been accepted by science. This term *gandhabba* is sometimes interpreted as nothing but a *gantabba*, *i.e.*, a *sambhava* or a being awaiting rebirth. Nothing more could be spoken of this *gandhabba* in any material sense.

However, if by *gandhabba*, any kind of material organism is meant, then we have to fall back on the theory that there is something that passes through; but this thing that passes through should be clearly distinguished from something permanent that passes through, since we do not maintain that this linking phase is an unchanging and eternal entity.

Then does it amount to the fact that there is something which all the while changing, passes through and connects up two lives? It may be mentioned here that the original idea of a *gandhabba* has been interpreted in the *Abhidhamma* as *Paṭisandhivīññāna* or rebirth consciousness. This *paṭisandhivīññāna* is in turn spoken of as the resultant or the derivative of the *cuticitta* or death consciousness of the previous birth. These two are linked up in a necessary inter-relationship which establishes the process of rebirth without any sense of an *antarabhava*. Thus the thought process is a connected one, not only in this life, but in the next and in all that one to follow. It is the reflex of a continued life process since a flow of thought is a flow of life. Now, one may call for evidences to prove the continuousness of the thought pro-

cess, which, as was aforementioned, Buddhist *Abhidhamma* accepts as connected in a chain. It is perhaps no news that instances of children possessing the capacity of remembering their past lives were reported from a few countries. India was one of them which reported such an instance quite recently.

Then again there is a possible objection here. Namely, that these instances are exceptions and that the opposite is the general rule. In that case let us take an example. It is, I assume, allowable that our thought process of a limited day is a connected one. One must not here assume by connectedness, the logical progress of a series of thoughts but a continuous process of intellection without any vacant state of the mind. The thoughts may change from that of a god to that of a dog, but the thought process is continued without the mind being kept vacant at any moment. Now, in this case, could we credit ourselves with a recollection of all that happened within that day? I think, we cannot. But then are we to assume that our thought process broke as does a rope? This too, is not possible. Thus it is nothing but our own weakness that we do not recollect our past and on this ground we need not reject the possibility of a connected thought process beyond a day, nay beyond a life, nay more beyond a series of lives.

Then it appears that it is the thought process which establishes a link between the various lives. *Cuticitta* and *Paṭisandhicitta* are virtually linked up as being temporally identical. The *Mahānidāna Sutta* has an interesting reference here when it speaks of the descent of the embryo as the descent of consciousness or cognition. Rhys Davids who translates the very words of the *Sutta* "*viññānaṃ va hi mātu kucchim okkamitvā*" as "mere cognition after having descended into the mother's womb" adds a note to say that "there is no conception of cognition as a unity, descending from outside into the womb like a ball into a bag." It may be suggested that the phrase "descent of consciousness" probably implies a continuity of consciousness between the old and the new lives. This essential relationship of the consciousness which appears at birth and the consciousness at death may according to Keith "be illumined

by the comparison of the two scales of a balance." Thus it is clear how the last thought has an essential influence on the form of rebirth.

The interpretation then of the *gandhabba* as consciousness does not create a problem here. Its interpretation as a set of forces that are transmitted from one life to another is a further step towards a logical conclusion. Life cannot be anything but a mighty force. Then again, thoughts undoubtedly are forces. Hypnosis is just the focussing of suggestion. The great feats performed by hypnosis proves the great force inherent in thought and this establishes the interpretation of *gandhabba* as *paṭisandhivīññāna* and at the same time a set of forces still further.

