

The Teachings of the Buddha

Vidyālaṅkāra
Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao



Suramā Prakashana
Bangalore - 11

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Articles on Buddhism

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By

Vidyālankāra

Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao

Compiled and Edited

By

Dr. S. R. Sudarshan

Suramā Prakāshana

Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao Memorial Trust ®
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नमो तस्स भगवतो
अरहतो
सम्मासंबुद्धस्स

Obeisance to the Blessed One,
the Exalted One,
the Fully Enlightened One.

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About the Author



Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao (1925-2006) was born in a conservative Mādhva Brahmin family. He studied sanskrit in a pāṭhaśāla in Nanjangud, and then learnt the prasthāna traya with bhasya under Pālghat Nārayaṇa Śāstri. He also studied Pāli and Tripiṭakas from Nārada Mahāthera of Sri Lanka, and learnt Tibetan in order to study Tibetan Buddhism. He obtained an M.A. in Psychology from the Mysore University, and started his career as a research assistant in the Indian Institute of Science. He later headed the department of clinical psychology in NIMHANS in Bangalore.

A born teacher, he was a visiting professor at the Bangalore University teaching in the departments of psychology, philosophy, indology, social work and education. He headed the department of Indian culture

at the Callison College, University of the Pacific, Bangalore Centre. He was a senior associate of the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, and was on the guest faculty of the Indian Institute of Management.

He was a member of the Karnataka State Lalita Kala Academy and Sangita Nritya Academy, had served on the Agama Board, Karnataka and was on the advisory committee of the T.T.D. He had been honored with the 1986 Karnataka Rajyotsava Award.

He was a prolific writer, artist, sculptor, musicologist, scholar and orator. He had written more than 150 books in English and Kannada apart from books in Sanskrit and Pāli on various aspects of traditional Indian Culture. His books on Iconography and on Tirupati were given the state Sahitya Academy awards.

He had been honored with the titles Vidyāṅkara, Sangita Kalāratna, Vāchaspati, etc. He had received the Vedaratna Samman from the Swāmi Gangeshwaranandaji Trust, Mumbai.



Preface

When my father Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao passed away two years ago, his sorrowing family members had not only a sense of emptiness in their lives, but also a sense of responsibility on their shoulders. My father had authored about a hundred books in Kannada, an equal number in English besides books in Pali and Sanskrit. Most of these books were out of print and had to be reprinted. He had been an artist and sculptor, and his art works had to be preserved. He had been an avid reader, and had collected hundreds of rare books which had to be catalogued. He had been giving speeches, discourses and lectures for many decades, and these had to be collected and recorded onto CDs.

Soon after his demise, an admirer of his proposed the formation of a trust with the main idea of having memorial lectures by distinguished people at some prestigious organization. But my mother, Smt. Rama Ramachandra Rao, my sister, Smt Uma Anil Kumar and I felt that despite spending a large sum of money for this purpose, this would not absolve us of the responsibility of perpetuating his memory by his own works.

But the idea of forming a trust germinated in our minds, and gave us something to think about. Would it be a good idea to form a trust? Who should be the members? And so on. Then my mother put forward her experience of many decades. "Do not involve many people in the trust. It would only create confusion, delay, difference of opinion and ill will" she said. My father had indeed a large number of students, but unfortunately none of them was in a position to either continue his work or help in the collation and publication of his writings. So finally after quite a few months we gathered up enough courage to form a trust, and the members? My mother, my sister and myself!

The activities of the trust have been mentioned in the back flap. The response of the public to the CDs that we had brought out was so gratifying that we felt emboldened enough to begin publishing some of my father's articles that had appeared in journals many decades ago. The first two books that we have published are - 'The Three Acharyas' in English and 'Sri Raghavendra Swamigalu' in Kannada.

And now, about this book. All the articles in this book are taken from the journal '*The Aryan*

Path' which was then being edited by Sri B.P. Wadia and later by Smt Sophia Wadia, and appear in their original form with their editorial comments.

My father came to Bangalore from Mysore in 1948, and here he developed a keen interest in Buddhism; he also met the Venerable Narada Mahathera from he learnt Pali and Buddhism. His interest in Buddhism was so intense that he was seriously toying with the idea of becoming a Buddhist monk. The story circulating in his family during those days was all about how Ramachandru was going to become a monk and settle down in Sri Lanka. His mother Kamala Bai was desolate that her only son, so talented and intelligent was thinking of settling down in some monastery. But then Kumari Rama Telikicherla arrived from Madras to do her diploma in medical (clinical) psychology at The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (later known as NIMHANS) where Prof Rao was on the faculty. Prof Rao met her there, and the rest as they say is history.

But my father's interest in Buddhism continued until his death. He was in correspondence with the Buddhist scholar Rahula Sankrityayana, and I think that it was Rahula Sankrityayana who aroused his

interest in Tibetan Buddhism. He taught himself Tibetan in order to read the books in the original. He was convinced that most of the important texts in Sanskrit had been translated into Tibetan centuries ago, and that many of the texts that are no longer available in Sanskrit could be read in Tibetan translations. He was also deeply interested in Zen, and learnt Zen meditation from two Zen priests, Sri Nagakawa and Sri Otaka who had come to Bangalore.

In this book the articles are arranged in chronological order. There is one article 'The way of the Cynics' which does not deal with Buddhism but has been included in this book as it had appeared in '*The Aryan Path*'. It has been printed last. In one place, my father had given the Pali text in English. I have given the Pali in devanagari script in the footnotes, as it may help some readers to read the Pali correctly. In order to help persons who may not know much about Pali literature, I have given a brief overview of the Pali Buddhist literature which has been quoted in this book.

The book contains one photograph of the Venerable *Narada Mahathera* from whom my father learnt Pali and Buddhism. All the other paintings

and line drawings are by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao himself.

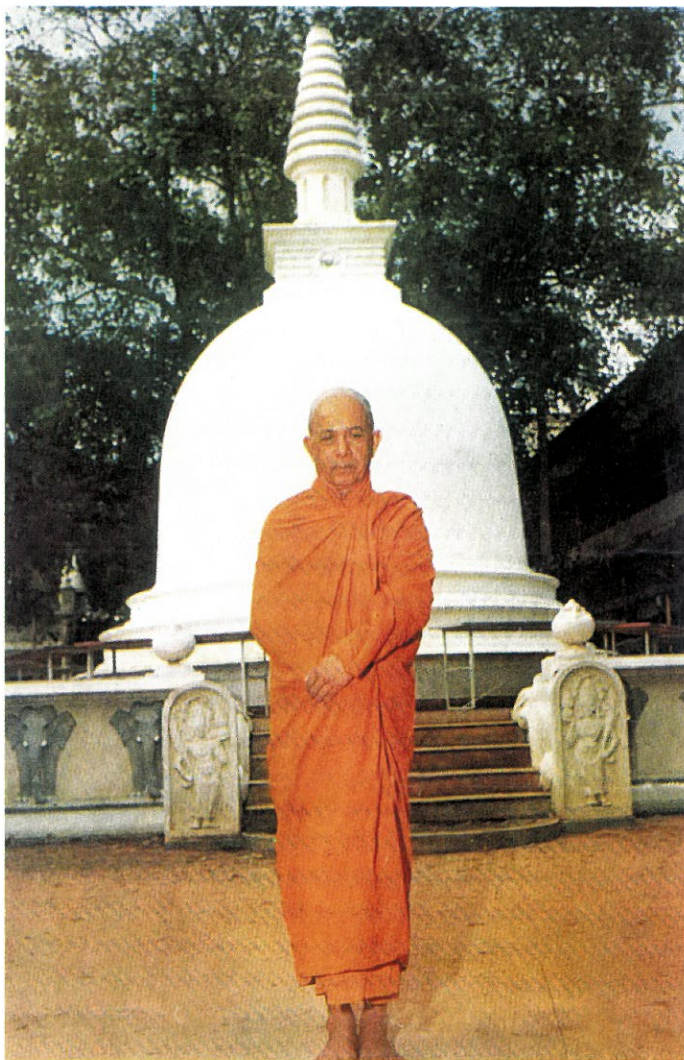
I thank Vāgartha Printers for the pains that they have taken to bring out this book elegantly. No words are enough to thank my mother for her valuable advice.

Dr. S. R. Sudarshan





The Buddha's Parinirvana



The Venerable Nārada Mahāthera, To Prof. Sumcandro
 Vajirarama Monastery

Nārada

4 10 75

“THE STOPPING OF ILL”*

[In this thoughtful article **Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao**, M.A., Research Assistant in the Department of Social Sciences in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, examines the doctrine of “Dukkha” (pain) and its ceasing as found in the Buddhist teachings.—ED]

The legends describe how by accident the eyes of the young Sākiyan Prince of Kapilavasthu, perched on the peak of pleasures, were caught by three instances of human suffering—old age, disease and death—and how he undertook to discover the cause and condition thereof and to launch on a programme of shielding man against them. In a sense, the problem of *dukkha* (pain) has persisted throughout the history of man on earth, from the dimmest beginnings down to the present day : its variant is Evil. There is no human endeavour that does not recognize its presence; but reluctance to recognize it as an incontrovertible fact in the fight for survival has prevented man from elevating it to the rank which it deserves.

The dissatisfaction that one experiences with the state of affairs (so abundantly evident even in the Vedas, at a period of rarest prosperity) is an implicit

* The Aryan Path, June, 1951

enunciation of the problem of pain—something that is not what one thinks it ought to be. That which one thinks should be is extolled, idealized, painted in gorgeous colours. This wishful thinking of the Ideal quite frequently obliterates the actual, thus giving rise to the theory that the ideal is the essential, of which the actual is but a confused appearance.

All through Indian philosophy we find the dualism between “This” and the “Beyond” persisting with wonderful tenacity; the diversity of schools in this regard is mainly verbal. It is equally unanimously recognized that the individual should cross This and reach the Beyond; although the means of achieving this feat is not so unanimously accepted. This recognition of the duality between what is and what might be is followed by the promise of something Great, Good, Beautiful or even Blissful, as an incentive to spiritual discipline. *Samsāra*, the long chain of birth and death, of acts good and bad, with their results of happiness and misery, is the ordinary daily life of each of us. It is variously likened to a vast ocean, to a thick forest, to deep darkness, to the jaws of death; something that the wise will earnestly try to transcend.

The Teacher "who taught something more," the Buddha, inherited this tradition. Characteristic of his doctrine was the emphasis on the positive aspect of *samsāra* and its pain and a measure of freedom due to the universalizing effect of the personally experienced mood of emancipation. Gotama had, by dint of his untiring effort, crossed the ocean of *samsāra* and gone to the farthest shore of *nibbāṇa*. His experience was his own, impossible of achievement by any one, save by great earnestness, great energy and the saving grace of wisdom. He, "teacher of men and gods" though he was, makes no pretence of being able to lead another to that state by anything short of that discipline. The Buddha makes no bold promises; he only shows the *way*; the *effort* must be made by the aspirant himself. There is no miraculous transportation of the individual across the dreary ocean of *samsāra*; it has to be crossed, every inch of it; the Buddha is but a pilot that surely guides one across. Hence the constant emphasis on courage, on the virtues and the prohibitions.

"I am your surety for not returning to birth", said the Arahāt. "Do ye give up lust, ill-will, delusion, wrath, spite, pride. I am your surety for

not returning.” The Pāli texts present the Buddha as a teacher (*Sattha*), a guide, and nothing more, but one in whom entire trust could be placed. He is no wonder-worker, bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth all by himself: each must strive to that end and, by culture of mind and by treading the āryan path of purity, attain to the *arahattā* state, the individual emancipation that has caught the Indian imagination all along.

The most original concept in Buddhism is absolute reliance on the chain of causation. The analysis of its sequential links is beautifully simple. Ignorance (*avidyā*) is the principal root; from it have arisen the impressions (*sankhāras*) which bring into being simple awareness of the throbbing life (*viññāna*); that branches into the six provinces of sense (*āyatana*); this brings about contact (*phassa*); contact gives birth to sensation (*vedanā*). When anything is sensed, desire (*tanhā*) is implanted, and, desire being there, there is clinging or attachment (*upādāna*); existence (*bhāva*) comes in the wake of attachment; the sharpest offshoot of existence is birth or rebirth (*jāti*); and being born means being a victim of old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, despair. “Thus,” concludes the

Teacher, "this entire aggregation of misery arises." The law of causality is the guiding factor in this chain. The Buddha's doctrine is:—

I will teach you the Dhamma. That being present, this becomes; from the arising of that, this arises. That being absent, this does not become; from the cessation of that, this ceases. (*Majjhima-nikāya*, II, 32)

The principle of causality implies continuity. It counterbalances, as Charles Eliot has suggested, the *anattā* (No-Self) doctrine.¹ Human life is an order, an organization, a fabric woven by the forces of *Kamma* (karma) or action and reaction; and pain is a legitimate product of life lived in any manner. The origin of pain can be systematically diagnosed and, being causally determined, or rather necessitated, it is a positive, real entity. The simplest definition of pain is to get what one desires not and to be separated from that one desires. These two are inevitable, the former, because of *kamma* and the latter because of the momentariness of everything. Pain consequently is natural. Even when we seem to have achieved what is pleasant, the *Visuddhimagga* warns us "sorrow springs from the flood of sensual pleasures as soon as the object of

1. *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. I. p. 194

sensual desire is removed.” The natural impulse to get what is pleasant and avoid what is not, is thwarted, bringing in its train frustration and pain.

The locus of pain is not a subject of controversy with the Buddha, who does not consider seriously the world beyond the individual reference. “Verily, within this mortal body, some six feet high but conscious and endowed with mind, is the world, its origin, and its passing away”. (*Samyutta-nikāya*, II.3.8). Statements like “All existence involves pain” and “The world is on fire” are to be construed on the conscious human plane, for the Buddha is primarily concerned with man; he is, in the words of Ananda Coomaraswāmy, not a poet and a mystic, but a psychologist.² Man being a succession of psychic states is a victim to the inexorable law of *kamma*; *dukkha* surrounds him like an atmosphere.

Is there a way to overcome it? If *dukkha* is in the very order of things, must we not resign ourselves to the fatalistic decrees of *kamma*? The Buddha has often been misunderstood in this regard; the constructive aspect of his doctrine has

2. *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 274

not been adequately recognized. "Nothing is more characteristic of Gautama's thought," observes Coomaraswamy, "than the form of consolation it offers to the suffering individual." (Ibid., p.148). The Buddha exhorts the individuals enveloped in darkness to seek the light. But what is the light that he holds out for us? The āryan path recognizes that *dukkha*, being originated, can also cease. Insight into *dhamma* gives that recognition.

This possibility of the elimination of pain from the scheme of things is what filled the Śākya Ascetic with zeal to preach his gospel to the many—man (*bahujana*); the truth that he saw admitted of humanitarian application. He offers a positive programme to whoever is anxious to get rid of pain. The āryan path is the path of virtue, of purity, of nobility. The best summary of his doctrine is also the simplest:—

To abandon all wrong-doing; to lead a virtuous life; to cleanse one's heart—this is the religion of all the Buddhas.

