

ISSN: 0025 0406

The Maha Bodhi

2564 B.E., Vol. 127, No.1, September 2020

“Go Ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.

- Mahavagga, Vinaya Pitaka

Editor-in-Chief

Ven. P. Seewalee Thero

Editors

Hemendu Bikash Chowdhury

Dr. Bimalendra Kumar

Editorial Advisory Board

Prof. Charles Willemen, Belgium

Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne, Sri Lanka

Prof. G. A. Somaratne, Hong Kong

Prof. Sanghasen Singh, India

Prof. D. K. Barua, Kolkata, India

Prof. K.T.S. Sarao, Delhi, India

Prof. Baidyanath Labh, Nalanda, India



Maha Bodhi Society of India

Sri Dharmarajika Chetiya Vihara

Headquarters : 4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street,

Kolkata 700 073, India, Tel : 033 2241 5214

Email : mbsihq@gmail.com / mbsi.ipmd@gmail.com

Website: www.mbsiindia.org

Published by:
Maha Bodhi Society of India,
4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street,
Kolkata 700 073.
Tele: 033-2241 5214
Email: mbsihq@gmail.com
mbsi.ipmd@gmail.com

Note: Contributors of the articles are solely responsible for contents in the same.

Printed at
Rohini Nandan
19/2, Radhanath Mallick Lane
Kolkata 700 012, Mob: 9231508276
Email : rohininandanpub@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

Bodhisattva Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, started this journal - The Maha Bodhi in the month of May 1892. Since then over One hundred twenty five years have passed. This journal have seen many ups and down but still it serves the Buddhist community all over the world with firm determination and selfless dedication by spreading useful knowledge about Buddha and his teachings and all allied topics. Anagarika Dharmapala's aim in starting this journal was to reach as much as people possible so that Buddhist idea of love and compassion will spread and he has planned the projects with a vision and care so much so his noble efforts have continued for over a century.

All the eminent editors who took over the journal after him followed his ideal and the style of presentation in every possible way. They too have laboured a lot to fulfil the founder's aspiration with devotion.

The last issue was published on the occasion of the 2563rd Buddha Jayanti celebration on 18th May 2019, which contained 18 articles on various aspects of Buddhism and related fields. It was widely acclaimed by readers all over the country.

The present issue is being released on the occasion of 156th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala. It contains scholarly articles on Buddha, Buddhism and related topics by eminent monks and academics from various part of the country as well as from abroad. This also contains some important articles on Anagarika Dharmapala published earlier in the Maha Bodhi Journal, considering its valuable contents. We hope our readers will benefit from the reading these articles.

We hope to receive constant encouragement from readers as well as patrons to make the future issues of the journal contribute positively to Buddhist Studies in general and make them reach international standard.

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam

CONTENTS

WOMEN IN BUDDHISM : A CAMPAIGN FOR LIBERATION OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD	
Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh	7
HUMAN DHARMA OF THE BUDDHA : A GLIMPSE	
Sanjib Kumar Das	19
STRIVING FOR A BETTER SOCIETY: THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA WAY - AN APPROACH TO INDIAN SOCIETIES IN THE 19TH CENTURY	
Prof. Suniti Kumar Pathak	30
MEDITATION AND VIPASSANA IN PALI LITERATURE	
Dr. Vijay Kumar Singh	33
LIFE OF BUDDHA IN ASVAGHOSA'S LITERATURE: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW	
Dr. Sumanapal Bhikkhu	37
NAGARJUNA, SHUNYATA AND ANATMAN	
Dr. Amartya Kumar Bhattacharya	44
BUDDHISM IN VIETNAM IN THE BEGINNING OF CENTURIES	
Bui My Diem Loan	60
LIFE SKETCH OF DEVAMITTA DHARMAPALA "Upasika"	66
THE LAST HOURS OF THE LATE VENERABLE SRI DEVAMITTA DHAMMAPALA	
Brahmachari Devapriya Valisinha	73
DHARMAPALA'S NEW BUDDHISM AND YOUNG ASIA	
Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar	77
ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA: THE LION OF LANKA	
Anagarika Priyadarsi Sugatananda	79

WOMEN IN BUDDHISM: A CAMPAIGN FOR LIBERATION OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

Dr. Arvind Kumar Singh

Today, when the role of Women in Society is an issue of worldwide interest it is opportune that we should pause to look at it from a Buddhist perspective. It seems, therefore, justified to raise again the question whether the status and position of women during Buddha's time was better than that of other societies. The status and position of women has been a subject of considerable interest in recent decades. In all societies, particularly in the West, there has been a rethinking of the position accorded to women in all spheres of activity. This reappraisal has also touched on the question of the position accorded to women in the main religious traditions of the world. It is therefore opportune to consider the place accorded to women in Buddhism. Recently, there are several books devoted to discuss this theme, however, it seems to be a long standing controversial without final judgment. It really deserves a separated, scholarly and earnest study.

First is the negative teaching of the Buddha about womenfolk that, more or less, was affected by the patriarchal and hierarchical culture of the time and the asceticism that was adopted by the Buddha on the way of his quest to liberation. Second are the rational teachings of the Buddha and their significance to the womenfolk. It is believed that the Buddha was a social reformer and not only a liberator who fought for the equality of caste system but also a women emancipator. Others point out the Buddha's teachings show to be misogynous

doctrine and the Buddha was a misogynist. No doubt, '*Status and Position of Women at the Time of the Buddha*' is a very interesting theme. It was during the time of the Buddha the status and position of women grew up and he done what would have then been a radical statement on the potential of women. Marriage was no more compulsory but a secular, social contract with clear rights and duties of the contracting parties.¹ A daughter was considered as good as a son and shared equally in the intellectual life of the community.² Through the forceful advocacy of the Buddha's foster mother, women gained entry into the monastic life. They flocked from all classes of society to embrace the new life open to them. Thus, women assumed equal status and position in the socio-religious pursuits. The establishment of female's order in Buddhism was a landmark not only for being the first female monastic order but also laying the trail for the long line of women ascetics and religious leaders.