Then it could be asked as to what determines the destiny of this consciousness. Does it roam at its will and pleasure or is there any kind of law that directs this consciousness? It is with reference to this question that Buddhism establishes a theory of cause and effect. Life is a process directed by one's own self, *i.e.*, by one's own actions. "This idea of *Kamma* is intimately bound up with rebirth. In a sense it may be said to be a part of it. One may even say that they are the same doctrine, looked at in one case subjectively and in the other objectively. In a way *Kamma* is rebirth latent and for the time being unmanifest; and rebirth is *Kamma* become active and manifest. *Kamma* is like a cable running unseen under the sea and every now and then emerging above the surface of that sea and exposing to view a small portion of its length, making its appearance manifest to our human vision. Each of such emergencies is a 'lifetime' only because we have no better word for it. But in strict truth, the real 'lifetime' is the stretch of the cables whole length, both beneath and above the surface of our supposed sea, both when manifest and visible and unmanifest and invisible to human perception."²

Now, this law of *Kamma* is in perfect concordance with the aforementioned theory of the necessary connection of *cuticitta* and *paṭisandhicitta*. It is the *cuticitta* that is said to determine the future condition of a being. Now, there is no great chance that would generally take the upper hand here since the last thought of a man is

² Karma—*Bhikkhu Silācāra*.

shaped by his Kamma, *i.e.*, his past actions. Actions here imply conduct and there is no need to prove the essential concomittance between the conduct and the mentality of a man. Anyway a rare possibility of chance functioning itself in this situation is not denied. As for Ceylon, it is a prevalent custom for the kinsmen of the deceased to have acted in such a way as to create happy thoughts in the dying man. Either they get the theras to chant the Parittas in his presence or bring within his recollection some good deed which he had previously committed.

Therefore this further establishes the fact that though consciousness is effective in rebirth, it is itself governed by Kamma and hence Kamma is the primary principle that governs our series of births and deaths. Hence it is no logical fallacy to hold that Kamma is the life-cable or that "Kamma is rebirth, latent and for the time being unmanifest and rebirth is Kamma become active and manifest."

Since it was mentioned earlier that there is a necessary connection between cuticitta and patisandhiccitta and that gandhabba itself could mean viññāna, one would observe that the entire life-continuum is one process of thought with connecting links at each birth and death. A thought process consists of khandas and each khana consists of three stages of genesis,

continuance and cessation. Now the cuticitta and patisandhiviññāna fall to one khana, as was aforementioned and therefore the thought process is a connected one. It is again this fact of the connectedness of the consciousness that gives us an explanation of the practical side of the death moment of beings. Some groan for years in prolonged suffering since for them there is yet no suitable place ready for rebirth whereas some are given not even a warning of the great calamity to befall since they cannot afford to delay any longer because a suitable place is ready for rebirth and it cannot be missed.

Then one may ask as to why one does not possess the ability to see through the past lives and remember all that was done during the previous lives, if the thought process be a connected one. This probably is due to the fact that some are so constituted during the subsequent life that they have within them the necessary power of seeing through. It is the result of the difference in the constitution of the being. Otherwise we cannot understand why the owl should see by night whereas we see by day. Further, it is believed that once a being undergoes an embryonic process, he gets so sullied that generally the consciousness of past births gets blurred. This, however, does not rule out the possibility of one's developing such an ability

by a process of correct application.

Thus, in this observation we have arrived at the fact that there is no need of an attā that passes from one life to another but that it is one Kamma which is the primary cause of this existence—the existence being simply the coming into being of the khandhas (khandhānam pātubhavo). "Just as the arising of a physical state is conditioned by a preceding state as its cause, even so the coming into being of this psycho-physical organism is conditioned by causes anterior to rebirth."³

Therefore it may be established that if by attā is implied something which is permanent, unchanging and eternal, passing from one life to another, then there is no such attā in Buddhism; but if by attā we mean some principle which governs our lives, but never fixed and unchanging, then there is such an attā in Buddhism; since Kamma is something that governs our lives, all the while changing itself. Hence is it said that one is the moulder of one's own Kamma—Kamma as distinguishable from fate—Therefore we may conclude that Buddhism establishes rebirth without any permanent, unchanging and eternal attā but accepting a changing and unassailable principle, *i.e.*, the principle of Kamma. This Kamma establishes rebirth and needs no permanent attā to sponsor the cause.

BUDDHISM AND WORSHIP

By G. P. MALALASEKERA

I AM often asked: Do Buddhists pray? What do they do when they go to temple? What is the Buddhist attitude to prayer?