What comes after the cessation of *dukkha*? Is it pleasure? No doubt the expression *sukha* frequently occurs in the Pāli texts, but closer analysis reveals that this "pleasure" has nothing in common with

the ordinary usage of that expression; it is in no way hedonistic. As Charles Eliot notes, it means rather well-being, satisfaction; it is the relief that comes after an arduous journey through *samsāra*. It is not pleasure consequent on obtaining something desirable, but best approximates to the sense of elation felt by "one who has crossed the stream-in-flood," (*oghatinṇa*). It is not happiness born of *kāma*, to which the Buddha is altogether averse; on the contrary, it is the happiness born of the suppressing of all craving.

There is no entity or process such as *sukha* per se, comparable to the heavenly states of popular religion. *Sukha* is defined only relatively to *dukkha*, perhaps because of lingual limitations; *dukkha* is the positive fact, and *sukha* only its negation. It is the cessation of this *fact* that is connoted by the famous term "*nibbāna*," all the interesting synonyms of which are the negation of something rather than the positive affirmation of anything.

The point becomes more emphatic when we turn to the description and records of the personal experiences of the men and women who have thought it fit to "wayfare" in accordance with the teachings of the Śākyan Ascetic. The ideal of

Buddhist thought and living is the *arahattā*; it advocates no pursuit of pleasure, but seeks to free man from his fetters, like love of life, lust, pride, evil and impurity. This is the characteristic of the emancipated saints of whom Gotama the Buddha was but one. The *arahat* is freed from the misery that afflicts the common man: he, being without any sorrow, looks down on suffering man, even as one on a mountain peak looks down on another in the valley below; he has mounted the tower of wisdom; for him, the burden is shed (*ohitabhāro*), done is ought-to-be done (*katakaraniyo*), he is completely cool (*sitibhūto*) and no more for him is the fever of samsāra.



The Aryan Ideal*

[The traditional Indian preoccupation with the things of the Spirit is a matter of common knowledge. **Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao**, Research Assistant in the Department of Social Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, analyzes here the ideal which from ancient times has sustained many in this country in the spiritual life, in the attempt to gain the "Something More" than the best gifts of the phenomenal world. In our troubled times, the attainment of the inner equilibrium which nothing can disturb is an ideal that makes a powerful appeal to many in the West as well as in the East. How greatly does the world need integrated individuals, calm, balanced, poised, clear-sighted, above all prejudice and predilection and devoted to the highest interests of all mankind!—Ed]

When at the dawn of Indian history the early Aryan visitors camped on the banks of the mighty rivers, the Sindhū, the Yamunā and the Gangā, the first flush of their experience was a prosperity unexperienced hitherto. But, with their active spirits, they did not stop therewith but yearned for something more. This idea of Something More has persisted throughout our thought and life as a nation as the *summum bonum*, as the consummate ideal, worthy of the constant and ceaseless pursuit of man. The search for it has enlisted many heroes, all alike

* The Aryan Path, December, 1951

distinguished by a certain unimpeachable nobility of character and a sincerity of purpose, but each carving out a route in his own individual fashion. The goal, however, is one; the throbbing purpose is one.

The Something More as the ideal has undergone steady and progressive change during the intellectual history of our people, getting consistently better and worthier. From the Vedic bard who aspired only for plenty, for the fulfilment of all wishes, to Gotama the Buddha who strove to extinguish the candle of worldly longing altogether, to impoverish himself of his very selfhood, is a long stride indeed, but a legitimate one. This continuum of philosophic discipline is often lost sight of in the historical perspective; the apparent disparities are thrust to the fore, pushing the essential unity aside and thereby causing confusion and arousing enmity in the minds of those who are denied the original experience, but have to content themselves with it at second hand. The continuity of Indian thought is a significant fact, although often elusive.

The Something More was a something beyond. The discontent that the human heart feels even in the midst of plenty; the anxiety that one evinces

before the dark obscurity that yawns inexorably after death; the sad realization of the inconclusiveness of human life here; the suspicion that there may be, behind and beyond all this, something that is more important; these have shaken man from the earliest dawn of human intelligence down to this day. Under the pressure of all these subterraneous but furious currents of thought and emotion, it did not take long to construct the "ideal," which was the Real of all reals (*satyasya satyam*), which was utterly free from mundane limitations of every type, and which would be the most excellent state of affairs to which a wise individual could ever aspire.

When such an ideal was formed, it was but logical and proper that man should attempt to walk in its shadow, in order to bring down the ideal to the actual. The Indian term for this human endeavour is *Brahmacarya* (Brahma—faring) a course of strenuous discipline, after which one becomes *Brahmabhūta* (Brahma—become): that course of discipline is the technique of making the ideal actual. It is a piece of impertinence to imagine that any religious discipline in India—orthodox or heterodox—deviates from this norm of religious life. The goal of actualizing the ideal is the bond of

unity that fundamentally knits all schools, all philosophies and all thought.

The actual is incomplete, it is not the final word; there is a Beyond (*Samparāya*), which, however, does not present itself before us ordinarily. It has to be sought after, striven for, achieved. The actual comes to us, but we must go to the Beyond. The majority of men are content to walk along this edge of the river (*tīragāmino*); but few are bold enough to try to cross over to the farther shore (*pāragāmino*). The former are ordinary men, leading quite an ordinary life, having their share of joys and woes, now elated and now depressed, falling prey to the pranks of fortune, wedded to worldly goods and asleep to the deeper truths and the profounder facts.

The latter are, by implication, a better stock of people, more courageous in disposition and more optimistic in outlook; they look forward to experiencing the hitherto inexperienced, to venturing into *terra incognita*, to bringing a superior significance into everyday life. These are the people who have wrought a revolution in their lives, rising above ordinary limitations, directing their energy into strange channels, and developing new faculties

and a searching insight. They enroll themselves as labourers (*śramaṇas*) in the new field which yields the crop that savours of the Beyond. The harvest that they reap concerns the deeper and nobler factors in life and by virtue of this fact they become *arahats* (worthy ones); they have done something which an ordinary man has not done and does not seek to do; they move along the noble path (*ariye pathe kamamānam*), and they live in the light which they have lit by their earnest toil; it is their own light (*attadīpa*).

In short, the former are children (*bāla*), while the latter are elders (*thera*); the former are mean (*anariya*) while the latter are noble (*ariya*).

What is the incentive that stirs the earnest to such activity, by no means pleasant or easy? The *will* to achieve the Ideal. This will is aroused by a certain disillusionment concerning the satisfactoriness of this worldly existence. Gotama who became the Buddha relates how unbearable life had become to him with all the woes, horrors and pain due to it, until he beheld what it was in the human heart that was the real root of all worldly trouble—and renounced. (*Sutta Nipāta* 4—15—1 ff.) In agitation (*saṁvega*) of mind and being, he went

forth with a resolve to discover the “architect” of all this mundane structure; when his search was over, he had attained the Ideal, he had become awake (*buddha*) from life’s ignoble slumber; he had discovered the principle (*dhamma*) that carried him across (*pārāyaṇa*) to the farthest shore of *Nirvāṇa* from this worldly existence with its sorrow and pain.

It was no easy thing for him to do this. The Upaniṣads speak of such a course as “sharp like a razor’s edge,...a path extremely exhausting (*durgam pathah*).” It is invariably described as a dangerous journey. In proportion to its difficulty, the incentive must be equally strong: not even a fool would do a thing were he to gain nothing from it. The tales of countless men and women, who have turned to the noble ideal and attained it, exhibit a veritable array of profound emotional disturbances; the impulse springs from a deeply agitated state of mind, the stark realization of the principle of pain in existence and unshaken confidence in the possibility of attaining the ideal.

What then is the noble ideal which prompts this religious life? The *Cchāndogya Upaniṣad* (8-4-I-3) promises *brahmaloka* as the reward for *brahmacarya*;

and *brahmaloka* knows no decay, no death, no sorrow, no good, no ill, and no evil of any description. *The Kāṭha Upaniṣad* (2, 15) calls it the monosyllabic *Aum*, the best support and the most excellent, the imperishable, to gain which is to gain all that one needs. The early notions of this ideal as a country inhabited by departed souls changed in course of time into that of a state of ultimate existence (*Paramam padam*); anthropomorphic imputations gradually came to be shed till we reach the Vedāntic conception of Brahman and the Buddhist concept of Nirvāṇa. The Upaniṣads advocate the negation of all imaginable attributes and present Brahman as beyond the possibility of description, of demonstration, aye, even of thought. When one is really serious, one becomes silent.

Gotama the Buddha treats the Ideal as the positive denial of every detail of this phenomenal world. It is no longer the consummation of pleasure, as the early Vedic notion had it, but essentially a relief from life's anguish, an escape from the tortuous whirl of *samsāra*. The ideal is unmoored from all material considerations and mundane requirements, and held out as extremely abstract. The centre of gravity is shifted from

instinctual gratifications to the whole being's fundamental urge—the urge for rest.

To live is to move away from equilibrium, and the unequilibrated state is both unstable and unreal, because it is constantly changing, depending on the force acting upon it. As such it is painful, since it is not rest. Everything in the universe evinces an unmistakable urge to regain the disturbed equilibrium, to achieve poise, to get back to rest. A human being strives towards this end; but in his ignorance he does things which only move him farther away from the rest. Hence all this misery, strife and passion. It has been the task of saints and seers to remind men of the real ideal, to prescribe a way of life which will lead to rest. The ideal of Moksha, of Brahmajñana, of Yoga, of Nirvāṇa, of the Jain Kaivalya, is the same ideal of everything rest—where there is no more disturbance. This is the urge to do away with *samsāra*, so to reduce the disturbing forces that enduring equilibrium is gained, never to be lost again; to put a final stop to the series of individual existences or births and deaths. One who recognizes this urge undertakes to fulfil it and does achieve the goal that rids him of all needs and stresses—he is worthy (*arahat*),

because he is emancipated from what binds all others. He has "rolled back the veil of passion."

For the one that has attained to this Ideal of ideals (*param'attha*) there is a new vision. There is at once a feeling of utter relief and supreme satisfaction. As the Gita puts it, no gain is greater than gaining that; it is for that that all religious discipline is suggested. Now an individual is awake, while the rest of creatures are dead in slumber; he is dead to all the ordinary pursuits which keep all others alive and active. In the words of Gotama, he has formed an island (*dīpa*) for himself, which no flood of worldly anxiety touches. He has ascended the mountain-top of wisdom and looks on life with detachment. He has eliminated his selfhood from the scheme of things; he has escaped from the clutches of name and form. In short, he has lost the identity, by which we ordinarily know persons; he moves about as nobody (*agottako*). In this sense he is extinguished (*nibbuta*), his fever of life has cooled (*sitibhūto*), he has become the Brahmā, the highest ideal the *āryan* speculation has evolved. Done for him is what is to be done. "No barren pilgrimage is his who lives that life persistently."



“Arya”—The Nobleman*

(Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, Research Assistant in the Department of Social Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, who wrote in our December 1951 issue on “The Aryan Ideal,” is a student of Buddhism as well as of India’s Sanskrit heritage. He brings out here the agreement of the Enlightened One with the traditional division of mankind into the noble ones and those who were not noble, though the Buddha specifically ruled out heredity as the criterion of excellence, substituting for it self-cultivation, discipline, enlightenment.—ED.)

The religious disciplines without exception have ever admitted the indispensability of a consistent, integrated and well-directed style of life for both fittingly staying in this world and for passing out of it. In India, this is the major preoccupation of all philosophical schools and spiritual systems. With the repeated assertion of the transience and wickedness of this world, which inexorably has caged us, there is an emphatic urge to make the best of the life pattern that is ours. Whatever the deductions of logic, it is impossible for us to dismiss with a snap of the fingers the actual world, or to forget altogether this body of ours with all its errors and evils. This practical consideration is responsible for the call of our seekers and sages:

* The Aryan Path, August, 1952

“Awake, arise, train yourselves for the lasting peace; the world is on fire!” Many indeed have been the systems of training, but the goal is always to combat the vile forces of matter with the aid of a powerful style of life.

Our early forefathers in India divided mankind into *ārya* and *dasyu*. The exact meaning is highly uncertain but it is clear they reserved for their own stock the superior appellation *ārya* and called the darkish natives *dasyus*, with probably a tinge of contempt. One suggested criterion of this difference was: the *āryans* were conscious of their spiritual leanings, while the *dasyus* did not appear to them to be so. There is a vague expression of this contempt for being content and happy with the body in the world “*śīśnadevāh*.” In other words, religiosity was the line of demarcation between nobility (*ārya*) and its negation. Of course this division later came to be pressed into service for baser motives.

This division again came into prominence with Gotama the Buddha. As is chronicled, this child of earthly prosperity felt a strange commotion of the spirit and leaving his home earned his “calm” after struggle and toil. Thereafter he wandered as a recluse, and in his wanderings came to his original



The Great Renunciation

home to stand before his indignant father—a fulfilment of earthly nobility—as a begging monk. The father accused the son of having betrayed and shamed the nobility of the family, and the son asserted that he was noble, in fact, nobler than ever, and nobler than all the nobles in the land. The irony is obvious. Gotama never belittled his nobility, he had *earned* it; he never forgot that he was a *buddha*, a *jina*, an *ārya*—that was his life’s achievement. He termed his doctrine *ariya-desanā*, and he called his follower the *ariyasāvaka*. There obtains the characteristic expression with reference to the Buddha “the great sage gliding along the noble road” (*ariye pathe kamamānaṃ mahesiṃ*). Mankind was again divided into *ariya* and *anariya*.

In what then does nobility consist? The *Kaṭha Upanishad* mentions the choice for the individual between the good (*śreyas*) and the pleasant (*preyas*); one who chooses the former is the wise man, the latter, the fool. The pleasures bind us, the good frees us. The real issue is to decide whether to become more worldly or less; herein lies our perdition or our salvation. The same Upanishad observes that many are the choosers of the pleasant, but few the choosers of the good.

The great mass of humanity is yoked into the serfdom of the world, being poor in wisdom; a small band of elect persons are no longer obliged to labour thus, being aristocratic in wisdom.

But shall we take action or non-action to be the mark of nobility or otherwise? The *Bhagavad-Gītā* clarifies the issue. It is impossible for any living person even for a moment not to act; but action without attachment to its fruits, that is to say, action done with no personal longing, is as good as not acting. Action without this insight binds us, whereas action with this insight delivers us. Like using a thorn to remove a thorn, such action supplants all other action. All religion is an attempt to define such insightful action (*vijñācarana*), which makes for knowledge, liberation, the over-coming of all grief and interminable tranquillity of spirit (*nibbāṇa*).