Women in Pre-Buddhist India: A Brief Survey

The status and position of women in ancient India particularly during the *Vedic period* (1500-1000 BCE) was of equal status with men in every field, such as education, politics, society, economics and religion.³ They were treated with dignity and respect. In the later period after 800 B.C. ancient society in India marked by the curtailment of freedom for women and saw the rise of rigid social divisions such as caste. There are various theories on how women lost their

*Dr. Singh is Assistant Professor, School of Buddhist Studies & Civilization; Gautam Buddha University, Yamuna Expressway, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Greater Noida, UP.

social status in this devastating period. They seem to have held an extremely subordinate place in the society. They spent their lives as serving their parent in young age, husbands and his family and sons in old age. Their rights were limited either at home or outside society, in politics, economic, education as well as in religious rituals⁴. Household works seemed to be the only job they could do, had to marry the husband chosen for her by parents and child marriage emerged.⁵ In all their roles, women were less powerful than men. Women were lowered nearly to the point of being mere chattel as Janice Willis says, “They were helpmates at best and burdens at worst, but always they were viewed as being inferior, second class citizens.”⁶

The social attitude towards women in pre-Buddhist days can be traced from the early Vedic literature, such as the *R̥g Veda*. There is evidence indicating the honour and respect which women received in their homes. In the realm of religion, too, they had access to the highest knowledge of the Absolute or Brahma. However, such a liberal attitude towards women changed with the course of time, under the influence and dominance of the priestly class with their priest crafts, animal sacrifices, and other ritualistic practices. New interpretations were given to the scriptures. Women came to be considered as greatly inferior to men, both physically and mentally. A woman was looked down upon as a mere possession or a thing. Her place was the home, under the complete whims and fancies of her husband. She not only had to perform all the domestic chores, but also had to bring up a large family. Some of the priestly class Brahmins married and lived with their wives yet regarded food cooked by women as impure and unfit to eat. A myth was built up that all women were regarded as sinful and the only way to keep them out of mischief was to keep them endlessly occupied with the task of motherhood and domestic duties.

The Buddha and Women: Age of Liberation

It is not suggested that the Buddha inaugurated a campaign for the liberation of Indian womanhood. But he did succeed in creating a minor stir against Brahman dogma and superstition. He condemned the caste structure dominated by the Brahman, excessive ritualism and sacrifice. He denied the existence of a Godhead and emphasized emancipation by individual effort. The basic doctrine of Buddhism, salvation by one’s own effort, presupposes the spiritual equality of all beings, male and female. This should mitigate against the exclusive supremacy of the male. It needed a man of considerable courage and a rebellious spirit to pronounce a way of life that placed woman on a level of near equality to man. The Buddha saw the spiritual potential of both men and women and founded after considerable hesitation the Order of *Bhikkhūṇīs* or Nuns, one of the earliest organizations for women. The Buddhist community consisted of the *Bhikkhus* (Monks), *Bhikkhūṇīs* (Nuns), laymen and laywomen so that the women were not left out of any sphere of religious activity. The highest spiritual states were within the reach of both men and women and the latter needed no masculine assistance or priestly intermediary to achieve them. We could therefore agree with I. B. Horner when she says Buddhism accorded to women a position approximating to equality.⁷

Once the order of *Bhikkhūṇīs* was founded a large number of distinguished women from various social backgrounds came to adorn this Order, attracted by the power of the Buddha’s teaching and the freedom which the new Order offered them. Many of these *Bhikkhūṇīs* attained to the supreme bliss of enlightenment. The stories, sayings and deeds of these distinguished *Bhikkhūṇīs* are recorded in many places in the Pali Canon, most notably in the *Therīgāthā*, a compilation of verses uttered by these Theris when they saw the clear light of the Dhamma,

and which constitutes a part of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Amongst those in the *Udāna* are recorded in the *Therigāthā* are some of the best known names in early Buddhism. They include Prajapati Gotami, who was the first *Bhikkhuni*, Uppalavanna and Khema, who are traditionally regarded as “foremost of the *Bhikkhunis*”, Kisgotami and Patacara, who figure in the best known stories in early Buddhism. The members of the order belonged to all walks of life. Some were former courtesans like Ambapāli and Vimala, others were of royal lineage like Sumedha and Sela. There were distinguished exponents of the Dhamma like Dhammadinna, scions of noble or merchant families like Bhadda Kuṇḍalika, Sujāta, and Anopama, not to mention those of humbler origins like Punika the slave girl, or Chanda the daughter of a poor Brahmin. The actual numbers of Theris involved is not known. Patacara is credited with having 500 personal followers, and there are several unnamed Theris to whom sayings are attributed. The accomplishment of these Theris of old is that they gave living proof of the Buddha’s utterance in the *Samyutta Nikāya*: *yassa etādisam yānam, ittiyā purisassa va; sa ve etena yānena, nibbanasseva santike ti* which connotes “This is the only vehicle, Be it a woman or be it a man; The one who takes this vehicle, Can reach the peace of *Nibbāna*” where the chariot referred to is the Buddha-Dhamma.