I shall attempt to answer these questions. Now, the word prayer means many things. In theistic religions, *i.e.*, in religions which believe in an omnipotent, all-powerful, omniscient, all-knowing god, who is the creator of the world and the father of all creatures, prayer means, among other things, supplication to him, petitioning him, humbly asking him for guidance and protection, for his favour, asking him to bestow upon the supplicator health and happiness, prosperity and the provision of various needs, even the needs of

daily life and asking him for forgiveness for sins committed.

It should be stated at the outset that, in as much as the Buddhists do not believe in such a god, they have no prayer in that sense. The Buddhists, on the other hand, believe in the doctrine of Karma which declares that happiness and unhappiness are alike the results of action, that prosperity and adversity are produced for each individual by his own deeds, words and thoughts, that the law is impersonal, that it has no agent behind, directing it or administering it. Being impersonal, it can show no mercy, nor give forgiveness for trespasses. Evil can only be redeemed by doing good, which will

overcome the effects of the evil deed. Sin, in the Buddhist sense, is not the transgression or disobedience of laws arbitrarily laid down by a god to be followed by human beings, but the performance of wrong acts of body, speech and mind which soil the character and impede the growth of one's personality.

There is thus in Buddhism no "prayer" in the commonly accepted sense of the word. Human beings are responsible only to themselves for their good and evil, happiness and misery, and to no other. The world is a man-made world; it does not depend upon its progress or prosperity on any external agency;

³ Ven. Nārada—Buddha Dhamma.

it is not constructed by anyone outside it.

What do the Buddhists do when they visit the temple? They do many things. Let us follow a Buddhist devotee on such a visit and then, perhaps, we shall be able to understand the significance of his actions. There is no special day for such a visit; he can go whenever he likes, though, of course, the poya-day especially the day of the full-moon and of the new moon, are particularly favoured, because on these days others are likely to go to the temple too, and most human beings like company. The devotees are clad in white, because white is the colour of purity, simplicity and humility. He takes with him flowers, the sweeter their fragrance and the brighter their colour the better they are for his purpose; he also carries oil, and incense, sometimes sandalwood powder and camphor. Arrived at the temple he washes his hands and feet, because cleanliness, both of body and mind, is praised always, in all actions. In the temple are several shrines or places where offerings can be made. The main shrine is the "vihara." The word means dwelling place. There is some confusion about the terms used to indicate the various buildings to be found in the temple. It is worthwhile clearing the matter.

Vihara means a dwelling place and the word was originally used to mean the residence of a Buddha. Later it was also used and is quite often used even now to indicate the dwelling place of the monks, e.g., Maha Vihara of Anuradhapura. In this sense, it corresponds to the word monastery. But now-a-days the place where the monks live is called a pansala, though the word originally meant an ascetic's hut, or a hermit's cell. The old word for what is now commonly called the Vihara, i.e., the place which contains images of the Buddha, was pilimage, or image-house, but the word is now hardly ever used. And therein lies something worthy of notice, for to the Buddhist, an image in itself is not an object of worship; it is to him merely a token, a symbol, a representation, which helps him to recall the Buddha. For the purposes of his worship, it is even immaterial whether there is an image or not, but an image or a picture or some sort of symbol, he finds helpful for the concentra-

tion of his thoughts. In worshipping an image, therefore, the Buddhist is not an idolator, worshipping merely wood, clay or stone, and the charge of idolatry made against Buddhism is due either to ignorance or to deliberate misrepresentation.