Proper action leads to its own dissolution. The Jains recognize five stages of such action : It flows (*āsrava*), it binds (*bandha*), it ripens (*saṃvara*), it stops (*nirjarā*) and, finally, it liberates (*moksha*). The greatest devotee of knowledge has not overlooked the importance of action in helping man to achieve the *summum bonum* in life; for Shankara holds that the intellectual search after the Absolute, *nididhyāsa*,

must be supplemented by a special action pattern, *upāsanā*. And *upāsanā* has a twofold aim : to lead to insightful knowledge (*saṃyakdarśana*), and to help on the spirit's progress (*abhyudaya*). The former is necessary till the liberating wisdom dawns, but the latter must continue till the body lives its time out.¹

But all action implies the setting of the mind in that direction and for this special action pattern which has the purpose of freeing individual existence from the worldly whirlpool the mind must be appropriately set. Not only is this tendency of the mind not given freely by nature; it is even opposed to the established order of nature. The mind finds it extremely uncomfortable—even as a fish finds being lifted out of its watery home and dropped on the dry land. To set the mind in this direction means a struggle against nature, a fight against the world, a vigorous spirit, firm as a rock, spurning all the temptations of the world.

There is a beautiful allegory of the Śākyan ascetic resisting the onslaughts of Māra and coming out victorious (*jina*), discovering the secret of the correct mode of doing away with worldly bonds and rising up as one awakened (*buddha*) from the wide—

1. See his Commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, 4, I, 12.

spread spiritual slumber of the many. He poses the problem of Man *versus* the World and prompts man to success; the world gets weakened when man turns superman (*mahāpurisa*). This superhumanhood is to be achieved (*kayirātha*), it never dawns on anyone like manna falling from heaven. One must strive towards that ideal; without effort, the Buddha assures us, nothing is gained but everything is lost, Therefore “Arise, awake, rush towards the saving goal” is the teaching of the Buddha as of the Upanishads.

The derivation of the word *ārya* from the root *ri* (the cultivator) may also be suggested. Originally it might have signified the profession of these people as against hunting practised by the *dasyus*. Perhaps it implied the excellence of farming as struggle against nature, the reaping of the fruit which is normally hidden from man, the acquaintance with a skill and a technique of which the *dasyu* was ignorant and the confidence of an advanced state of mind. By a natural shift of values, it meant strife against the unseen power of worldliness and holding one's own against this “other”; it signified an assertion of Self in the face of all else: “*anyā vāco vimuncatha!*” says the Upanishad.

Self is all this, Self is the only important entity, Self is the only reality. One who saw and lived this truth was a *dhira*, a *rishi*, an *ārya*, a *brāhmaṇa*—terms connoting greatness and nobility. Others were *bālas*, *mandas*, *avaras*, *ajñas*—in a word, inferiors. From the cultivation of land, the meaning of *ārya* moved to the cultivation of the mind, of the spirit; from the harvest of crops, the aim advanced to the harvest of the *summum bonum* in life; from *anna* the emphasis shifted to *moksha*. With this, man rose from his baser animal nature and blossomed into a spiritual being. Compare, in this context, the indignant Bhāradvāja's pride in his agricultural occupation and the Buddha's rejoinder asserting the superiority of his agricultural occupation—self cultivation, chronicled in the Pāli scriptures.

Here is the test of true nobility. "There is not, Ambaṭṭha, in the highest attainment of knowledge and virtue any talk of birth or family or pride...." (*Dīghanikāya*). But it consists in the mental culture prompting the action pattern which liberates the agent; in a word, the style of life which helps one rise above the ordinary limitations. This life pattern comprehends the founding of all action—mental or bodily—on *Sīla*, the formation of wisdom and

strenuous effort and thus the tangled skein of life is unravelled (*vijaṭaye jaṭam*). The Buddha preaches several “noble states” (*ariyavāsa*) to be attained and sustained by one who seeks to be a noble man, such as absolute renunciation, unagitated will, tranquil mind and body, liberated insight. (*Anguttara nikāya, Dasakanipāta, 20*).

Anuruddha reflects that nobility, it is for one who has few wishes, who is contented, secluded, vigorous in understanding, attentive in mind, settled at heart, and possessed of insight (*Aṭṭhaka nipāta 30*). In this struggle for supreme freedom in life, one must be disciplined even as is a soldier; he has his regulations to obey, his rules of conduct to follow. This discipline it is that preserves him from frittering away his energies and hence the Pāli term *Pāṭimokkha* (Sk. *prātimoksha*), a bond by the restraint of which the monk must needs be controlled (*pāṭimokkha-saṃvarasaṃyuto*). Thus the *ārya* is worthy of respect for he is enlightened and disciplined; he is an example to follow. He shines in the world as a self-lit light, he is as conspicuous as a self-made island. He is the most eloquent enunciation of the *Dhamma*, although he “balances his mind in the Ariyan silence.”



Māra, The Tempter*

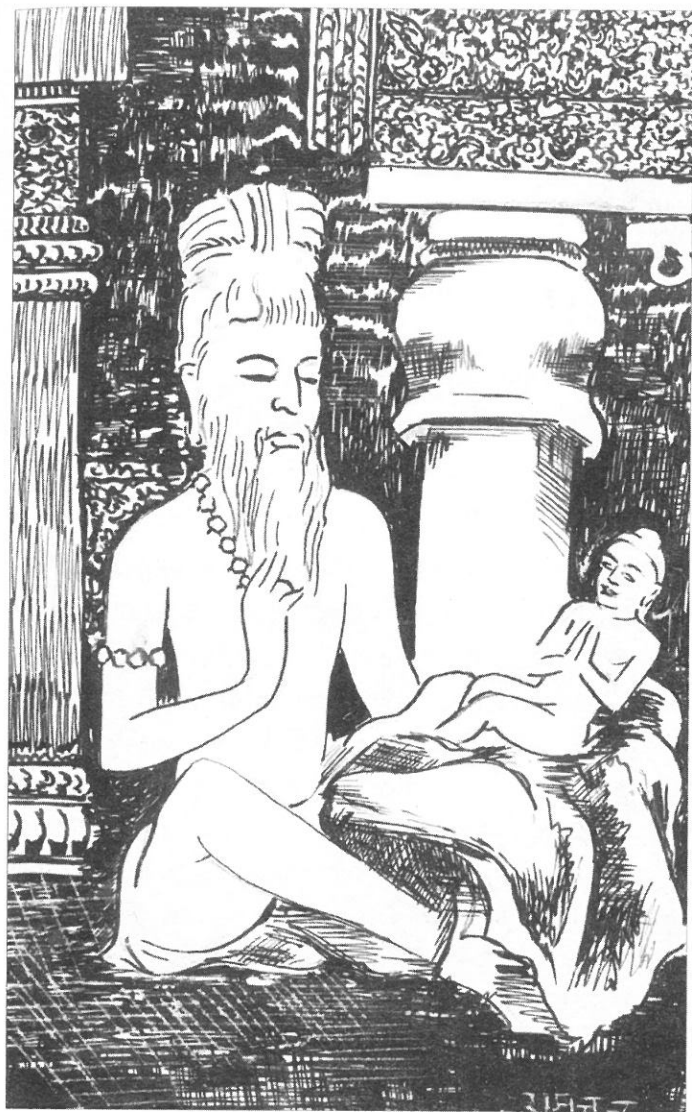
(Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, Research Assistant in the Department of Social Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, discusses here the problem of Evil from the point of view of the struggle between the higher and lower aspects of man's nature. While Evil as an opposing or contrary force in Nature is necessary to the equilibrium of the Kosmos, balancing active Goodness, as Spirit and Matter or the centrifugal and centripetal forces are mutually dependent and necessary to the harmony of the manifested world, it is possible for man by strong effort to purge his own nature of evil, as Shri Ramachandra Rao has brought out in this article.—Ed.)

'Seven years did I keep intent vigilance on the Buddha to catch him in a moment of weakness; but lo! he was ever watchful.'

—Māra, the Tempter.

When the future Buddha was born, Asita, the sage of the Sarvadhara Hills, prophesied that the child would grow up to be a successful monarch or a great mendicant. These two alternative ambitions face everyone; either living in the world, seeking to fulfil all one's wants and to master all one surveys; or resisting the world's temptations, renouncing all attachments and fixing one's attention on mastering oneself. The former flows out (*pravṛtti*); the latter

* The Aryan Path, June, 1954



Asita's Prophecy

withdraws (nivṛtti). Both have been recognized as normal courses, but in the pursuit of the former, the wise warn us, one ought to be exceedingly cautious, lest in one's anxiety to master the world, one loses one's own self. The "mastery" achieved thus would turn out to be a deplorable servitude: yet the major portion of mankind choose this course. Withdrawal is a trying, arduous and unattractive course; few enter it and fewer still succeed. Between the pleasant and the good, what is pleasant always tempts.

This factor of temptation is personified in the Buddhist legends as Māra. Etymologically it is closely related to "death," a snare which binds man, and catches him not once but again and again. In the *Kaṭha-upaniṣad*, Yama, the Lord of Death, asserts:— "One who believes entirely and only in the world gets into my grip again and again." One of the prayers of the *Ṛg-veda* reads: "Let not thy worshipper be disregarded like a wild animal in a pasture or go along the road of Yama!" In the *Atharva-veda*, Vivasvat is implored: "May death pass away and deathlessness come to us! May he preserve these men from decay: May their spirits not depart to Yama!"

The *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* also points out that the unwise are “indeed born again after death and become again and again the food of death.”

Thus death really means an unending series of births and deaths, a terrible prospect for a Hindu. In popular literature, Māra is pictured as a most handsome youth, full of lust, bewitching whomever he sees. He comes to disturb the austerities of ascetics, to turn their minds toward worldly enjoyments and thus keep them under his sway. We have the famous legend of Kāma (a synonym of Māra, meaning Desire) with his fair consort Rati (literally Enjoyment), disturbing the severe penance of Śiva (literally Good) in order to direct his attention to the damsel Umā¹ (literally Easy Life) and thereby preserve the world from destruction by the “demon” Tāraka (literally Saviour). This is the theme of Kālidāsa’s famous epic poem, the *Kumārasambhava*. The truth behind the symbolism is that desire assisted by love of enjoyment distracts the good and leads to an easy life; this results in the continuance of the world. Kāma or Māra is thus

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1. The word is split as U-mā and means ‘Don’t !’ It refers to the pleading of the mother, Menaka, that her daughter, young, frail and fair, shall not waste herself in severe austerities (Vide the *Kumārasambhava*)

the spirit of the world; man, who has his eyes on the prize of liberation, rest or immortality must combat this spirit of desire and death. Māra is wicked because he frustrates the noble urge to liberation and drags his victim into helpless servility.

In the legend of Gotama who became the Buddha, Māra is described as a constant opponent of the Teacher's struggle to liberate himself and to liberate mankind. He is pictured as seething with jealousy, for Gotama would not only free himself from his snare but would establish his own kingdom as a rival to Māra's. The Buddha was determined to pull down the palace of Māra, conquer the wicked inmate and inaugurate the reign of *Dhamma* (Law), which is the exact antithesis of Māra.

The Buddha's whole life was a constant repelling of the force of Māra. Long before Gotama became the Buddha, when he had just gone out of his home, he met Māra for the first time. Māra attempted to dissuade the agitated young man from renouncing his attachment to worldly life: "Depart not, in seven days from today you will be an emperor !" But Gotama heeded him not.

The second time Māra met him, Gotama, worn out by excessive austerities, but not a Buddha yet, was on the banks of the river Nerañjarā in the forests of Uruvelā. Māra appeared before him, warned him that death was at hand and urged: "Live, my man, life is precious!"

But Gotama declared that defeat in a struggle was worse than death: he would rather die struggling than live like a coward. Then Māra came in the disguise of an excited messenger and cried: "Devadatta has conquered Kapilavasthu, imprisoned your father and abducted your wife! Why stay you here, you are badly wanted there!" But Gotama was not moved. Then Māra argued that Gotama was attempting an impossibility; enlightenment would not come and he would waste his life. Failing again, Māra employed the artifices of his three daughters, Rati (Pleasure), Tanha (Craving) and Arati (Discontent), to win him over. These beautiful damsels in all grace and youth came to Gotama with songs of spring and words of love. But the ascetic's answer as translated by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy was:—

Pleasure is brief as a flash of lightning

Or like an Autumn shower,

only for a moment.....

Why should I then covet the pleasures

you speak of?

I see your bodies are full of impurity:
Birth and death, sickness and age are yours.

I see the highest prize, hard to attain
by men.....

The true and constant wisdom of the
wise.

Māra grew furious and began to assault this extraordinary man with a terrible whirlwind, a storm of rain and a mighty flood, showers of rocks, a storm of deadly weapons, burning ashes and coals, and with "thick and fourfold darkness." But the ascetic sat unmoved; and "Māra's bow and his standard fell from his grasp, and all his cohorts, a million and thirty-six thousand in number fled, filled with dismay." Māra ran away confounded and ashamed.

Māra approached Gotama for the third time when the latter had just come out victorious in his struggle, and was sitting under the nigrodha tree, working out the implications of his enlightenment. This time Māra urged him to die: "Pass away now, my man, now is the time for you to pass away!" Now that the Buddha had defied him and escaped from his sway altogether, Māra was anxious that he

should not induce others to imitate him. But the Buddha had resolved to proclaim his gospel and lead the entire mankind to liberation; he therefore would not yield to Māra's plea.

The final visit of Māra to the Buddha was at the latter's death-bed on the banks of the Nerañjarā. He urged the great teacher to die, and for once the Buddha felt like complying with his wish: "Make yourself happy, O Evil One, I will die ere long; three months from now will be the time for me to pass away." The principle of death did devour the constitution that had experienced the highest liberation, but it was a death that entitled the self to eternal rest. The Buddha had conquered Māra and his domain completely while he lived, and thus on his death he transcended the principle of death.

In Śāntideva's *Sikṣāsamuccaya*, four Māras are mentioned: the Māras of the constitution, of suffering, of death and of the gods. Others add another, the Māra of the accumulation of Karma. Further it is said in the canons, Māra has three sons: Confusion, Joy and Pride. And his three daughters are named Craving, Discontent and Passion. He wishes ill, injury and insecurity. His army consists of: Desire which is "next-in—

command," Discontent, Hunger-Thirst or bodily needs, Sloth-Torpor or bodily inclinations, Fear, Doubt, Contempt, Arrogance, Gain, Fame, Honour, Self-praise and Speaking-ill-of-others.² The symbolism must be obvious.

Māra is variously designated: Friends of Fools, Wicked Sprite, Evil One, Hold-fast Dragon. It is a principle of existence that each individual must encounter. Ordinarily the individual surrenders to this great power and becomes insensible to the highest ideal and incapable of attaining to it. He neither sees the goal nor knows the way. Such an ordinary man, who is Māra's prisoner, is called a fool; he is careless. Māra is not a power that can be destroyed for ever by any individual, however great and enlightened. It is a problem for every individual to face and solve. There is no way of destroying it absolutely, for "this revolution of existence is beginningless, and there is no known origin of individuals, who come and go, veiled by ignorance and chained by desire."³ Māra exists or

2. *Sutta - nipāta*, padhāna sutta, 2-2-12 to 15

3. *Sarīyutta - nikāya*, nidāna-vagga, XV, 5.