Depiction of Women in Negative Sense

Despite the fact that the Buddha elevated the status of women, he was practical in his observations and advice given from time to time in that he realized the social and physiological differences that existed between men and women. These were depicted in the *Anguttara Nikāya* and *Samyutta Nikāya*. It was clearly mentioned that a man’s duty is his unending quest for knowledge, the improvement and stabilization of his skill and craftsmanship, and dedication to

his work and ability to find the wherewithal for the maintenance and sustenance of his family. On the other hand it was stated, as a matter of fact, that it was the woman’s duty to look after the home, and to look after her husband.

The *Anguttara Nikāya* contained some valuable advice which the Buddha gave to young girls prior to their marriage. Realizing that there were bound to be difficulties with the new in-laws, the girls were enjoined to give every respect to their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, serving them lovingly as they would their own parents. They were requested to honour and respect their husband’s relatives and friends, thus creating a congenial and happy atmosphere in their new homes. They were also advised to study and understand their husband’s nature, ascertain their activities, character and temperament, and to be useful and co-operative at all times in their new homes. They should be polite, kind and watchful in their relationship with the servants and should safeguard their husband’s earnings and see to it that all household expenditures were properly regularized. Such advice given by the Buddha more than twenty-five centuries ago, is still valuable today.

The handicaps and drawbacks under which women had to undergo in life were also clearly indicated. The suffering and agony to be borne by a woman in leaving her family after her marriage, and the difficulties and problems she had to encounter in trying to accommodate her in a new environment, were the trials and tribulations she had to bear. In addition to these problems, women were also subjected to physiological pains and sufferings during their menstrual periods, pregnancy and childbirth. These are natural phenomena depicting the differential situations and circumstances prevailing between men and women. Although in certain sections of the *Tripitaka* some caustic comments were made on the wiles and behaviour of women, the Buddha, in the *Samyutta Nikāya*,

did bring forth many redeeming features: under certain circumstances, women are considered more discerning and wise than men and women are also considered capable of attaining perfection or sainthood after treading the noble Eightfold path.

To some, the Buddha seem to be an anti-women as he tirelessly taught women as a trap of evil,⁸ a temptation, a target for lust, a hindrance or an obstacle for men on the path to their ultimate liberation. Not only that, he showed his unwillingness to accept women into his order initially and laid down the eight strict rules for them before establishing the nun's order with the foretelling his Dhamma's span would be cut by half.⁹ This *Bhikkhūnī Saṃgha* was formed five years after the establishment of *Bhikkhu Saṃgha*. Especially, he declared that women could not attain the Buddhahood as men could.¹⁰

The disciples of the Buddha, especially the more perceptive of the female followers, appear to have grasped very well the principle that the Dhamma was neutral with respect to the gender of the person following its dictates. There are not many direct references to this question, but an incident reported twice in the *Sutta Piṭaka* is very relevant to this and must be considered. This records the taunt of Mara to the Theri Soma that no woman could reach “the high ground of the wise” because she has only the “two-finger knowledge (*dvāṅgulapaññā*)”, an allusion to cooking where the consistency of the cooked rice is tested by pressing it between the fingers. The refutation of Mara, as given in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, is worth quoting in full: “*itti bhāvo kim kiyirā, cittaṃ hi sus amāhite ñānamhi; vattam ānamhi sammā dhammaṃ vipassato*” which means “What matters being a woman; If with mind firmly set. One grows in the knowledge; Of the Right Law, with insight?”. Another refutation is: *yassa nūna siyā eva, itthāham puriso ti va; kiñci va pana*

asamīti; tam Maro vattum arahatīti which means “Anyone who has to question, Am I a woman or am I a man; And does not oneself really know, Over such a one will Mara triumph”.

The version given in the *Therīgāthā* preserves the essential first stanza which asserts the irrelevance of the “female condition” (*ittibhāvo*) to spiritual progress, but replaces the second with a more conventional stanza: *sabbattha vihatā nanadi, tamo kkhadho padā lito; evam janāhi pāpima, nihato tvam asi antaka* which means “With pleasures overcome everywhere, And the mass of ignorance torn away; Know this, O Defiled One, Driven out art thou at last.” Whether this involves some later reworking by monk compilers we shall never know. It is however a fact that the *Udānas* recorded in the *Therīgāthā* are somewhat disappointing if we were to look in them for evidence on the question that is considered here. In most respects what the Theris see as the travails of life from which they seek escape into the ineffable, are not different from those identified by the theras in the *Theragāthā*.

These incidents need to be re-examined in the socio-cultural context in which the Buddha existed. The Buddha, being human, he was not immune to the ingrained prejudices of his time, society and culture. He may appear to be a misogynist, despite his greater liberality in gender attitudes than other men in of his time, but it is necessary to place his actions and within his milieu rather than to judge them from a twenty-first century perspective. No doubt, limitations on the social equality of *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhūnīs* were made, and these limitations were probably made in order to increase societal acceptance of the monastic orders. The tradition of *Bhikkhūnīs* order disappeared in Theravada Buddhist countries, one after another. The latest one was the *Bhikkhūnīs* order in Sri Lanka which was recorded the last seen in the tenth

century CE.¹¹ In the present time, Theravada nuns, after a long period of disappearance, have tried to re-establish their old tradition but several difficulties are still ahead. Inspired by the world movement of women's right, Buddhist women, the laity and the ordained of the two Buddhist traditions have joined their hand together in associations, sounded their voices, fought for their status, improved their education actively in monasteries and in society as well.