There is another point worthy of attention in the use of the word Vihara for the building which contains representations of the Buddha. As stated earlier, the word means dwelling place, so that the Vihara is to the Buddhist where the Buddha lives, not in the past only but also now. For, the worship of the Buddhist devotee is not to someone who is dead and gone and is no more, but to someone who is alive and present before him. This does not mean that the Buddhists believe that the Buddha, who passed away from earthly life at a place called Kusinara, 2,494 years ago, is, at the moment, alive in some particular place, carrying on the functions of life. But the Buddhist, in paying his homage to the Buddha, likes to recall to his own mind the living presence of the Master, so that his act of worship may be vivid and significant. The Buddha has passed away but His influence persists, pervading the world, like a perfume whose fragrance continues even if the material object which produced the fragrance has been taken away. This feeling of the Buddhist devotee that his offerings are to someone, who to him is yet alive, in that the Buddha's teaching is yet alive, and the memory of the radiant personality is evergreen, also explains why it is that the Buddhists often make offerings of food and drink at the shrine. Such offerings are merely symbolic of the vitality of their faith and devotion; no one believes, not even the most ignorant Buddhist that the Buddha actually partakes of the food or drink. It is their way of expressing in idealistic form their conception of the Buddha as a living influence in their lives.

The offering of flowers and incense is a bestowal of worship, an act of homage, of adoration, of gratitude, and the offerings themselves have no intrinsic value. They correspond to the offering of a garland or a bouquet of flowers to someone to whom we wish to show our honour, our respect, our affection, our gratitude. The offering of flowers or incense is followed by the utterance of stanzas which recall to the mind of the

devotee the sublime qualities of the Buddha.

The Buddha verily is the Blessed One, who had put an end to all sorrow and suffering, the Perfect One, worthy of homage, who had attained to supreme wisdom and enlightenment, who proclaimed the way of right knowledge and good conduct, who found Happiness and Peace, who realised the truth about the world, who is unrivalled as guide and friend to those that seek His guidance, who is the teacher of gods and men.

It will be noticed that here is no request for favours, no solicitation for protection, but the recollection and rehearsal of the qualities of a great man, who to the Buddhist is the greatest that ever lived.

Other stanzas follow in which the devotee declares that he accepts the Buddha as his Teacher and Guide for as long as life lasts, and by virtue of the fact may happiness come to him. It is an assertion of his faith in the Buddha, his acceptance of the way of life as laid down by Him. And, here is something very significant. The devotee utters his resolve to win himself the peace of Nibbana which the Buddha had attained through the practice of virtue and the acquisition of wisdom. The devotee recalls to mind that during successive births, for a long period of time, the Buddha, then known as the Bodhisatva, or aspirant to perfect enlightenment, cultivated those qualities of head and heart that lead beings to perfection, to supreme achievement. In the course of this training, the Bodhisatva, or Buddha-to-be, considered no endeavour too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Not in one birth only but in numerous births he had sacrificed his life for the principles he held dear, in the service of others. The way of the Buddha, the devotee recalls, is the way laid down for all those who accept the Buddha as Teacher and Guide. All men can become Buddhas, if they have the necessary resolve and are willing to follow the path to Buddhahood. The Buddha did not attain a greatness which others cannot themselves achieve.

The Way of Life proclaimed by the Buddha is called the Dhamma and the devotee recalls to his mind, by means of a stanza, the qualities and salient characteristics

of that Teaching. That it is something which has been clearly proclaimed with no mystery or esotericism behind it, but open and clear like the open palm of one's hand, that its efficacy is manifest and obvious and capable of proof, that it is eternal and timeless, in that it holds good for all times and for all places, that it invites and challenges enquiry and investigation, that it has nothing to hide or be ashamed of, that it rests not on faith but on conviction, that it is not vague but definite in the goal it lays down, *viz.*, the elimination of unhappiness and the attain-

ment of happiness and peace, that truth and happiness can be achieved only by individual and strenuous effort, not by depending upon someone else, however powerful he may be.

And the devotee also recalls to mind for his own encouragement and edification that there are and always have been men and women who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of the Dhamma, the Way of Righteousness, who thereby are exemplars of the Good Life, well-conducted, upright, of blameless behaviour, worthy of

honour and respect, worthy of being looked up to and followed. These nobles ones are known as the Sangha, the community of dedicated ones, who cleanse this world with the goodness and the sanctity of their lives, avoiding evil, promoting good, filling the universe with thoughts of friendliness, goodwill and peace. The devotee in thus giving gifts to worthy ones practises *dāna* or generosity, in remembering these noble ones in piety practises *sīla*, good conduct, in filling his mind with elevating thoughts he practises *bhavana*—the cultivation of the mind.