OLDENBURG's translation of this passage runs as follows : 'The pilgrimage of beings has its beginning in eternity. No opening can be discovered from which proceeding, creatures, mazed in ignorance, fettered by a thirst for being, stray & wander.,

does not exist for individuals, but it is inherent in average human nature.

In the very air is bondage, where the
mind runs to and fro.

With *that*, O recluse, I will bind thee.

Thou shalt not escape me!"⁴

"Whenever you say 'this is mine' and call something 'me' and if you mean what you say, then, O monk, you are in my hold!"⁵ It is therefore that the Buddha calls out: "Arise! be alert! (literally sit upright) Train yourselves aright for quiet (*santiyā*). Seeing you slack, let not Maccurājā (Māra) take you over (to himself)!"⁶ And in the *Dhammapada* he points out that this laughter and these joys of man are improper, for the whole world is on fire—the fire of Māra: "Hid in gloom, O ye men, seek ye not light?" But to seek the light needs effort, one must struggle to overcome the thick gloom which has mankind in its hold. Each must struggle for the light.

The passions that bind man, according to the *Majjhima-nikāya*, are threefold: those of sensuous

4. *Vinaya-Piṭaka* i, 21 (F.L. WOODWARD translation)

5. *Saṃyutta - nikāya*, sagatha-vagga, IV, 19 (free translation)

6. *Sutta-nipāta*, 2-10-2

pleasure, of existence and of ignorance. In the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, a list of 10 fetters is given: egoism, doubt, mistaken discipline, sensual desire, ill-will, love of life, longing for a future life, conceit, arrogance and ignorance. In the *Dīgha-nikāya*, five hindrances are mentioned: sensuous desire, ill-will, sloth-torpor, conceit and doubt. Nāgārjuna's *Dharmasaṅgraha* lists a number of major and minor stains: greed, hate, pride, ignorance, heresy, doubt, idleness, vanity, shamelessness, cruelty, anger, enmity, hypocrisy, contentiousness, envy, avarice, deceit, double-play, haughtiness, malice, recklessness, sloth, arrogance, breach of trust, indolence, carelessness, indifference, forgetfulness, wickedness, argumentation and idle curiosity. A probationer for renunciation is to guard against these wicked things: destruction of life, taking what is not given, unholy living, falsehood, wine and drinks, eating at improper times, entertainments like dancing and music, the use of ornaments, gold and silver.⁷ All this renders the roots of man firm in the world; he becomes "food" for Māra. Then it becomes hard for the mind to escape his clutches, even as a fish cannot endure

7. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Mahāvagga, I, vi

being taken out of its watery home and dropped on dry ground. (*Dhammapada*. v. 34)

“Māra must be fought with the weapon of wisdom.”⁸ And wisdom is paraphrased in the following verse: “As a bubble of water, as a mirage, so must this world be viewed; it is then that Maccurājā becomes blind.”⁹ The natural instinct is to cling to the world, accept its reality and obey its behests. Attachment develops and with it dependence. The self gets lost in the overpowering atmosphere of worldly existence; the essence of being is lost sight of and we credit with confidence the insignificant. The reign of falsehood is thus inaugurated and we become devotees of unreality. This is the false outlook (*micchādiṭṭhi*) which leads one astray, into the jaws of Māra.

The temptation to believe in the world and accept it as important must be resisted and it is only thus that Māra can be weakened. There is indeed something beyond, and this was shown by the Buddha. When one is aware of the important beyond, the interest in *this* ceases, and a positive dislike for it arises too. Note, for instance, how the

8. *Ibid.*, v. 40

9. *Ibid.*, v. 170

Buddha looked upon his own body. The monk Nāgasena declares that the body must be regarded as a sore, one must not cling to it, but must employ it for the practice of the holy life.¹⁰ It must become the tool of the highest attainment. For rendering it thus, love of pleasure must be discarded, it must be unmoored from all attachment. When in this structure of darkness light dawns, Māra becomes powerless. When he tried to assault the nun Kisāgotamī, she spurned him and announced: "Sped for me is all worldly joy, pierced is the mass of gloom. Defeating death's array, here I stand stainless."¹¹

Wisdom is said to have the merit of an axe; it cuts off. What does it cut off and how? The answer is given by Nāgasena in the *Milindapañho* (p. 36): The man grasps the mind by his mentation and cuts off the evil stains by wisdom. Wisdom is thus a beneficent factor. There are other beneficent factors also, such as virtue, faith, energy, mindfulness and concentration.

Virtue is described as the gateway and groundwork of all the others; when founded in

10. Cited in *Milindapañho*, p. 77

11. *Samyutta - Nikāya*, Sagātha-vagga, 5, 3

virtue, nothing will decline. "Founding his mind and wisdom on virtue, the earnest monk will clear all this tangle." *Sīla* strictly means "habit," but by usage it has acquired the sense of "virtuous habit" or "good conduct"; and in the Buddhist literature it is used to mean "that which calms the mind or prevents the fickleness of mind."¹² It not only helps good grow but eradicates evil as well. It has a positive aspect in so far as desirable conduct is concerned, and it restrains the individual from undesirable conduct. It weakens *Māra* and strengthens *Dhamma*.

Wisdom without virtue amounts to little, for, as Mrs. Rhys Davids observes: "Man had not just to know; he had to wayfare, to become in order to attain. He had, in a word, to live his religion." It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of noble living for obtaining final release from worldly fetters; wisdom sheds the light, but the effort involves action. To become worthy of the high ideal, the whole being must be properly disciplined, the senses well under control, the mind in perfect order, and the heart quietly at rest. The senses being the prime means of contact with the world, it is of urgent necessity that they be subjugated. For the chain of interdependence originates here as

12. See B.C. LAW : *The Life & Works of Buddhaghosa* (1923)

(*manasikara*), which both comprehends (the mind) and cuts off (the defilements of existence). The will-to-live of the ordinary man serves to spread the roots of life; the Buddhist, however, aspires to supplant the will-to-live by a "will-to-well," to borrow the expression of Mrs. Rhys Davids. Insight is the fusion of the understanding and this will: meditation is the process thereof.

In the Buddhist texts earnest meditation is classified into four types: meditation on the impurity of the body, on the evils of sensation, on the evanescence of thought and on the conditions of existence. And no less than 40 subjects for meditation are mentioned: ten pleasant ones (the four elements, four colours, light and space), ten disgusting ones (various types of corpses), ten reflections (on the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, morality, generosity, deities and sprites, death, body, breathing and quiescence), and ten higher states (love, compassion, joy, indifference, the infinity of space and of consciousness, nothingness, neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness, realization of the loathsomeness of food and analysis of elements). The Buddha holds that the meditation on death (*marāṇasati*), frequently

practised, will help the aspirant enter into the deathless, i.e., Nirvāṇa.¹ In the *Samyutta Nikāya* one is enjoined to meditate on the cessation of selfhood, *sakkāyanirodha*.²

The elegant narrative commentary on the *Dhammapada*, the *Dhammapadatthakathā*, ascribed to the great Buddhaghosha, deals with the "teaching" of meditation. The pupil who seeks to attain the Buddhist end of *arahatta* approaches the master, who studies the pupil thoroughly as to his or her capacities and proclivities, tastes and temperament. Then the teacher selects for his pupil a subject of meditation in accordance with the pupil's personality. With this assignment the pupil retires to a solitary place, a jungle retreat or some quiet secluded spot, free from the temptations of ordinary life and from fear of wild animals. The pupil settles down in calm earnestness to direct his mental energies to unravel all the possible implications of the subject allotted to him. Provided the subject is appropriate and the application earnest, the pupil gradually transcends the obstacles to progress and ultimately frees himself from the phenomenal

1. *Anguttara Nikāya*, Cakkaniṭṭhā, 20

2. *Mahāvagga*, IV, 54

defilements. He thus becomes an *arahat*; and now he has no need for a teacher.³

Not all men are alike, and so diverse must be their subjects of meditation; what suits one personality may not suit another. The pupil's success depends therefore upon his master's diagnosis and judgment. This diagnosis and judgment, however, are not always correct or final. Even the great Sāriputta erred in assigning the subject of bodily impurity to the young and fair son of a goldsmith.⁴ When the pupil feels he is unable to concentrate on a subject, he comes back to the teacher, who assigns to him a different and better subject. The Buddha is reported to have chosen a subject suited to the understanding of children when they visited him in Jetavanārāma.⁵

But those whose mental application is mature and instantaneous attain the end of meditation immediately: the Kosambavāsi Tissa, having taught a young novice the formula of meditation on the subject of the first five constituent parts of the body, applied a razor to his head to finish the

3. *Dhammapadatthakathā*, 143,X,10

4. *Ibid.*, 285, xx, 9

5. *Ibid.*, 318, xxii, 9

preliminaries of ordination, when suddenly the pupil attained *arahatta*.⁶ Normally, however, one who has taken a subject for meditation strives hard and long before he becomes an *arahat*.

A subject for meditation may suggest itself, as happened to the nun Paṭācara when, as she poured out some water, it spilled on the ground, ran awhile and disappeared, arousing in her mind parallel thoughts of birth, youth and death. Kisa—Gotami lit a lamp and watched the flame; the flaring up and the flickering down of the flame served as a subject for meditation to her. But this presupposes a previous process of maturation of the mental faculties, or a realization of the real nature of the phenomena through personal experience.

It is impossible for one unacquainted with meditation directly to explain or understand the exact process of meditation. But strewn in the narrative accounts of the *Aṭṭhakatha* are suggestions as to the major stages in the attainment of *arahatta*. As a typical instance might be cited the following: Sappadāsa came from a well-to-do family but was tired of life. Once, in a fit of utter dejection, he attempted suicide; he leaned against a tree and

6. Ibid., 96, vii, 7

applied a razor to his throat; as he did this he reflected on what he was doing to himself. Nothing seemed to him amiss; all was right. At this, a thrill of joy ran through his being; but he suppressed it and developed spiritual insight. He attained *arahatta* and abandoned the idea of suicide.⁷

Meditation, involving as it does concentration of mental faculties, is impossible when the mind is depressed by worry or exhilarated by delight, as for instance when Sāriputta found that Tambadathika, once the public executioner, was unable to concentrate because he was agitated by his past sins.⁸ And the Buddha refused to teach the gospel to Bahiya as the latter was overcome by great delight and hence was unable to grasp the right intent.⁹ It is only in a state of placid equanimity that meditation is possible.

The aim of meditation is simply Nirvāṇa; and Nirvāṇa is, the elder Sāriputta tells the wanderer Samandaka, the destruction of the three fires of egoism, viz., lust, (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion

7. Ibid., 112, viii, 11

8. Ibid., 100, viii, 1

9. Ibid., 101, viii, 2

(*moha*).¹⁰ This is indeed the cherished ideal of *arahatta*. Kisa—Gotami, who had reached this ideal, tells Māra the tempter:—

Sped is all worldly joy, pierced is the
outer darkness;
Defeating death's array, I bide here
without stain!.¹¹



10. *Samyutta Nikāya*, Salayatanavagga, 39, 1

11. Ibid. Sagathāvagga, 5,3

A Buddha in Our Age*

(Professor S. K. Ramachandra Rao of the All-India Institute of Mental Health, Bangalore, makes in this article the incontestable and encouraging point that the possibilities of attaining Buddhahood are open to man today. He writes of a Burmese Bhikkhu said to have attained Enlightenment in this century.—Ed.)

The Buddha is not the name of a person, but the indication of an attainment. One who is perfectly awake to the impermanence and misery inherent in all phenomena, convinced of the utter impersonality of all beings, one who has entirely suppressed his lust for life and has consequently uprooted his very existence, is a Buddha; space and time are of no account to him. The man, Gautama, who is celebrated all over the world as the Buddha, is by no means the only one worthy of this designation. Many were the Buddhas who had gone before him, and it is held that many are the ones who have come after him. The glory of Gautama rests, however, on the systematization of his Doctrine based on personal experience, and on the founding of an Order which has endured all these 2,500 years almost in its pristine purity.

* The Aryan Path, November, 1955

Walking in the way suggested by him, it is believed, many a mortal has attained to the *Arahatta* stage. It is heartening to note that it is believed that such a sage, one who is said to have reached to the very highest of attainments and virtually become a Buddha, walked on earth in our own times. This worthy one was born in Burma and was known to his countrymen as Bhaddanta Kammatthanacariya U Kavi Mahāthera (Kavi being his monastic name), better known as Mingyan Sayadaw.

Born in 1877 in the woody tracts adjoining the Soonloon caves near Mingyan in Upper Burma, he was an illiterate farmer, absolutely ignorant of the outside world.¹ He knew nothing about religion; he was but a serious-minded agriculturist. He had a wife who was more of a demon than a woman, and five children.

It so happened that one day a local soothsayer saw for him a very dark future; even predicting possible death in none too distant a time. The credulous farmer was promptly scared out of what little wits he had, and, when the soothsayer suggested daily worship of the Buddha as a

1. For these biographical particulars I am indebted to the Venerable Nānaponika Thera of the Forest Hermitage, Kandy, Ceylon.

remedial measure, he made a habit of visiting daily the local monastery, which contained a Buddha shrine. To this same place was wont to come an acquaintance of his, a rice miller, who one day casually told him about a meditation exercise which he had learnt from a nun who was reputed to have reached the *anāgāmi* stage in spiritual evolution.² The farmer became inquisitive and was overcome by a zeal to try his luck with this meditation practice. The rice miller faithfully passed on what instructions he had received. This meditation is one known to scholars as *ānāpāna-sati* (the meditation on breath movement) under the general heading of *Sattipatthana* (the way of Mindfulness). The farmer practised this with unbounded enthusiasm; all his daily activities were increasingly flooded with this practice. Wherever he was and whatever he was doing, ploughing, sowing, cutting the crop, walking or standing, he was always mindful. Such indeed was his steadfast application that in the next four years, it was later discovered, he had reached the *anāgāmi* stage.

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2. There are four stages on the Holy Path (*Ariyamagga*), at the end of which there is a complete cessation of all the hindrances that obstruct spiritual development (*bhāvana*), leading directly to worth (*Arahatta*). The *anāgāmi* is the third stage.

When he was forty, he suddenly felt disgusted with the life of a householder, and implored his ferocious wife to let him take to a monastic life. The woman, of course, laughed heartily and refused. The farmer now became very melancholy and life became for him as a meaningless mass of dirt; he lost appetite, grew moody, and wearied of life. He at length became so conspicuously run-down that the kindly neighbours decided to intervene. They pleaded with the strong woman to let this crank of a husband have his will, lest he should sicken to death at home. The woman at length agreed, but on condition that he would bring home a hundred measures of sesamum seeds. The poor man set to work and luckily collected as much. He forthwith went out of his home into the jungles. He must have felt like the Thera Sumangala of old, who sang:—

Happy I in freedom blithe :

Three crooked things I've laid aside:

The plough, the hoe, the heavy scythe:

There they lie: there let them bide!