Obviously, in the Pali canon there are many passages depict women as jealous, stupid, passionate and full of hatred. Their images symbolize desire, lust and aversion under the images of Mara's daughters who came to seduce the Buddha just moment before his enlightenment. The Buddha seems to be tireless to talk about the dangers of contact with women that could defile and destroy the purity, the holy life of anyone on the path of seeking the truth, the final liberation. There are five obstacles that are impossible for a woman, etc.

The *Jātaka* tell us many heroes, heroines and villains, containing both positive and negative views of women. Although scholars have doubt about these stories, any way, they are still bringing effects greatly in global moment for women's right and the role of laity in Theravada Southeast Asian countries. Beside a number of the *Jātaka* stories concerning of virtuous or wise women¹², there several the *Jātaka* stories show the biased view against women. They talk of women as defilements that could harm the ascetic life¹³, the untrustworthy and fickle nature of women, the evil way to get money, their unfaithfulness to husbands. There are, at least, three the *Jātaka* stories tell us the treacherous women¹⁴ and three the *Jātaka* stories reveal women as full of wiles¹⁵. Interestingly, some the *Jātaka* stories generalize that women are unfaithful to their husbands¹⁶ along with others the *Jātaka* showing the notable examples of this

condemned nature¹⁷. Similar to the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the *Jātaka* stories also emphasize the sensual, worldly nature of women, that is, women can never have enough of "intercourse, adornment, and child-bearing"¹⁸ and never tire of sex.¹⁹

Another instance of Buddhist doctrine about women in the Pali canon, which somebody said a misogynistic doctrine, is the account of Siddhārtha's final challenge before he achieves enlightenment: the Evil, Mara tries to defeat the Buddha-to-be with his demonic armies, which fails miserably, so Mara utilizes his final weapon; his three lovely and voluptuous daughters. Mara's daughters try to seduce Siddhārtha (or the Buddha-to-be), however, they do not succeed and Buddha achieves final enlightenment. This account could be read as an objectification and sexualizing of women's inherent nature; the female figure being the final obstacle to Buddha's enlightenment.

Even just a moment before his great *nirvāṇa*, his faithful attendant nanda inquired him how should they conduct with the women. In this conversation, the image of women appears to be the stain.

"How are we to conduct ourselves, Lord, with regard to womankind?
As not seeing them, nanda
But if we should see them, what are we to do?
No talking, nanda
But if they should speak to us, Lord what are we to do?
Keep wide awake, nanda".²⁰

The Buddha may appear to subscribe to these views, despite his greater liberality in gender attitudes than other men of his time, but it is necessary to place his actions within his milieu rather than to judge them from a twentieth century perspective.

To understand above mentioned views, Buddhist scholars explain that it was affected by

the cultural and religious conditions at the time.²¹ In this context, we need to observe some incidents in the life of the Buddha, especially before his great renunciation, that have been referred to explain that Siddh rtha himself maintained that women were not equal to men but also all impure defilements. The Buddha was born in a period when Br hma ism was already a highly advanced religion that promoted an elaborate social order structured hierarchically. His father, uddhodhana, was king of a small kingdom, and his mother, Mah m y , is said to have died seven days after his birth.

Buddhist texts tell us that a priest told King uddhodhana that the boy would become either a great king or a homeless wanderer. Like all ambitious kings, uddhodhana. From the time the boy (the Buddha-to-be) was foretold, King uddhodhana kept in his royal mind not let him a chance to leave. He wanted his son to become a great king when the boy succeeded him to the throne. He was brought up in great splendour and luxury by his aunt, who was also his stepmother. The king filled Siddh rtha' s life with great luxury and had three palaces built for his son, one for winter, one for summer, and one for the rainy season. When he grew up, the king ensnared him with sensual pleasure, arranged his marriage, and surrounded him with young song-and-dance women and every other delight a man might desire. He also got him married at a young age to Ya odhar , and the couple had a son named R hula.

However, beside the royal luxury life, Buddhist legends told us that from the time he was a boy, he was taught that women were only objects, like domesticated animals trained to breed, nurture and entertain men. From his stepmother to his wife, to all the dancing girls and servants of the palace, the young prince viewed women only as creatures who lived for the rewards of pleasing men. Moreover,

the king's counsellor advises the young prince to disregard his disturbing encounters and to follow the example of ancient heroes and sages in pursuing the pleasures of erotic love.

According to Rita M. Gross, when Siddh rtha Gautama abandoned his wife, it was not because of her evil or sexual nature, but because of his own attachment to her. Later his monks, whose attitudes are recorded in early Buddhist texts, could not so surpass the problems in their own attachments, but blamed women for their sexual desires²². Attachment itself, rather than that to which one is attached, was recognized as the fundamental obstacle by the tradition as a whole²³. It also the basic idea of the Buddha when he started founding his celibate order, specially the female's order.²⁴ Since women attraction through sexual desires were considered as great hindrance in the striving for enlightenment, the monks believed the only way to eliminate their desire was to make the objects of their attachment less attractive in their minds. It also seemed to be the monks who had a problem with sex, rather than the nuns. This would explain why a large part of Therav da texts is devoted to the depiction of women as disgusting creatures too repulsive to touch.

Formation of the *Bhikkhū* 's Saṃgha

Discussing about gender in Buddhism, an oft-quoted passage usually inquired next is the most controversial problem when the Buddha found the community of nuns. The question had been asked that, if women were considered as equal as to men, why did the Buddha purposely delay the permission for women to form the *Bhikkhū*'s order? In the time of the Buddha, the public opinion in the society was heavily influenced by ideas of this kind. The Buddha was a practical person who, before initiating any step to formulate a rule, paid special attention to public opinion. Across the *Vinaya* literature, one can see most of the rules regarding to the

admission into the *sangha* in the disciplinary laws enacted by him came to be promulgated, motivated and sustained by public opinion²⁵. When women requested admission to a *Bhikkhūnī*'s order, the Buddha probably thought of the people's negative attitudes to such an innovation. He might have thought the best way to change such attitudes in order to facilitate such a new step.