SRI PADA

By MARIE MUSAEUS HIGGINS

WHAT is it that ill's my longing
soul
While on the hills I wander?
'Tis not the wish for fame or
youth
Or wealth, that I might squan-
der.

It is a heart's wish deep and
strong
That all my life I've wanted,
And though it may not be as
yet,
Some day it will be granted.

Now, I have reached the highest
step,
At last, the summit's nearer,
And these dim eyes which gaze
afar
Some day will see it clearer.

THE VISION

I see The Lord on the Mountain
Throne,
I see Him standing on sapphire
stone,
I see Him stretching His bless-
ing hand,
O'er mountain and valley, all
over the land.

And Saman Deviyo, the Guar-
dian old
Falls on his knees, so strong
and bold,
And he pleads with The Lord of
the world of all
To leave His footprint on moun-
tain tall.

And The Lord in His Majesty
gave consent
To leave His token before He
went,
And His rays envelop the moun-
tain anew
In orange and pink and gold
and blue.

The eyes of The Blessed One
all ablaze
With mercy and love, all people
amaze,
As He looked o'er the Island
and out on the vale,
Bestowing His blessing on
mountain and dale.

"May this mountain become to
one and all
"A Pathway, a guardian strong
and tall,
"May it bring the *Pilgrims*
from far and nigh
"To climb to its summit with
never a sigh.

His arm, The Thathagatha
raised once more.
And Saman Deviyo bent in awe.
For deep in the Sapphire there
was seen
The print where The Holy One's
Foot had been.

And where The Buddha in aura
of gold
Stood on the Sapphire in days
of old,
His footprint is left, where He
rested last,
And is there to this day, after
centuries passed.

And Lanka, the Jewel on
India's brow,
Is guarded by Saman Deviyo
now,
And The Peak is the Light of
The Buddha's eye
To guide His pilgrims from far
and nigh.

(At the Foot of Sri Pada.)

My heart is so joyous,
My heart is so gay,
For now I am treading
The same Holy way—

The way that the pilgrims
Trode never in vain
To-day and in old time,
In sunshine and rain.

They've wandered the same
road
By day and by night
For sunlight and moonlight.
Were guiding them right.

And always Sri Pada
Was showing the way,
Sri Pada the blessed
By night and by day.

And "Sadhu" is sounding
Triumphant, Sublime,
No word of repining
Though long be the climb

So also this morning
This Wesak-tide,
I worship Sri Pada
I follow my Guide.

From *The Ceylonese* of May 9, 1917.

"Musaeus Cottage."
Nawalapitiya, May 7.

COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. NEWS

OUR SPORTS BRANCH

THE Sports Branch of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. is fortunate in having secured the services of G. G. Perera as its Secretary.

"G.G." is no stranger to us. He was one of our past general secretaries. In fact, he was in charge of the Association during the troublous times of 1915 when a panic-stricken government locked a good few of our members behind prison bars. He was our Secretary from 1914 to 1916 when we were near the Maradana Railway Station, when we had no permanent home, when we were threatened with ejection every month for non-payment of rent. But G.G., then only a law-student, carried on heroically under the wise guidance and inspiration of D. B. Jayatilaka.

Old G.G.—was he not referred to as Gin-Gini-Kan Perera in the "Borella Wireless Gazette" issued for the Law-Medical match of 1917?—organised a cricket tour for us in the Southern Province in 1914, when Mudaliyar T. W. Goonewardene, one of the original members of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. and later, in the twenties, our Hony. Treasurer, was Office Assistant in the Galle Kachcheri. He passed out as a proctor in 1919 and was closely associated with the activities of the Panadure Y.M.B.A., then a virile body, and was its General Secretary for five years.