The strenuous life of meditation free,

This is the life henceforth for me!.³

3. *Theragāthā* 46, edited by N.K. BHAGWAT, Bombay, 1939. The translation of this verse is by K. J. SAUNDERS, included in his *Heart of Buddhism*, Milford, 1915

He repaired to a secluded hermitage and entered as a novice (*sāmaṇera*). He had all the while been persisting in the meditation exercises, and six months after his entry into the hermitage, in the forty-first year of his life, he attained to *Arahatta*, the final stage on the Holy Path, which freed him from all fetters and fully quieted his being. He was now a living Buddha.

Hard it is for a jewel to remain hid for long. When the utterly ignorant farmer-monk began talking about the abstruse points in the Doctrine, without having so much as read or heard a single verse in the Canon, pious surprise went round. In time the news reached the Venerable Yelekyang Mahāthera, an old monk renowned alike for sanctity and scholarship, at the Meiktila monastery, fifty miles away from where our *Arahat* lived. He sent for the novice and, on close examination of his spiritual experiences, was convinced that the monk was in reality an *Arahat*. The Venerable One immediately invited many a leading Mahāthera in the country to meet this novice and give his opinion; and it was unanimously agreed that here was an *Arahat* according to the minutest specifications given in the Canon. The novice, who had already attained to

perfection, then formally received higher ordination (*upasampada*) from the fortunate Yelekyauṅ Mahathera, and in due course became himself the head of the monastery, Sayadaw, at Mingyan. He shook off his mortal coil and obtained his final release on the 17th of May 1952, at the age of seventy-five.

Mingyan Sayadaw was not interested in doctrines and did very little preaching. When, in 1948, U Nu, the pious Prime Minister of Burma, went to pay his respects to the sage, he requested an exposition on Nibbāṇa. The sage merely replied: "If you wish to know, observe till you know the end of dissolution, and you will know." Pressed further, he explained: "When a meditator examines the body with mindfulness (*sati*) and his concentration (*samādhi*) develops, it is possible to see distinctly the three factors of consciousness (*citta*), mental concomitants (*cetasika*), and matter (*rūpa*); and when what causes suffering (*dukkha*) is analyzed, the origin which brings about suffering is found to be greed (*lobha*). Then the supramundane path (*magga*) kills the latent defiling tendencies (*anusaya*), the rising of cause and effect (*uppada*), the relative stability (*thiti*), the gradual dissolution

(*bhanga*), cease. That is called the end of dissolution.” His emphasis was on meditation, the fruit of which was the liberating knowledge of the rise and fall of all phenomena (*udayabyayañāṇa*). He introduced slight modifications in the traditional techniques of meditation, as detailed in *Visuddhimagga*, for a greater and quicker effect, a method which he probably got from U Narada Sayadaw, who was also reputed to have been an *Arahat*. One of the latter’s disciples, a senior monk of great erudition and accomplishment, U Sobhana Mahāthera, better known as Maha-Si Sayadaw, is popularizing in Burma his master’s method. Bhikkhu Soma, a Singhalese monk, and Nanaponika Thera, a German monk who has settled in Ceylon, have written valuable accounts of this method in English.



Buddhism as a Way of life*

(Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao is a talented psychologist who is doing useful work at the All-India Institute of Mental Health; he has the rare opportunity to test in practice the principles of Buddhistic psychology.

In this very practical essay, prepared especially for this number, our good friend writes about the True Way of Living. Millions go their daily round from home to various haunts and home again. There are those who can afford to wander abroad doing business and seeing sights; there are the fortunate few who travel the world of knowledge; but the Pilgrims who are bound for the Holy Land of Truth are a handful. As our author points out, the Buddha invites all to His "Come-and-See Doctrine," but only those go who are tired of mental learning and surfeited with sensuous living. Also, the practice is difficult; one may go and behold—but to apply? To break the fetters of religious dogmas, sacerdotal customs, social taboos; to free the mind and rise above conventionalities; that is what the Great Reformer advocates: "Give up thy life, if thou wouldst live."—ED.)

Two thousand and five hundred years ago Buddhism emerged because of historical necessities. The ancient and austere Brahmanism had fallen into decadent days: the Buddha himself draws a sad contrast between the religion of the Brahmins of yore (*poraṇānam brahmaṇānam*) and that of the then contemporary Brahmins: corruption (*vipallāsa*) had

* The Aryan path, May, 1956

set in.¹ Ritualism, useless and gruesome, was rampant everywhere. The warmth of humanity was lost in the cold and cruel shackles of dogma. The healthy values of life were obliterated in the mass of pedantic verbiage and intellectual anarchy. Into this scene of barren confusion was born Gotama, the son of age-old tradition, to bring order, concord and peace into the lives of men. A passage frequently occurring in the Pāli texts indicates the real achievement of the Buddha:—

Just as someone might set upright again what had fallen down, reveal what had been hidden away, or tell a man who had gone astray which was his way, or bring a lamp into darkness so that those with eyes might see things about them—even so in many ways has Gotama made this doctrine clear.²

For the Buddha life was more important than the intellect; “unshakable peace” was infinitely superior to all dogmas and discussions. His approach, therefore, was not theoretical but intensely practical. It is this emphasis on the quality of life that was conspicuously absent from the atmosphere of those days—precisely as is the case today. And the great merit of the Buddha lies in this that he proclaimed, as he alone could, by precept

1. *Brāhmaṇa-dhammika sutta*, *Sutta Nipāta*, 2-7

2. E.g. *Kāśībhāradvāja sutta*, *Vasettha sutta*, *Sabhiya sutta*

as by example, the way of life that surely leads to the highest end. As Dr. Edward Conze rightly points out, "Dharma is not really a dogma, but it is essentially a path."³ The Pali word *magga* is of great import: it implies walking or faring (*cariya*) by the aspirant to reach the very end of the round of births and deaths, the *summum bonum* (*param'-attha*), which is tantamount to escape from sorrow, deliverance from all present and potential ills, final emancipation (*vimutti*), absolute purity (*visuddhi*), unaffected by stains of whatever kind. It is this goal of Worth (*arahatta*) that the Buddha envisages as the justification for the right way of life.

The way of life followed by the common man appears to the Buddha to be vulgar. In the words of one of his disciples, it is like a pig's, fattened by unclean things.⁴ Ordinarily, the mind of man is like a monkey, running hither and thither ceaselessly in vain pursuit after sense pleasures: such a mind deepens the roots of man in the worldly mire. He has endless desires, and much discontent; he delights in throngs, and hates quiet self-examination; he loves ease, and avoids discipline; he runs after excitements, and never cares to settle

3. *Buddhism : Its essence and Development* (Oxford, 1951), p. 64

4. DASAKA THERA : *Theragatha*, 17

down. His life is one series of increasing entanglements. From the womb of these entanglements spring up the unwholesome growths of ego-infatuation, attachments and aversions. This entanglement is the foundation on which rises the entire body of sorrow, from the oppression of which no man can ordinarily escape. Man thus passes on and is reborn, "obstructed by ignorance, and fettered by desire."⁵

In the very first of his sermons, the Buddha advises his followers to eschew this common way of life given to search after sense pleasures, as it is low (*hīno*), vulgar (*gammo*), unworthy (*anariyo*) and harmful (*anattasanhito*).⁶ During his life-time he must have pleaded vigorously against the common way of life, for he earned for himself the abusive epithet of "Unsettler."⁷ And, with all the gifts of a talented teacher, he describes in detail the way of life he has discovered, has followed and now recommends. He characterizes it as the Noble Way (*ariya patha*), the one calculated to lead the way-farer to utter freedom, absolute rest, unshakable calm. Although he believes in rebirth, the Buddha

5. *Nidānavagga, Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 15, 5

6. *Dhammacakkapavattana sutta*, opening passage

7. *Aṭṭhakanipāta, Anguttara Nikāya*, 12



The First Discourse

hastens his disciples to adopt this Way immediately (*akaliko*), for one can attain to Worth in this very birth (*sanditthike*). And the Buddha's is not a vain promise, for he holds out his personal experience as a testimony. He invites every man to follow the Way as he did, and be convinced by himself.

In fact, his teachings are described as the "Come-and-See Doctrine" (*Ehipassikadhamma*). He presents his own experiences as a guide for the aspirant who has started wayfaring, in order to give him the initial start. Beyond this, the Way in no way depends on, or bears any relation to, the Buddha.

The way of life recommended by the Buddha, therefore, is strictly personal for every wayfarer, who must do all the travelling himself. It is entirely his own affair: there is no grace of God to save him, and the Buddha no longer exists to help him. But the great body of doctrines (*Dhamma*) which the Master has left behind in lieu of himself,⁸ and the letter as well as the spirit of which has been preserved with remarkable fidelity by countless generations of alert and energetic monks, serves as a light in which the wayfaring may be done. This

8. *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta* 6.1.1

doctrine is composed of theoretical matter (*pariyatti*) as well as instructions for practice (*paṭipatti*): the latter is more important than the former, which is but its handmaid. So, essentially, Buddhism is a method, a discipline, a way of life to be adopted and intensely pursued.

And it must be admitted that, for following the Way fully and rightly, one must necessarily be a monk, withdrawing himself completely from worldly affairs. It is probable that for a long time Buddhism as a way was confined to monastic groups of earnest devotees whose sole enthusiasm was for emancipation. What the Buddha taught to the laymen was just common ethics—the abstaining from killing, from theft, from false speech, from sexual misconduct, from intoxicating liquors; care of parents; following a clean vocation; and so on. The *Sigalovada sutta*, for instance, and the latter portion of *Dhammika sutta* detail a code of conduct a householder should follow; but there is nothing Buddhist about it. The gospel of the Buddha was meant for, and had a special message to, the few who renounced home for homelessness (*anagāriyam*) in order to strive effectively for “putting an end to sorrow completely” (*samma dukhass’antakiriya*).

Very revealing is the remark the Buddha makes:—

For all its crest and neck so blue
 the peacock ne'er can match in flight
 the swan, nor layman emulate
 an Almsman, when in lonesome wilds
 the Sage is plunged in Reverie.⁹

For the renunciant the Way is rigorous but methodical. It is designated as *bhāvana*, which is really a system functioning in two stages: cultivation of mental concentration (*samādhi*), and the development of clear insight into things as they are (*panna* or *vipassanā*). Prior to the first stage must be perfected the virtues (*sīla*), thus bringing under control mind and senses: this consists of proper speech, action and livelihood. Here the “whole heap of unwholesomeness” composed of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth—torpor, agitation—worry and perplexity,¹⁰ which obstructs the Way, is overcome. Mind prepared in this style must now be developed or cultivated so that the insight that is necessary for emancipation may dawn. This is the lifework of an ideal Buddhist monk. It consists of

9. *Munisutta, Sutta Nipāta*, I. 12.15 (Trs. by LORD CHALMERS : Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 37. p. 53)

10. Called Hindrances (*Nivaraṇas*) : *Kamacchanda, Vyāpada, Thinamidda, uddaccha kukucca, vicikiccha*. See NYANAPONIKA THERA : The five Mental Hindrances (Colombo)

strenuous endeavour to check the arising of evil not yet arisen, to defeat evil already arisen, to develop good not yet arisen and to cultivate good already arisen;¹¹ mindfulness (*sati*); and intent states of mind or concentration. Mindfulness takes the form of meditations, forty of which are mentioned and explained by Buddhaghosha in his great *Visuddhimagga*. This is the very essence of practical Buddhism. The setting up of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), which is the subject-matter of a sermon held in the highest esteem and studied with the closest attention by all serious monks in Burma and Ceylon, has been hailed by the Master as the only way for the purification of beings, for overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, and for the attainment of Nibbana.¹²

It was one of the meditations of mindfulness, viz., *ānāpānasati*, that brought about the enlightenment of Gotama himself and made him a Buddha. For a monk, it is said, there can be no greater friend than this mindfulness over bodily and

11. *Samvara, pahana, bhāvana and anurakkthna padhānas*

12. *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, Dīgha Nikāya*, 22. See BHIKKU SOMA : *the Way of Mindfulness* (Colombo 1949) and NYANAPONIKA THERA : *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (Colombo)

mental processes (*N'atthi etādisē mitto yathā kāyagata sati*).

Contingent on the vigour with which this practice is carried out, and also upon the ripening of one's good *kamma*, the liberating Wisdom arises. This is the penetrating insight into things as they really are (*yathabhūtañāna*), the deep realization that whatever springs up, *ipso facto*, subsides (*yam kinci samudāyadhammam sabbam tam nirodhadhammam ti*). Upon this realization sorrow is finally overcome, and *samsāra* (life in the world) loses its poignant edge. This wisdom is composed of right views in regard to the truth that all composed things are transitory, sorrow-ful and devoid of self, and of the right aspirations. When this knowledge takes hold of the wayfarer he is utterly indifferent to worldly affairs; he becomes passionless (*virāgo*). This is the decisive support (*upanissāyapaccaya*) for the occurrence of emancipation (*vimutti*).¹³

Thus the way of life demonstrated by the Buddha as the most effective is analyzable into three natural aspects: the practice of virtues (*sīla*), the practice of mind-control (*samādhi*) and the development of insight (*pañña*). The three aspects, as shown above, are composed of eight principles:

13. *Dasabalavagga, Saṃyutta Nikāya*, 3

right speech, right action, right livelihood (the *sīla* group); right endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration (the *samadhi* group); right views and right aspirations (the *paññā* group).¹⁴ The Way is therefore described as the Eightfold Path (*Atthangika magga*) and is hailed by the Buddha in the very first sermons as the “road leading to the suppression of sorrow”; and this is the fourth and the greatest of the four truths he discovered under the sacred *bodhi* tree.

This is the great Way recommended by the Buddha for the overcoming of the world's ills. It requires earnest devotion and great energy: it is, in fact, a struggle (*padhāna*). It brooks no sort of compromise with the ordinary worldly life; it demands full application, which only a renunciant can afford. And one who successfully completes the journey is truly a victor (*jina*), a worthy one (*arahat*). Such worthy ones are rare, rare as flowers on the *udumbara* tree.



14. The usual order however puts the last two before the rest

The Real Significance of “Friendliness” in Buddhism*

(Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao is a well-known scholar of Buddhist lore and a sincere practitioner of the Master's teachings. In this article he has written about the well-known quality of *mettā*, which is more than friendliness; it is a Compassion for all the different kingdoms of the entire universe. Whatever the discipline of the spiritual life, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or Muslim, Love and Compassion are regarded as the primary virtues to be cultivated, with the basis of *vairagya* or Dispassion. In the language of *The Voice of the Silence*, “Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of Laws—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shore-less universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal.” Every aspirant trying to live the Higher Life will find valuable ideas in this article.—ED.)