When one thinks of the Buddhist order of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhūnī* whose existence depended on the laity; the *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*; this pre-occupation of the Buddha with the possible response of society is understandable. Without the support of the laity, the order of *bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhūnīs* cannot function.²⁶ When the Buddha was living in the Banyan monastery at Kapilavatthu, the Buddha's own foster-mother, Mah paj pa i Gotam came to visit him asking for permission to establish the *Bhikkhūnī*'s order; the Buddha did not acquiesce in it at once. Three times she asked, three times she was adamantly refuted without any explanation. She left his presence very sadly. A few days later, the Buddha with his community of monks set out for Ves l , the capital of the republic of Videha on the northern bank of the Ganges. Not changing her mind, Mah paj pa i Gotam and her followers, most of whom were members of Gotama's own clan, the *kya*, cut off their hair, adopting the symbol of a life of renunciation and put on the saffron-coloured robes began a long march cities and villages. They walked barefoot to Ves l , where the Buddha had gone²⁷.

They were seen in such conditions by thousands of people and the sight itself was sufficient for the people's hearts to melt. "Is not this lady who looked after the young prince, Siddh rtha when his mother died? She brought him up like her own son. Is not this Ya odhar , prince Siddh rtha's wife? These noble women

suffer heavily in not being admitted to the *Bhikkhūnī*'s order. Why doesn't the Buddha admit them creating an order for women?"

With swollen feet and travel-stained, they arrived at the Gabled Hall in the Great Grove where the Buddha was staying. One morning nanda was horrified to find Mah paj pat sobbing on the porch with a crowd of other *kya* women in such pitiable conditions. On learning the issue, nanda was totally moved by their determination and sincerity, determined to plead their case with the Buddha. He approached the Buddha asking on behalf of the womenfolk for their admission to the *Samgha* but the Buddha still refused to consider the matter. Thoughtfully nanda inquired whether women are not capable of attaining the highest spiritual status as menfolk, the Buddha replied in affirmative. Then, he reminded all the love and kindness she had given him after his mother passed away, how she had nursed him, given him her milk, how she had taken care of him and how she cultivated him when he was an orphan child. It was well, Lord, that women should obtain the going forth from home into homelessness in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder.²⁸ With his finally insist, the Buddha agreed to establish the *Bhikkhūnī*'s order. Once the public opinion was made favourable by the *kya* ladies' long march, the Buddha found a good opportunity to allow women to be admitted to the Order. This sociological consideration cannot be easily forgotten in understanding the Buddha's motive when he refused admission of women on three occasions. He knew how his refusal would fortify the *kya* ladies' determination to undertake the long march and how such a march would have its impact on the people's mind giving rise to a very positive public response.

The reason for this reluctance was concerned with monastic organization as a whole; 'the considerations which seem to have weighed

heavy in the mind of the Buddha regarding the admission of women into the *Samgha* are concerned more with the wider problem of the monastic organization as a whole. He would have been undoubtedly most adverse to stand in the way of the personal liberty of women. But in the interest of the collective good of the institution of *brahmacarya*, which was the core of the religion, women had to make certain sacrifices, surrendering at times even what might appear to have been their legitimate rights. This is evident from the eight conditions under which the Buddha granted them permission to enter the *Samgha*. According to Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, the immediate objection was possibly Mahapaj pati herself. Since she used to live a luxurious life of the palace and had never been acquainted with the experience of hardship, it was almost unimaginable to see the queen going from house to house begging for meals. It might be out of pity and compassion that the Buddha refused her request to join the Order because he could not bring himself to the point of letting her undergoes such a hard and strenuous life in the wilderness.”²⁹

Among other reasons given in this context, there are considerations such as the safety of women. To allow women to spend homeless lives required a lot of precautions and protections. Women, being thought of as desirous of sex, invited many dangers. The Buddha was highly concerned about this fact³⁰. Moreover, Women were considered as the center of household life. If permission was given for them to enter the *Samgha* and many opted to do so, it would end in a number of serious problems. The home would lose its main foundation and moreover even the community of monks would lose the support of lay households which would not have women in them to carry on acts of supporting the *samgha* by providing them with food etc. Subsequently, the Buddha is said to promulgate eight special regulations as the foundation for *Bhikkhuni*s that

they must accept before joining the order. These eight rules, (*Gurudhamma*) which were to be “observed, respected, honoured and revered by a nun, and never transgressed for as long as she lived,”³¹ were:

1. A nun, even if ordained for a hundred years, must greet a monk with deference, even if he has been ordained that very day; she must rise up from her seat, salute him with joined hands, and show him proper respect.
2. A nun is forbidden to spend the Rainy Season (*Vassavāsa*) in a district where there is no monk.
3. Every fortnight, a nun is to ask two things of the monks: the date of the *Uposatha* ceremony.
4. At the end of the Rainy Season Retreat, a nun addresses “the triple invitation” to both the Order of monks and the Order of nuns, she must ask whether anyone seen, heard or suspected anything against her.
5. A nun who has committed a serious offense must undergo the *Mānatta* discipline, a kind of temporary probation, before both Orders.
6. Ordination as a nun is to be sought from both Orders only after a postulant has followed the six precepts for years.
7. A nun is on no account to revile or abuse a monk.
8. Monks can give admonition and advice to nuns, but nuns cannot to monks³².