G. G. retained his connexions with the Colombo Y.M.B.A. throughout the years, and has now come back to us as our Sports Secretary. He is 60 years old today, but wonderfully enough he retains his youth much better than many of his juniors. His return to us is welcomed by all and I hope he will be given that measure of support which he justifiably expects to give new life to a branch of activity vital to the progress of youth.

Will those members willing to take an active part, in and off the field, in cricket, tennis and soccer, please communicate with the Sports Secretary direct at his Panadure address (G. G. Perera, Esq., "Shanthi," Panadure)?

All luck to you G. G.—and all luck to the Y.M.B.A.

D. N. W.

BRANCH SECRETARIES

The following branch secretaries have been elected:—Religious Examinations Branch: Mr. D. S. Abeysinghe; Religious Activities: Mr. L. R. Goonetillake; Literary Activities (English): Mr. W. Wimala-

chandra; Literary Activities (Sinhalese): Mr. W. P. Daluwatte; Social Activities: Mr. M. C. F. Abeykoon; Sports: Mr. G. G. Perera.

SUNDAY SERMONS

PROGRAMME FOR APRIL, 1952

1st Sunday: Pitakotte Somananda Thera

Annatara Upasaka Katha Vattu.—Hunger is the worst of illnesses, the five component parts are the worst ills, knowing this as a fact one should try to attain Nibbana.

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2nd Sunday: Panditha Thalalle Dhammananda Thera

Vanapasenadi Kosala Katha Vattu.—Health is the greatest gain, contentment the greatest wealth, a trusty friend is the excellent kinsmen, Nibbana is the happiness Supreme.

3rd Sunday: W. Sugathananda Thera of Vajirarama

Tissa Thera Katha Vattu.—He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquillity, is free from fear and free from sin, while he tastes the sweetness of drinking in the doctrine.

4th Sunday: Heenatiyane Dhammaloka Thera

Sakkupathana Katha Vattu.—The sight of the Aryas is good, to live with them is always happiness, if a man does not associate with fools he will be truly happy.

NEW MEMBERS

17-3-52: B. D. Wijetillake, 442, Pila-pitiya Road, Kelaniya; K. Herat, 20, Mitford Street, Kurunegala; R. Marcus Perera, 131/42, Model Farm Road, Borella; Gemunu Fernando, "Wasala Walawwa," Marawila; A. D. R. Wijesekere, 10/16, Gothami Road, Borella; Oliver Weerasinghe, 35, Old Kolonnawa Road, Colombo; E. Panchalingam, 116, Ward Place, Borella; K. Antony Alfred Perera, 33, Kanuwana, Ja-Ela; W. P. Perera, "Siri Pela," Kotalawala, Bandaragama.

RESIGNATION: Mr. R. Balasuriya.

VESAK CELEBRATIONS

Thursday, May 8

6.15 p.m. Talk by G. M. de Silva, Esq., District Judge.

Subject: Some Aspects of Buddhism.

7.30 p.m. Devotional Songs, Carols and Music by Radio Artistes (this item will be broadcast).

Friday, May 9

6 a.m. Members observe Ata Sil at the Association Hall.

7 a.m. "Heel Dana" for those observing Ata Sil.

8 a.m. Meditation.

9 a.m. Bana Preaching by the Ven. Heenatiyana Dhammaloka Thero.

10 a.m. Religious Discussion and Sermon, the Ven. Bambrande Siri Seevali Thero presiding.

11 a.m. Dana for those observing Ata Sil.

2 p.m. Chanting of Maha Pirit.

3 p.m. Religious Discussion, the Ven. K. Sangapala Thero, Gunawardanaramaya, presiding.

4.30 p.m. Bana Preaching by Ven. Narada Thero of Vajiraramaya.

Dana will be provided by the Religious Activities Committee for all those observing Ata Sil on Vesak day.

Vesak Dana for Bhikkhus will be given on Sunday, May 11, in the Association Hall.

All members who intend observing Ata Sil on Vesak Day please communicate with the Hony. Secretary, Religious Activities Branch to arrange for their Dana.

OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of Sir Henry Kotalawala.

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