Of the ten lifelong vows a Buddhist monk is enjoined to observe the very first is the resolve not to injure life (*pāṇātipātā*). In the eightfold path formulated by the Buddha, the primary constituent of the step concerning “right actions” is this restraint from injuring life. For the unshakable deliverance of mind (*ceto-vimutti*), which is the goal of every Buddhist aspirant, the second obstacle (*nīvaraṇa*) to be overcome is ill-will (*vyāpāda*); and this is said to be overcome by the practice of

* The Aryan Path, February, 1958

“friendliness.” Among the seven stages of purity enumerated by the scholiasts, purification of mind (*cittavisuddhi*) figures prominently; and for the attainment of this, forty exercises are suggested, one group thereof being designated as “cultivation of sublime states”; here, of the four such states, the first one is *mettā*, or friendliness. And this is characterized as a quality that makes the Buddha (*buddhakāraḍhamma*), a state of perfection (*pāramī*) practised by all the Awakened Ones. In the little handbook,¹ which the earnest Buddhist uses daily, an important section pertains to “the discourse on friendliness.” Buddhaghosa, the eminent exegetist, devotes a long and inspiring section in his *Visuddhimagga* to the practice of *mettā*.² The *Jātaka* tales abound in episodes extolling this virtue. Even the *abhidhamma* metaphysics considers this as an “immeasurable” (*appamaññā*).

In a gospel that insists on turning one’s back on society, on an austere and severe mode of life and on the practice of secluded contemplation, it is not a little surprising that friendliness, which is the strongest cement in social relations, should figure so

1. *Khuddaka pāṭha* - The section in “*Metta sutta*”; this is also included in the *Sutta nipāta* collection.

2. Ch. 9 (*Brahmavihariniddeso*)

prominently. But its import is not social; the Buddha's approach to the problem of pain was not merely human. It is unjust to the stature of the Buddha to reduce him to the rank of a social thinker. He was, in fact, a preacher of the doctrine styled as "cross-current" (*paṭisota*, cross to the normal life of men. A suspicion leaks through the Pāli texts that the Sākyan sage, during at least the early years of his ministry, was to his contemporaries "a snatcher of sons, a maker of widows, a breaker of homes"—the allusion is to his call for "home-leaving" *pabbajja*). His early followers indeed were social run-aways; they wandered about without relations of whatever kind or dwelt in jungles, "bending their minds towards emancipation." They were, in the Master's own words, like uprooted palm trees.

The Buddha's offer to mankind was the possibility of leading a higher life—higher than household, higher than society. This higher life was characterized by freedom; freedom implied the elimination of all barriers, and affection verily is the strongest barrier. Of the three fires that continually burn mankind, this affectionate attachment (*rāga*) is the foremost; its accessories are mental clouding

(*moha*) and aversion (*dosa*). This threefold fire has to be quenched in order that the higher life may be lived. Affection in the sense of an attitude of mind that limits the sympathy, confines the attention, intensifies the feeling of dependence, has obviously no place in the programme for higher life. But aversion, too, is an ill that must needs be eliminated, and how can it be eliminated without recourse to affection? The very Pāli texts say that aversion is counteracted by the cultivation of friendliness (*mettabhāvanā*).

The Pali word for aversion is *dosa*; its equivalents are repugnance (*paṭigha*) and ill-will (*vyāpāda*). It is described as an unwholesome root. Ethically it is aversion, hate; but, on deeper analysis, it is the “violent striking of mind at an object.”³ Although physically and in a gross sense one who hates turns away from the object that he hates, psychologically it implies a violent approach. To counteract this, turning away (acts of renunciation often imply this) is no solution. The farther we attempt to run, the faster the mind sticks to what is left behind; pulling and pushing are not methods to tame the mind. The opposite of *dosa* is

3. *Vipassanādīpani* (Ledi Sayadaw)

adosa (non-aversion), or, to put it positively, *mettā* (in Sanskrit, *maitri*). The latter word is hard to translate: it means loving-kindness, sympathetic interest, friendliness, amity. Psychologically it is the "inclination of mind in the direction of the object." The approach aspect is still there, but there is no violence about it, no striking. It is interesting to note that its equivalent *avyāpāda* signifies peace of mind. The mind moves, but it is free of emotional content.

The cultivation of friendliness as a spiritual exercise is said to induce the first three of the four intent states of mental absorption (*jhāna*). In the first *jhāna*, the mind is dissociated from the object and its own craving; and there is instituted *pīti*, which term connotes joy, satisfaction, zest. A thirsty, weary traveller on a difficult road on a summer day finds himself on the banks of a rivulet of clear, cool water; and his satisfaction at this is *pīti*. In the second *jhāna*, *pīti* gives rise to *sukha* (enjoyment); in the above simile, the traveller's happiness when he has quenched his thirst and rested his limbs. The realization that even *pīti* is a distraction leads to the third *jhāna*, wherein *upekkhā* (equanimity, indifference) looms large. Thus the perfection of

friendliness eliminates both affection and interest. It is clear that the narrowing of attention to any particular object or group and the concentration of interest and sympathy on it are not what *mettā* signifies in Buddhism.

What then is the significance of *mettā*? The term is defined as intention to engender benefit and happiness (*hitasukhupanayanakamata*).⁴ Buddhaghosa explains that its practice stamps out repugnance (*paṭigha*) and stamps in forbearance (*khanti*).⁵ The latter, it is well known, is deemed the highest of penances: "a renunciant will neither strike nor trouble another."⁶ This wording, which belongs to the early strata of canonical composition, being employed originally as a *pātimokkha* text, is negative and this is significant. It does not suggest an ideal of positive social service or a deliberate attempt to promote the welfare of others; it is more a personal discipline. Among the benefits of the practice of *mettā*, as enumerated in an old non-canonical but celebrated tract, there is no mention of its effect on society, community or even household: "the

4. *Suttanipāṭatthakatha*

5. *Visuddhimagga*, Ch. 9, Sec. 2

6. *Dhammapada*, 184

practiser sleeps pleasantly, wakes up fresh, undisturbed by anxious dreams.”⁷

That the social ideal was not involved in the conception of *mettā* is further evident from the actual method of its practice as detailed by Buddhaghosa. At the very start (*sabbapaṭhamam*), the aspirant will confine his attention to himself, and, his entire body being bathed with thoughts of friendliness, he should wish well for himself: May I be happy, not troubled, without malice, without passion, without taint! May I carry myself well! Then in gradual measures he must extend the orbit of his friendliness to comprehend all men, all animals, all living creatures, all things that struggle with ego-feelings. Included, too, are plants and stones, here and elsewhere, for *mettā* must radiate all round, regardless of objects. The important process during this practice is “breaking down the lines of demarcation between individual entities” (*sīmasambhedana*).⁸

No doubt the welfare of society and mankind follows as a corollary from the successful practice of friendliness; but it must be recognized that it is not

7. *Milindapanho*, IV (*Mendakapanha* 16)

8. *Visuddhimagga*, Ch. 9, Sec-12

intended primarily to serve this end. The river is of course a great benefit to the people living along its banks; but does the river flow just for their sake? The gospel of Buddha is essentially for the individual: its aim is not to better man's role in society or to make him a more efficient social animal, but to improve the very nature of man in order that he may be freed from all ills, present and future. In this refinement of the human constitution, the outlook of unbounded affection and friendliness to everything around is a necessary ingredient. The Buddha's intent has aptly been expressed by one of his early followers, the forest-dwelling Revata:⁹

Since I left home in favour of the monk's life, I have not harboured a thought that is ignoble or fraught with hate. Creatures may die, prosper or suffer; but in this long interval, I have no thoughts whatever. I cherish the immeasurable friendliness that I have cultivated well—in stages as the Buddha taught. I am friend to all, and all living things I love, I make become the mood of friendliness; and ever I dwell with a peaceful mind.

These verses are included in the canonical collection of the poetic outbursts of early Buddhist monks, and here are the enchanting original lines:—

9. *Theragatha* (Khadiravaniya - Revata), 14-1-1

Yadā aham pabbajito agāasmā' nagāriyam,
 nābhinandāmi saṅkappam anariyam dosasamhitam.
 Ime hannantu vaddhantu dukkham pappontu pāṇino;
 saṅkappam n' ābhijānāmi imasmim digha-mantare.

Mettam ca abhijānāmi appamāṇam subhāvitam,
 anupubbam paricitam yathā Buddhena desitam.
 Sabbamitto sabbasakho sabbabhūtānukampako
 mettam cittam ca bhāvēmi abyāpajjarato sadā.

रेवतो थेरो

“यदा’हं पब्बजितो अगारस्मान’गारियम् ।
 ना’भिजानामि सङ्कप्पं अनरियं दोससंहितं ॥ १ ॥

इमे हज्जन्तु वज्जन्तु दुक्खं पप्पोन्तु पाणिनो ।
 सङ्कप्पं ना’भिजानामि इमस्मिं दीघम’न्तरे ॥ २ ॥

मेत्तञ्चा’भिजानामि अप्पमाणं सुभावितम् ।
 अनुपब्बं परिचितं यथा बुद्धेन देसितम् ॥ ३ ॥

सब्बमित्तो सब्बसखो सब्बभूता’नुकम्पको ।
 मेत्तं चित्तञ्च भावेमि अब्यापज्जरतो सदा ॥ ४ ॥



Takkasila and Nālanda*

(Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, a scholarly and devoted student of Buddhist philosophy and culture, outlines here the atmosphere and intellectual temper of the famous universities of what might be called the Buddhist period of Indian culture. Since they are institutions of largely secular learning, they are the nearer to our modern conditions, and set a standard to which many modern universities may well aspire.—Ed.)

I propose to invite readers' attention to a phase in the history of Indian education which, for want of a better name, may be designated as the "Buddhist period." This period marks the change-over from the *gurukula* system of education, which was prevalent during the Vedic ages, to the *vihāra* system. The transition is significant. For the *gurukula* system, household life was the basic structure: the students (all celibates) lived with the teacher in his home for years at a stretch; while the *vihāra* was an established monastic school where students (both monks and laity) gathered at regular periods for religious as well as secular education. In time, many of these *vihāras* became full-fledged educational centres celebrated all over the country and even abroad, like Valabhī, Odantapuri, Vikramaśilā,

* The Aryan Path, February, 1959

Mithila, Jāgaddalā; and a few of them reached to the status of large universities, such as Takkasila and Nālandā.

The *gurukula* was run by a single scholar who gathered round him a few earnest students; these students lived with the teacher and learnt more by example than by actual precept. Owing to intimate personal contact with the teacher, opportunity was provided for the development of the student's personality on sound lines. It could truly be said that the teacher and the taught constituted a single unit: we read in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, “*ācāryah pūrvarūpam, antevāsyuttararūpam, vidyā sandhiḥ.*” But the *vihāra* had numerous teachers and a large number of students. Also, the teachers being monks and the *vihāra* life being monastic, the non-residential lay students could neither emulate their teachers nor enter into personal contact with them. Thus the *vihāra* was an independent educational organization which brought together the teachers and the taught for a specific purpose during the appointed hours, much as our modern schools do.

There is another aspect in which the *vihāra* differed from the *gurukula*: *vihāras* provided facilities for secular education in a large measure. *Pāli* books

like *Mahāvagga* and *Jātaka* contain frequent references to subjects like weaving and spinning, tailoring, accountancy (gaṇana), lekha, painting, medicine (*āyurveda*), surgery (śalya), etc. included in the *vihāra* curriculum. Famous in this aspect was the University of Takkasila.

Takkasila (Sanskrit Takṣaśila), transcribed by the Greek and Roman writers as Taxila, was since very ancient times an important town in the Gandhara province to the northwest of India. Situated along the high road leading from Central Asia to India, it was well known as a commercial centre, and came under the influence of as many as seven political powers: Persians, Macedonians, Bactrian Greeks, Mauryas, Scythians, Parthians and Kushans. The last of the Kushan Kings, Vāsudeva, died in the third century and soon after, the importance of Takkasila declined. When, in the fifth century, the barbaric White Huns invaded the country, the destruction of Takkasila was complete. Fa Hien, who visited the place in the fifth century, found nothing worth mentioning, and Hiuen-Tsang in the seventh century found only the regrettable ruins of an important centre.

Takkasila as a University township has found mention in the epics and the *Jātaka* tales. We find that it was a centre of higher education, where large numbers of students, both princes and commoners, from all parts of India crowded to complete their education. Emphasis seems to have been placed here on secular education—among the subjects of study were *trayī* (the three Vedas). *Vedānta*, *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), training in the Greek warcraft, astronomy, agriculture and eighteen *sippas* (arts). The great grammarian Pāṇini and the eminent statesman Kauṭilya (Caṇakya) were students from Takkasila. The university was famous for medicine and surgery: Jīvaka Komarābhadda, a distinguished physician and surgeon during the Buddha's time, studied medicine in Takkasila for seven years and travelled all over the country to acquaint himself with herbs and medicinal plants. References are extant regarding his skill in operations on brain and intestines: he was invited to Ujjenī for medical consultation. Caraka, the father of Āyurveda, also seems to have been a resident of Takkasila. The importance of Takkasila as an educational centre dwindled after the fifth century. Unfortunately, details of the educational system and methods practised there are not available. Probably education

belonged to a domestic system—there does not seem to have been a centrally administered university.

Universities of this type were at Nālandā, Vikramaśilā and Odantapurī. Nālandā, in modern Bihar, was the most famous. And fortunately the travel diaries of the Chinese pilgrims Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing as well as numerous epigraphical notices have preserved for us details concerning this great experiment on the Indian soil.

Nālandā, represented today by the neglected village Bargoan in Bihar, known only to archaeologists for the ruins, was famous even during the days of the Buddha as a prosperous township. Both the Buddha and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra frequented this place. It was there that Sāriputta Thera, the most celebrated of the Buddha's disciples, was born, and over his *cetiya* the great Mauryan King Aśoka built a *vihāra*, which served as the nucleus for the later university. The tradition of Nālandā as an educational centre grew up in stages, and the first big effort towards founding a university was made during 440 A.D. by Kumāragupta I, son of the celebrated Vikramāditya (Chandragupta II). This Kumāragupta, who was a patron of art and letters and to whose court the poet Vasubandhu was

attached, was himself a Vaiṣṇava, but “respected and esteemed the law of the Buddha.” He built numerous buildings round the central *Sanghārāma*; and this work was continued by his successors Skandagupta, Puragupta and Narasimhagupta. “A long succession of kings continued the work of the building, using all the skill of the sculptor, till the whole building is truly marvellous to behold,” writes Hiuen-Tsang. Harṣa-Śīlāditya, the King of Central India, the Maukhari Kings and the Pālas contributed to the expansion and stabilization of this university.