These people feel that the Buddha himself must have been aware of the problems society would have in accepting an independent order of the nuns. He made the rules about the *Bhikkhuni*s’ subordination to the *Bhikkhus* especially to mitigate action against the *Bhikkhuni*s. These rules call for gestures of submission on the part of the *Bhikkhuni*s, but in no way diminish the *Bhikkhuni*s’ ability to meditate and follow the path towards enlightenment. The Buddha may

have seen this as the best way to preserve women's ability to work towards enlightenment within the confines of their society. Thus, no one can deny that constitutionally these rules subordinated the nun's order to the monk's order. Even as one could argue that the *Gurudhamma* were simply produced in response to the prevailing social and cultural norms of the time, this does not entirely eliminate Buddhism's responsibility, nor does it lessen the oppression that women must have faced in the monastic community because of these rules. What was new and important about Buddha's teachings about women was that women could attain *Arahantship* and that women could do so by followed the same path as men. Certain limitations were made on the social equality of *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunis*, and these limitations were probably made in order to increase social acceptance of the monastic orders.

Women in Saṃgha: Entry led to Decline of the Buddhism in India

The most standing controversy about the women in Buddhism is the prophecy of the Buddha of his *dharma* in the future. The *Vinaya* records that after establishing the *Bhikkhuni*'s order, the Buddha foretold that the life span of his *dharma* would be cut off half due to the entering of women in the *Saṃgha*. If, nanda, women had not obtained the going forth from home into homeless in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, the Brahma-faring, nanda, would have lasted long, true *dhamma* would endured for a thousand years. But since, nanda, women have gone forth ... in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, now, nanda, the Brahma-faring will not last long true *dhamma* will last only for five hundred years.³³ This prophecy has been interpreted in different ways. Especially, when Western women came to study and practice the doctrine of Buddhism, some scholars have doubt on this prediction. They have been reluctant

to accept this pronouncement as representing the words of the Buddha. They assume that it was added to the canon in later period when patriarchy still dominated over society after the death of the Buddha.

According to Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, the history of Buddhism in India was not fixed to that prediction. Where the Buddha made this prediction or not, Buddhism have lasted long over and spread into Him layan countries, South and Southeast Asia countries and now the West³⁴. When scholarly examining the surviving *Vinaya* texts, Jan Nattier hold that all the extant versions of this story belong to schools which were the sub-sects from the main Therav da school. Not a single occurrence of this tradition has been identified in the surviving literature of any of the Mah s ṃghika schools.³⁵ My approach in this matter is somewhat different. In the P li canon, the Buddha did not warn a single time regarding the decline of his *dhamma* in the future. Across the history of Buddhism, we can see, his monks would be more responsible for the disappearance of this true *dhamma*, not nuns. No doubt, his faith could not disappear fatally when it has been a religion of many, either in India the original homeland of his religion in private or in many other countries in general. It must take a process descending from decline to disappearance³⁶. After the death of the Buddha, we can see the role of nuns in the history of Buddhism in its homeland and in other countries was less aggressive and dynamic then the monks. This factor can be traced back to the time when the First Buddhist Council was convened at R jagaha, three month after the *Mahāparinibbāna*, in which five hundred male *Arahants* participated but without a single nun.³⁷

In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha said that when his monks confuse the *dhamma* as the non-*dhamma*, confuse the discipline as the non-discipline and interpret the non-*dhamma*

as the *dhamma*, the non-discipline as the discipline, such confusion and ignorance cause the disappearance of this true *Dhamma*³⁸. He explained that when his monks express wrongly the letters in the *Suttas* and in the *Vinaya* and interpret incorrectly the meanings, these things would conduce to the conclusion and disappearance of his faith³⁹. On other occasion, the Buddha taught that the careless actions of his monks towards the *dhamma* would be the reason for the decline. When they hear, learn, practice, understand and experience his teaching carelessly so that it would lead the disappearance of his religion⁴⁰. Although one can assure these teachings as the warnings to the monks, they could be observed as his precaution or prediction about the confounding of his *dhamma* as these matters have occurred in the history of Buddhism.⁴¹

In any case, the Buddha opened the doors for women's entrance to monastic life. Women flocked by the thousand from different strata of society to join the order of *Bhikkhūṇīs*. Women joined for all sorts of reasons. Many women joined simply because the Buddha's teachings made sense to them, and aroused in them a desire for liberation.⁴² Other women, though this first reason was true for them, had other reasons as well. Some become *Bhikkhūṇīs* because their husbands or other relatives were becoming *Bhikkhus*. Others became *Bhikkhūṇīs* when they were widowed⁴³, or when their other relatives died⁴⁴. Some very poor women joined because the order would provide them with some measure of security⁴⁵. Courtesans who were disgusted with their lives of sex left to become *Bhikkhūṇīs*⁴⁶. Some young women chose the renunciative life as preferable⁴⁷ to marriage or unhappy in family life⁴⁸. In some cases, marriage was not mentioned but various others facts were stated⁴⁹.

Once a wandering mendicant asked the Buddha whether there were any nuns who

had attained the perfect state, the Buddha emphatically told him not merely a hundred, nor two, nor three, four or five hundred, but far more are those nuns, his female followers had attained the sainthood after eliminating defilements and abiding in a perfect state.⁵⁰ In the P li literature, the *Therīgāthā* preserves seventy-three enlightenment poems and other verses of seventy-one women. They are traditionally believed to have been the Buddha's contemporaries. These stanzas are said to have been uttered by several nuns to express to their joy at the attainment of the highest goal. Some of the nuns to whom these poems are ascribed, especially those who were renowned for their learning and their skill in teaching the *dharma*, also appear in other early Buddhist scriptures.

There is a few scriptures in the P li canon were preached by women, and the most notable is the one preached by the nun Dhammadinn to her former husband, the Buddhist by disciple Vis kha.⁵¹ She explain the basic doctrines and practices of Buddhism, from the four Noble Truths to the subtle details of meditative experience, afterward the Buddha himself praises her as very learned, possessed of great understanding. However, we must bear in mind that this texts, basically, is not meant for presenting the position of women either in society or in Buddhism but the facts have peeped in through the descriptions of the subject under description only. Women had more freedom and independence within the order of *Bhikkhūṇīs* than any other women' community did elsewhere in society. *Bhikkhūṇīs* were not anyone's slaves or servants. For the most part, they ran their own community and made their own decisions. They seldom had to take orders from any one and did not have look after anyone's physical needs. They were specifically forbidden to do household chores. They had only to work for liberation from *samsāra*. Once they, themselves, were liberated, then they often taught other women.

Conclusion

For promoting the cause of women, the Buddha can be considered as the first emancipator of women and promoter of women and promoter of a democratic way of life. It is to the eternal credit of the Buddha-Dhamma that women were not despised and looked down but were given equal status with men in their spiritual endeavour on the way to gain wisdom and the complete deliverance (*Nibbāna*). It is not suggested that the Buddha inaugurated a campaign for the liberation of Indian womanhood. But he did succeed in creating a minor stir against *Brāhmaṇas* dogma and superstition. He denied the existence of

a Godhead and emphasized emancipation by individual effort. The basic doctrine of Buddhism, salvation by one's own effort, put forward the spiritual equality of all beings irrespective of gender. This was to mitigate the exclusive supremacy of the male. It needed a man of considerable courage and a rebellious spirit to pronounce a way of life that placed woman on a level of near equality to man. The Buddha saw the spiritual potential of both men and women and founded the Order of *Bhikkhūṇīs* or Nuns, one of the earliest organizations for women. In this context, the scholar I.B. Horner also concluded that Buddhism accorded to women a position approximating to equality.

Notes and References

1. See *Dīgha Nikāya*. III. p. 191-192. tr. by Thomas W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogue of the Buddha*, vol. III: p. 18-183
2. *Samyutta Nikāya*, I. p. 86. III. p. 2 § 6 tr. by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *The Book of Kindred Sayings*, vol. I: p.111. *Majjhima Nikāya*. II. pp. 106-112. tr. by I.B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings*, Vol. II: pp. 292-6.
3. See Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. 1. pp. 221-3. Swami Madhavananda & Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (ed.), *Great Women of India*, pp. 26 – 9.
4. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of Indian People*, vol. 1, The Vedic Age, p. 458
5. Anant Sadashiv Altekar, "Ideal and Position of Indian Women in Social Life" in *Great Women of India*, Op. Cit. p. 32.
6. Janice D. Willis, "Nuns and Benefactresses: The Role of Women in the Development of Buddhism" in *Women, Religion, and Social Change*, ed. by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad & Ellison Banks Findley, p. 61.
7. I. B. Horner, *Women under Primitive Buddhism: Laywomen and Almswomen*. London: 1930. p. XXIV.
8. *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. III. p. 67. v, vi, 55. tr. by E. M. Hare, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. III, p. 56.
9. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. p. 255. tr. by I. B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline*, vol. V, p. 356.
10. *Majjhima Nikāya*, III. pp. 65-6. tr. by I.B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings*, Vol. III, pp. 108-9. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. I. pp. 27. i, 15 § 28. tr. by Frank L. Woodward, Op. Cit. vol. I. pp. 25-6.
11. Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religions* (Second Edition), Vol. 10, p. 6760.
12. See *Mudulakkhaṇa Jātaka* and *Lomahaṃsa Jātaka*, *Jātaka* I. pp. 303-06; 389-91. tr. Robert Chalmers, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. I, pp. 161-4; 229-30; *Sulasā Jātaka* VIII. 435-8. *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. III. pp. 260-3; vol. VI. Pp. 19-37; vol. V. pp. 48-53; *Sumbula Jātaka* XVI pp. 88-98. *Mahājanaka Jātaka* XXII pp. 30-68. *Mahānāradakassapa Jātaka* XXII pp. 220-55.
13. *Lomasakassapa Jātaka*, *Jātaka*, IX pp. 514-19. *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. III, pp. 306 - 9
14. *Asātamanta Jātaka*, *Takka Jātaka*, *Jātaka*, I. pp. 285-9; 295-8. *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. I, pp. 147-50, 55-8. *Cullapaduma Jātaka*, *Jātaka* II. pp. 116-21.
15. *Durājāna Jātaka*, *Anabhirati Jātaka*, *Jātaka* I. pp. 299-301, 301-2. *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. I, pp. 158-61. *Kosiya Jātaka*, *Jātaka* I. pp. 463-5. *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. II, pp. 284-5.
16. *Aṇḍabhūta Jātaka*, *Jātaka* I. pp. 289-95, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. I, pp. 151-5; vol. II, pp. 94-5. *Gahapati Jātaka*, *Jātaka* II. pp. 134-7.