Here was another feature of the changing methods of education. The *gurukula* was a cottage, a hermitage in a village or in a wilderness. But the *vihāras* had magnificent buildings attached to them. The Nālandā University had, according to *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, “hundreds of buildings.” Hiuen-Tsang speaks of seven *vihāras* and eight halls in Nālandā; I-tsing saw seven halls with three hundred apartments. An inscription speaks of “the series of cloud-kissing towers” of the main-building—*“vasyām āmbudharāvalehi śikharaśreni-vihārāvali-mālevordhva virājini.”* The Library was a special feature of the Nālandā University; for Nālandā was

known throughout Asia for its valuable collection of Mahāyāna texts and translations. The Library, named "Dharmaganja," was located in a special area and was housed in three spacious buildings: "Ratnasāgara," "Ratnodadhi," "Ratnaranjaka." The first was a nine-storied building. The students were accommodated in thirteen monasteries, ruins of which have now been excavated. Thus it was hardly an exaggeration when an inscription described Nālandā as "decorated by the ring of famous monasteries"—*Śrīmadvihāra-parihāravibhūṣita*.

Nālandā was a vast educational complex, celebrated throughout Asia, and it continued to be prosperous for about seven centuries. There were, according to Hiuen-Tsang, 10,000 resident scholars: 1,500 teachers and 8,500 students. There were students from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tukhara. I-tsing counted 56 scholars from abroad. Hiuen-Tsang himself was a resident student for five years, and I-tsing for ten years. A student from Nālandā was held in high esteem throughout the country and even abroad. Trained scholars like Śāntarakṣita, Padmasambhava, Kamalaśīla, Kumārajīva and Paramārtha went to Tibet and China, and contributed greatly to the dissemination

of Indian culture. Among teachers there were the most eminent in the land: Dharmapāla, Śīlabhadra, Guṇamati, Prabhāmitra, Dignāga and Rāhulabhadra. Even Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Nāgārjuna were associated with the Nalanda University.

It was essentially a post-graduate institution, although provision was made for primary (for students between eight and thirteen) and secondary (between thirteen and twenty) education. Admission was scrupulously restricted; rigorous oral entrance-examinations were conducted by the *dvārapaṇḍitas* (gate-professors), and not more than two or three out of ten could pass. Only the most brilliant and accomplished of the students could hope to enter the portals of Nālandā. Once the student was admitted, he was in for discipline of a severe kind. Hiuen-Tsang notes that during the several hundred years it endured Nālandā did not witness a single guilty rebellion. And the students who assembled here belonged to diverse schools and creeds and countries, but there was perfect harmony. A historian has aptly described Nālandā as “an experiment in liberality of teaching”—students discussed and disputed on an intellectual plane only, and differences did not jeopardize happy

human relations. The entire university lived and progressed as one family. It is interesting to note that the general affairs of the university were administered by a democratic body of the students themselves.

Although the university was nominally the centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it was in fact a temple of higher learning in all arts and letters known to the age. I-tsing mentions that the compulsory subjects taught included grammar and lexicography (*śabdavidyā*), arts and crafts (*śilpasthānavidyā*), the science of medicine (*cikitsāvidyā*), logic (*hetuvidyā*), and philosophy (*adhyātmavidyā*). Texts of the eighteen Hīnayana schools, Sāṃkhya, Yogaśāstra, astronomy and Tantras were also taught. Nālandā was the centre of the diffusion of Mahāyāna culture. In the Nālandā University were made a large number of excellent bronze images of Tantric deities connected with vajrayāna, tantrayāna and kālacakra. It directly influenced the art of Java.

The educational method was chiefly tutorial. Small groups of five or six students were under the care of a teacher. The students not only listened to the lectures of the most eminent professors in the

land (there were arrangements for a hundred lectures every day) and pored over the valuable texts in the library, but engaged themselves in continual discussions. The art of formal disputation played a leading role in the educational system at Nālandā. Sanskrit was the medium of instruction, and the contribution of Nālandā to the development of Sanskrit literature is immense.

The needs of the students in regard to boarding, lodging and clothing were looked after by the University; and the education was free. Towards the maintenance of this huge establishment went the revenue of about two hundred tax-free villages. The royal support and the public interest rendered the University self-sufficient and a rewarding place of higher learning and research, until the twelfth century, when the heartless Muslim invaders led by Bakhtiyar Khilji destroyed it completely. The buildings were razed to the ground, the library was burnt and the monks were massacred. But it should be noted with pride that Nālandā never declined: it died at the height of its glory.

There were, besides Takkaśilā and Nālandā, other centres of learning such as Valabhī in Western India, which had a leaning towards Hīnayāna;

Vikramaśīla near Nālandā, founded in the eighth century by King Dharmapāla; Jāgaddalā founded by Rāmapāla of Bengal in the eleventh century; and Odantapurī of the Pāla Kings. In all these, secular learning was at least as important as the sacred: often it was more important. The educational establishments of this period served their purpose exceedingly well; for in the stabilization, development and expansion of Indian culture their role is definite and significant.



An Analysis of Suffering*

(Our old friend, Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, Head of the Department of Psychology, All-India Institute of Mental Health, Bangalore, gives in this article a lucid account of the basic teaching in which the Compassion of the Enlightened One found practical expression.—ED.)

The Indian tradition describes the Buddha as an advocate of the analytical method (*vaibhajiya*), and this description is amply justified by the discourses preserved in the Pāli canon. His very first discourse, which was delivered in Banaras, is an excellent specimen of his consummate analytical skill. It is remarkable that this short speech, uttered 2,549 years ago, involves the fundamental principles of axiomatics so familiar to the scientific mind in the contemporary world. Shorn of the ethical and metaphysical ideas that were later read into the simple statements, the discourse formulates certain postulates, derived from observation and experience, and seeks to construct a theoretical structure explaining the interrelationship among the postulates.

It is also remarkable that the Buddha did not stop at mere intellectual edification: his interest was

* The Aryan Path, September, 1961

essentially pragmatic. He was moved by compassion for suffering humanity, and was in fact showing a method, a way, for the eradication of suffering. Thus the postulates that he enunciated have an operational aspect: the postulate is not merely a statement of facts but it indicates a necessary operation. The commentators have compared the Buddha's method to the physician's programme; they emphasize that diagnosis of a disease on the basis of symptoms is invariably attended by a prescription for the removal of symptoms. A postulate is thus both factual and functional.

Further, the Buddha carefully avoids impersonal abstraction in the postulates. A postulate, to be significant, must carry conviction concerning the possibility of effective application. The Buddha draws on his own personal experience and introduces a demonstrational aspect in the postulates: had he not himself, by his own effort, experienced the validity of the postulates? He not only understood the truth of the postulates and appreciated the necessity of particular operations with regard to them, but also put to the test in his own life those operations and obtained their fulfilment. He could thus speak with absolute authority about the postulates he had formulated.

In the discourse, he enunciates four postulates: (1) Suffering in life is a fact; (2) it originates under certain conditions; (3) it is eliminated under certain other conditions; and (4) there obtains a method by which it is eliminated. Basing himself on these postulates, the Buddha set out to teach this method for the benefit of mankind. Illustrating the Buddha's design, the second-century author of *Vimuttimaggā* (Upatissa) writes:—

Just as a skilful physician first sees the symptoms of a disease, then hears the cause of it, and then seeing the necessity of the cure of the disease prescribes a suitable medicine; so the four Truths may be known as coming in the same order.¹

It is not surprising that the Buddha is described in the ancient texts not as a philosopher but as a physician: his heart was troubled with the ills that mankind was heir to, and he did not care to theorize about them except in so far as the method of cure required a rational foundation. The importance of the Buddha to mankind is exquisitely illustrated by a venerable monk of Thailand:—

...the word Buddha is like a physician who removes the arrow of doubt. It is as though we have suffered from

1. Cited in P.V. BAPAT : *Vimuttimaggā* and *Visuddhimaggā* (Poona. 1937), P. 110



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a disease for many years and have tried many remedies, without success. Then we meet an able physician who tells us that he also used to suffer from the same disease, but by the taking of certain medicines he was cured, and further that he has given the same remedy to many others who suffered from this disease, and they also were cured. He then suggests that we take this medicine... so that we may become completely cured. In such a case, should we not obey him?.²

Having analyzed the problem of suffering in terms of the four postulates, the Buddha subjected each postulate to a further analysis into its triple aspects—factual (*sacca*), functional (*icca*) and demonstrational (*kata*)—mentioned above. He considered (in the ancient expression “turned over in his mind,” *parivaṭṭa* from the root *vr̥t*, “to turn,” “to proceed”) the four postulates in their three aspects, thus obtaining twelve propositions (*ākāras*).³

- I. (1) Suffering in life is a fact.
- (2) Suffering in life as a fact must be understood.
- (3) Suffering in life as a fact was understood (by me).

2. CHAO KHUN UPALI GUNUPAMACARIYA SIRICANDO : “Meditation for calm and insight” *The Middle Way*, 1961, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, pp. 127-133

3. “Tiparivaṭṭam, dvādasākāram.”



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- II. (4) Suffering originates under certain conditions.
 - (5) The origination of Suffering must be overcome.
 - (6) The origination of Suffering was overcome (by me).
- III. (7) Suffering is eliminated under certain other conditions.
 - (8) The elimination of Suffering must be realized.
 - (9) The elimination of Suffering was realized (by me).
- IV. (10) There obtains a method by which Suffering is eliminated.
 - (11) The method for the elimination of Suffering must be cultivated.
 - (12) The method for the elimination of Suffering was cultivated (by me).

It can be seen that each of the four postulates has three aspects, and each aspect, from application to four postulates, has four propositions. In terms of the three aspects, viz., (a) the factual (or the Fact), (b) the functional (or the Task) and (c) the demonstrational (or the Accomplishment) the propositions may be summarized thus:—

- I. (a) Suffering (*dukkham*).
 (b) Suffering to be understood (*pariññeyyam*).
 (c) Suffering understood (*pariññātam*).
- II. (a) Origination of Suffering (*dukkhasamu-dayam*).
 (b) Origination of Suffering to be overcome (*pahātabbam*).
 (c) Origination of Suffering overcome (*pahīnam*).
- III. (a) Elimination of Suffering (*dukkhanirodham*).
 (b) Elimination of Suffering to be realized (*sacchikātabbam*).
 (c) Elimination of Suffering realized (*Sacchikatam*).
- IV. (a) The method of Elimination (*dukkhanirodha-gāminīpaṭipadā*).
 (b) The method of Elimination to be cultivated (*bhāvitabbam*).
 (c) The method of Elimination cultivated (*bhāvitam*).

There is an alternate rearrangement of the propositions suggested by the scholiasts, in terms of the three “revolutions in the Master’s mind (*parivarta*), the same as the aspects:—

I. The First Revolution (The Facts):

- (a) Suffering.
- (b) Origination.
- (c) Elimination.
- (d) The Method of Elimination.

II. The Second Revolution (The Tasks):

- (a) To be understood.
- (b) To be overcome.
- (c) To be realized.
- (d) To be cultivated.

III. The Third Revolution (The Accomplishments):

- (a) Understood.
- (b) Overcome.
- (c) Realized.
- (d) Cultivated.

The Buddha claimed competence to teach this gospel because he had understood what was to be understood, overcome what had to be overcome, realized what was to be realized and cultivated what was to be cultivated—and thus was a Buddha.⁴

4. "Abhiññeyyam abhināñātam, bhāvitabbam ca bhāvitam
Pahātabbam Pahīnam me, tasmā buddhosmi, brāhmaṇa"

Suffering, or rather the removal of Suffering, forms the leit-motif of the Buddha's gospel; and it is certainly significant that the very first of his utterances was so thoroughly preoccupied with Suffering. He had no doubt been absolutely emancipated from all Suffering when he obtained the Enlightenment in Gaya; but he was made alive to the phenomenon of Suffering in the world, and he expected every one of his disciples to turn out to be, like himself, an "ender of Suffering."⁵

It was thus but natural that Buddhist thought, at least during its early phases, was concerned primarily with Suffering and its analysis, analysis as preliminary to its removal. The ancient collection of thirty treatises, known as "The Path to Analysis" (*"Paṭisambhidhāmagga"*), included in *Sutta piṭaka*, takes up the topic (*paṭiniddesa*) of Suffering for definition, description and analysis, closely following the enumeration in the First Discourse.⁶ Each of the four postulates in this account is explained as having four characteristics, thus making sixteen descriptive definitions:—

5. Hence his exhortation : *Dukkhaṃ antakaro bhava*

6. For an exposition of this account, If. LEDI SAYADAW : *Catusaccadīpanī*, Eng. trans. The Light of the Dhamma (Burma), Vol. 5, No. 4 and Vol. 6, No. 1

I. Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of being oppressive (*pīḷana*);
- (b) has the characteristic of being generated by a set of conditions (*saṅkhata*);
- (c) has the characteristic of burning up (*santāpa*);
- (d) has the characteristic of incessantly changing (*vipariṇāma*).

II. Origination of Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of organizing the predisposing factors (*āyūhana*);
- (b) has the characteristic of continuous loading (*nidāna*);
- (c) has the characteristic of engendering association with Suffering (*saṃyoga*);
- (d) has the characteristic of obstructing freedom from Suffering (*palibodha*).

III. Elimination of Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of freeing one from Suffering (*nissarṇa*);
- (b) has the characteristic of freeing one from disturbances (*paviveka*);

- (c) has the characteristic of a condition which no longer dissolves or disintegrates (*amata*);
- (d) has the characteristic of not being generated by a set of conditions (*asamkhata*).

IV. The Method of Eliminating Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of tending towards freedom from Suffering (*niyyāna*);
- (b) has the characteristic of bringing about the state of Arahattā (*hetu*);
- (c) has the characteristic of affording insight into the reality (*dassana*);
- (d) has the characteristic of mastering oneself (*ādhipateyya*).

We see from the above table that Postulate I and Postulate III refer to exactly opposite phenomena; and Postulate II and Postulate IV refer to exactly opposite processes. Postulates I and II pertain to the actual world of common human beings; whereas Postulates III and IV envisage a possibility, an ideal state. Postulate I is necessarily implied in the rationale of every Indian religious

system or philosophical discipline; and Postulate III is the goal of all religious life in India; at any rate it is the ideal held out by the *Upaniṣads* and in the Jaina system. These two postulates in fact belong to the pre-Buddhist tradition, and the Master had already absorbed them during his pre-bodhi days. Postulates II and IV represent the Buddha's original contribution to Indian culture, the former being his philosophical standpoint and the latter his religious system.

It is significant that in this ancient axiomatics happiness (*sukha*) is not mentioned as an opposite of Suffering or as an ideal state for aspiration. In the Buddha's scheme of analysis happiness is not a reality at all; Suffering is the reality, but when it is eliminated we find quiet, wisdom and freedom as positive gains—and not happiness. Postulate III, which refers to the precise opposite of Suffering, is said to be equivalent to Nibbāṇa, and its characteristic is described as "Quiet" (*santi*).⁷ The Buddha's ideology recognizes only the elimination of Suffering, and not the generation of happiness here or hereafter.

7. BUDDHAGHOSA : *Visuddhimagga* (Ed. D. Kosambi), 16, 66 (p.355)

What, now, is Suffering? It is a phenomenon which is universal in its occurrence (*sabbasattasādhāraṇa*), and is readily identifiable (*suviññeyya*) by its characteristic of causing discomfort, trouble (*bādhana*). It is felt as “burning heat” (*santāpana*) and it excites the organism to activity (*pavatti*). The medieval scholiast, Buddhaghosa, derives the Indian word for Suffering, *dukkha*, from two concepts: bad (*kucchita*) and vulgar (*tuccha*). The ancient expositions liken Suffering to “burden,” to “disease.” The First Discourse itself offers illustrations: the process of being born, getting old and worn out, decay and death, illness, association with the undesirable, dissociation from the desired, failure to obtain the aspired object. These are included in the category of “Objective Suffering” (*vatthudukkha*), while the category of “Subjective Suffering” (*sabhāvadukkha*) includes feelings of misery, agitation, moods of depression and so on.⁸ In any case, Suffering is natural to beings as well as thoroughly undesirable.

Origination is defined by the eminent Burmese scholar-monk, Ledi Sayadaw, as “the cause of ever continuing this psychophysical process of

8. UPATISSA : *Vimuttimaggā*, 602 (BAPAT, Op. cit)

experience”;⁹ and it is equated with craving (*taṇhā*), which is recurrent. Craving is the deep-seated organismic urge expressing itself as pre-disposing tendencies and instincts. Its essential characteristic is “production” (*pabhāva*) of conditions and states, which tend to form unbroken series (*anupaccheda*). It is unitary as “egoity” (*abhimāna*) but assumes a threefold form as attachment–aversion–ignorance. The ancient expositions liken origination to “the taking up of a burden” or to “the cause of a disease.”

Elimination of Suffering has the character of “quiet” (*santi*) and is tantamount to *Nibbāṇa*. The word for elimination (*nirodha*) is explained by Buddhaghosa as “the absence of the flood (*rodha*) of Suffering”; it is cessation (*atthagama*), detachment (*virāga*), freedom from craving (*mutti*) and getting uprooted from the normal world of craving and Suffering (*anālayo*). This state is likened to “putting down the burden” or to “the cure of the disease.” But is this merely a happy dream of a desolate soul? Is it unreal like the horns of a hare? It is of course not a reality for the worldlings; but it

9. Op. cit

becomes a reality when one undertakes to shake off the Suffering, understand the Origination, appreciate the Elimination and apply oneself to the Method. The Method is what leads to an expected end (*niyyāna*); and it is likened to “the technique of putting down the burden” or to “the therapeutics.”



The Way of the Cynics*

(This short article has a message—not especially and only for the India of today, influenced by the pleasure-loving West, but for the world as a whole surfeited with the attractions of hedonism. Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao of the Institute of Science at Bangalore has done well to point to the message of frugal living which stresses the importance of *ponos*, *tapas*, the polishing and mellowing of mind by *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*—Practice and Detachment.—Ed.)

The emphasis on virtue as an essential ingredient of human happiness is universal, but the fact that simplicity is a form of virtue is not so unreservedly accepted. Nations differ on this point. India, for instance, has for ages adhered to the doctrine that simplicity is the equivalent of godliness. In the West, however, philosophy generally is regarded as more intellectual than practical or humane; and apparently simplicity signifies little except in academic ethical discussions. The western zeal for a “richer, fuller life” is usually traced to the vigorous worldly philosophy of the later, pleasure-loving Greeks, who were the intellectual forerunners of western civilization. The Greeks were, no doubt, prosperous in most respects

* The Aryan Path, March, 1954

and looked on life with a gay smile of irrepressible optimism. But they were certainly not oblivious of the part of simplicity in conducing to happiness: Socrates himself was a classical example of frugality; and it is interesting to note that one of his followers, Antisthenes, lead a band of enthusiasts inspired by his life and teachings who pursued a simplicity which verged on asceticism. Although they were never very popular, being regarded at first, perhaps, as queer and eccentric specimens who never completely succeeded in their mission, their ideals have guided for centuries the footsteps of many an earnest human being.

The Grecian devotees of the simple life were called Cynics, possibly connoting their admiration for the mode of life of the dog in contrast to that of pleasure-loving and self-indulgent men. In dogs, it is said, they perceived four great virtues; indifference as to their way of life, absolute disregard for public opinion, guarding the person and property of whoever trusts them and discrimination between friends and foes. These Cynic philosophers, with a strange fortitude, resolved to emulate these virtues; pleased with whatever might come their way, going about

barefoot, eating and making love in public, wandering about at all seasons of the year with the barest minimum of garments, eschewing shame and dignity, regardless of censure or praise and guarding the tenets of their philosophy with unswerving fidelity. Contentment and cool equanimity were their watchwords. The perversities of fortune never perplexed them, for they never sought fortune. Suffering and privation they endured without a murmur and even gladly welcomed them for the schooling they gave in the hard ascetic discipline. They are said to have admired in Socrates the spirit of endurance, in Diogenes the spirit of utter indifference, in Crates continence and in Zeno hardihood. Heracles with his courage and vitality, endurance and adventure, was their hero.

This Cynic philosophy was made popular by Diogenes of Sinope, whom Plato described as "Socrates gone mad." He was in fact a pupil of Antisthenes, who was the pupil of Socrates. Diogenes, in acknowledging inspiration from Socrates, singled out mainly the master's simplicity of life and made that the dogma of his school. His rule of life was asceticism; his gospel was to shed the artificialities of convention, tradition, fashion

and passion from human life so as to make it more natural. After all, life belongs to nature and therefore should be lived according to nature. He cursed politics, admired liberty, and proclaimed himself a "citizen of the world." His mission in life was to alter the current modes of living by instituting the practice of virtue in place of pleasure-seeking in the scheme of men's lives. Crates was the most famous of his disciples. He was heir to great wealth but gave it up in preference for a Cynic's simple life. "Like Heracles," he declared, "I march and fight against lusts..... I am the deliverer of mankind and healer of men's woes." Plutarch tells us that Crates "passed his whole life jesting and laughing, as though on a perpetual holiday." Crates characterized himself as a scout of God, a schoolmaster of humanity, a citizen of the lands of obscurity and poverty, impregnable to fortune, perfectly free and therefore absolutely happy.

A pupil of Crates was Zeno, celebrated for his riddles. As a Stoic he furthered the Cynic philosophy and propounded its ethical doctrine by the Socratic method. He defined the end of human life as "life in accordance with nature," which is

tantamount to saying life in accordance with virtue, i.e., with frugality, continence, simplicity and endurance. He used logic to show how the Cynic ideals agreed with macro-cosmic principles. Ariston, also a Cynic, differed from Zeno in that he stressed a life of "complete indifference to everything between virtue and vice"; he equated philosophy with ethics. Normally we find persons being trained, by themselves or by others, to play certain roles and specialize in certain character-parts; but philosophy should train a person to enact well any role assigned to him. In other words, one should be a Cynic to occupy any station in life with equanimity and efficiency.

Cynicism, by emphasizing asceticism, tended to turn the enthusiast's mind away from worldly pursuits, and sometimes even from social and civic obligations; it also instilled an aversion for the wealthy class. Diogenes was exiled and he relished this independence: it was he who coined the expression "kosmopolites" to denote world-citizenship. With this international outlook, indifference to the factors of social and communal solidarity, and contempt for conventions, the Cynics alienated the sympathy of the ruling class as well as

that of the aristocrats. In due course, by the end of the third century, the movement had faded out, although its basic ideas were absorbed and assimilated by Stoicism.

In the following we find an elegant apologia for the benefits of virtue as set forth in Cynicism: Actual life is more important than intellectual adventures: it is the business of philosophy as of science, not to arrange our thoughts or develop talents, but to help us to lead happy lives. Men, in their folly, mistake pleasures for happiness. Pleasures (*hedone*) forge for us fetters and make us slaves of impulses and conventions; in the end grief is the out-come. Virtue, on the other hand, delivers us from sorrow and in this lies happiness. Virtue therefore should be our objective. The path of virtue is hard and demands self-restraint, discipline and the power of endurance. Unremitting *ponos*, roughly equivalent to the Sanskrit *tapas* (mortification), is an indispensable aid to virtue. *Ponos* and *hedone* are eternal opposites: most men choose the latter for it is easier to do so and it gives an immediate illusion of happiness; but wise men always choose the former for the satisfaction it gives is unshaken by vicissitudes. Mental equipoise must never be made

to depend upon physical comforts, for, upon loss of the latter the former would be lost too. Men must learn to be independent and self-reliant. This requires practice, toil, and the will to achieve and in this virtue consists. Virtue is its own reward and sure happiness (*endaimonia*) radiates from it naturally.

All this reads like a chapter from Indian philosophy. What was but one minor school of thought in Greece has been our national genius. But the rising tide of the mundane ideology of our contemporary civilization appears to be enveloping Indian life and we stand close to the loss of our souls. The thought that from the robust, prosperous and pleasure-loving Greeks there arose a cry of discontent and a feeling of distrust for worldly abundance should be for us opportunely instructive. How would it profit us if we gained everything else and in the process lost ourselves?



A Brief survey of Buddhist Pāli Literature

The earliest and most authentic information about the Buddha and his philosophy can be got from the Pāli texts. The Pāli is derived from the Māgadhi which was the language of the common people in Magadha during the time of the Buddha (6th century BC)

The Pāli canonical literature can broadly be grouped under three Piṭakas or Baskets (Tipiṭaka), namely **Vinaya Piṭaka**, **Sutta Piṭaka** and **Abhidhamma Piṭaka**. All these Piṭakas contain different texts, some of which appear very ancient, and some others seem to be comparatively recent compilations.

The **Vinaya Piṭaka** gives the rules and regulations which are to be followed by the Bhikkus and Bhikkunis (monks and nuns). It consists of three sections:

1) *Sutta Vibhanga*— a catalogue of sins which are Major (*Pārajika Pāli*), or Minor (*Pacittiya Pāli*)

2) *Khaṇḍaka* (treatises giving a detailed code of duties enjoined upon monks) which again are

grouped into two divisions *Mahāvagga Pāli* (greater section) and *Cūlavagga Pāli* (smaller section) which also contains a history of the various Councils supposed to have been summoned after the death of the Buddha.

3) *Parivāra*: an epitome or concise summary of the other books in the Vinaya Piṭaka.

The nucleus of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is the *Pātimokkha*, the list of transgressions against the rules of discipline along with their proper atonement. This is recited by monks and nuns on every *uposatha* day (day of fasting, every fortnight)

The *Sutta Piṭaka* (the Basket of Discourses) which gives in a popular form the teachings of the Buddha consists of five great *Nikāyas* or Collections:

1) *Dīgha Nikāya*— collection of long discourses is arranged in three *vaggas* or series. One of the most important texts in this collection is the *Mahā-Parinibbāṇa-sutta*.

2) *Majjhima Nikāya*— collection of medium length discourses.

3) *Samyutta Nikāya*— collection of various sayings.

4) *Anguttara Nikāya*— the longest book dealing with the psychology and ethics of Buddhism, and

5) *Khuddaka Nikāya*— (a Division of small books) a collection of texts not included in the previous collections.

The *Khuddaka Nikāya* consist of Fifteen Books namely:

i. *Khuddaka Pāṭha*— small passages

ii. *Dhammapada*— Way of Righteousness, which is the most popular among the Buddhist Scriptures.

iii. *Udāna*— pithy sayings or Solemn Utterances of the Buddha.

iv. *Iti Vuttaka*— composed around 400 BC contains various passages, each leading to a profound saying of the Buddha. Each passage begins with the words—*Iti Vuttam Bhagavatā* (thus spoke the Buddha).

v. *Sutta Nipāta*— collected discourses, an important work containing accounts of three important incidents in the life of the Buddha, his renunciation of the world and his conversation with King Bimbisāra, the great temptation by Māra and

the visit by Sage Asita to the infant Bodhisattva and his prophecy.

vi. Vimāna Vatthu—story of celestial mansions.

vii. Peta Vatthu— stories of petas (wandering ghosts, pretas).

viii. Theragātha— outpourings in verse of the Theras (Elders, numbering about 264).

ix. Therigatha— Psalms of the Sisters. Both this and the preceding contain poems of high literary merit.

x. Jātaka— stories of the former births of the Buddha, or Bodhisattva as he was called before Enlightenment. It is a collection of about 550 stories. The *Nidāna-Katha* is an introductory commentary giving an account of the life of the Buddha until the opening of the Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti.

xi. Niddesa— expositions, said to be the work of Sāriputta.

xii. Paṭisambhidā— analytical knowledge.

xiii. Apādana— lives of arahants.

xiv. *Buddhavamsa*— the history of the Buddha, and

xv. *Cariya Piṭaka*— modes of conduct, containing 35 tales from the Jataka in verse.

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* which gives the teachings of the Buddha in a scholastic and technical manner reflects the philosophical and psychological speculations in Buddhism. This consist of seven treatises:

i. *Dhammasaṅgahaṇī*—enumeration of states of mind reached by religious people.

ii. *Vibhaṅga*— the book of divisions.

iii. *Dhātukathā*— dealing with the bases of character.

iv. *Puggalapannatti*— dealing with the identification and classification of individuals.

v. *Kathā Vatthu*— dealing with points of controversy, compiled around 250 BC by Tissa, son of Moggali at the court of King Aśoka.

vi. *Yamaka*— the book of the Pairs, and

vii. *Paṭṭhāna*— the book of Relations.

Some of the other important texts not included in the above groups are:

1. *Milinda Panho* which is a work of the 1st century AD, and is a dialogue between the great Buddhist philosopher Nāgasena and the Greek King Menander.

2. *Visuddhimagga* which is composed by Buddhaghosa who lived in the 4th century AD, and went to Sri Lanka during the time of King Mahānāma to translate the Buddhist texts in Sinhalese back to Pāli.

3. *Vimuttimagga*, the Path to Freedom was written in the 1st century AD by the Venerable Upatissa Thera. The original text is no longer extant, but has been translated into Pāli from a 6th century Chinese translation known as Gedatsu Do Ron.

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The trust was founded about a year after the death of Prof. Rao by his family members with these objectives:

- To obtain recording of his lectures delivered at various places and on various occasions, and convert them into CDs. So far we have brought out more than 25 audio CDs on topics such as Bhagavad gita, Vedas, the three Acharyas, Purandara dasa, Sankaracharya's philosophy, Ayurveda, etc.
- Prof. Rao was conducting classes at his residence for many decades on scriptures such as Upanishads, Bhagavad gita, Brahmasutras, and so on. These are also being converted to CDs. The CDs on Brahmasutras, Mandukya Upanishad, Yoga sutras of Patanjali and Gita vivritti are available now.
- Many of Prof. Rao's books are out of print. The Indian Books Centre, Delhi is reprinting about six of them such as Durga kosha, Lalita kosha, Siva kosha, the Tantra of Sri Chakra, Sāligrama kosha and Vrکشayurveda,.
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