17. *Bandhanamokkha Jātaka, Kosiya Jātaka, Jātaka*. I. pp. 437-40, 463-65.
18. *Sattubhastha Jātaka, Jātaka* VII. pp. 341-51; *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. III, pp. 210-15.
19. *Bandhanamokkha Jātaka, Jātaka*, I. pp. 437-40; *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. I, pp. 264-7.
21. *Dīgha Nikāya*, II. p. 141. tr. by Thomas W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogue of the Buddha*, vol. II, p. 154.
22. See Rita M. Gross. 'Buddhism' in *Women in World Religion* ed. by Jean Holm & John Bowker, p. 4; Peter Harvey. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, p. 379.
23. Rita M. Gross. 'Buddhism' Op. Cit. p. 5.
24. Ibid.
25. Peter Harvey, Op. Cit. p. 379.
26. Torkel Brekke. *Religious Motivation and the Origins of Buddhism*, p. 34.
27. Chapla Verma. 'The Wildering Gloom: Women's Place in Buddhist History' in *Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India* edited by Mandakanta Bose, p. 77.
28. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. p. 252. tr. by I. B. Horner, Op. Cit., vol. V, p. 352.
29. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. p. 255. tr. by I. B. Horner, Op. Cit., vol. V, p. 354, *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, IV. p. 274. viii. vii, 51. tr. by Frank L. Woodward, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. IV, p. 183.
30. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, *Thai Women in Buddhism*, p. 28.
31. Ibid.
32. *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, IV. pp. 274. viii. vi, 51. tr. by Frank L. Woodward, Op. Cit., pp. 277, viii, vi, 51. *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, vol. IV, p. 285.
33. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. p. 254. tr. by I. B. Horner, Op. Cit., vol. V, p. 354.
34. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. p. 254. tr. by I. B. Horner, Op. Cit., vol. V, p. 354. See also *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, IV. pp. 278. viii. vi, 51. p. 285 tr. Frank L. Woodward, *Op. Cit.*, vol. IV, p. 183.
35. See Chatsumarn Kabilsingh. *Thai Women in Buddhism*, p. 30-1
36. See Jan Nattier. *Once upon a future time studies in a Buddhist prophecy of decline*. p. 32.
37. See S. R. Goyal. *A History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 383-404. See also L. P. Sharma, *A History of Ancient India (Pre-historic Age to 1200 A.D.)*, pp. 86 - 9.
38. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, II. pp. 283-7. tr. by I. B. Horner, (tr.), *Op. Cit.*, vol. V, pp. 393-400.
39. *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, I. pp. 16, 1, 10 § 33-42 tr. by Frank L. Woodward, *Op. Cit.*, vol. I, p. 13.
40. *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, I. pp. 57, ii, 2 § 10 tr. by Frank L. Woodward, *Op. Cit.*, vol. I, p. 53. Also in *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, I. pp. 69, ii, 4 § 11 tr. by Frank L. Woodward, *Op. Cit.*, vol. I, p. 65
41. *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, III. pp. 174, v, xvi, 154-5. tr. by Frank L. Woodward, *Op. Cit.*, vol. III, pp. 132-133. Bhadda and nanda also recognized that it is owing to not practicing the *dhamma* i.e. the four stations of mindfulness, the *dhamma* cannot last long. See *Samyutta Nikāya V*, pp. 170, XLVII, III, III, ii - p 152. *The Book of Kindred Saying or Grouped Suttas*, Vol. V., p. 152.
42. S. R. Goyal. *A History of Indian Buddhism*: p. 383. L. P. Sharma: *A History of Ancient India (Pre-historic Age to 1200 A.D.)* p. 86.
43. See Stories of Dhammadinn and Khem, *Therīgāthā* XII and LII. tr. CAF Rhys Davids, *Psalm of the Sisters*: pp. 16-7, 81-4 respectively.
44. See Story of Cand. *Therīgāthā* XLIX. tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *op.cit.* pp. 75-6.
45. Stories of Sundar Nand, Paṭac r, V siṭṭh Gutt, Vijay, Kis Gotam. *Therīgāthā* XLI, XLVII, LI, LVI, LVII, LXIII. Tr. CAF Rhys Davids, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 55-7, 68-73, 79-80, 90-3, 106-10.
46. Story of Puṇṇik, *Therīgāthā* LXV, tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 116-9.
47. Story of Ambap li. *Therīgāthā* LXVI, tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 120-5.
48. See Stories of Mutt, Suj t, Anopam, Uppalavaṇṇ, Sumedh, *Therīgāthā* XI, LII, LIV, LXIV, LXXIII tr. by C. A. F. Rhys Davids *Op. Cit.*, pp. 15, 84-7, 111-5, 164-79.
49. Stories of Bhadd Kpil n, Soṇ, Bhadd Kuṇḍlakes, Isid si, *Therīgāthā* XXXVII, XLIV, XLVI, LXXII tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *op.cit.* pp. 47-9, 61-8, 156-63.
50. See stories Citt, Mettik, Abhay, S m. *Therīgāthā* XXIII, XXIV, XXVII, XXVIII tr. by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 27-8.
51. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I. pp. 490-1. tr. by I.B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings*, Vol. II, pp. 168-70.
52. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I. p. 299. tr. by I.B. Horner *Op.Cit.*, Vol. I : p. 360.

HUMAN DHARMA OF THE BUDDHA : A GLIMPSE

Sanjib Kumar Das

In general, the term 'Dharma' is formed from its Sanskrit root '*Dhr*' which means 'to hold, to bear or to grasp'. It is defined as 'bearing its own entity'. There is no doubt that the term is used in several meanings. From Buddhist point of view, it is used in ten meanings.¹ On the other hand, from the Hindi Literature point of view, it is also used in the sense of 'Responsibility'. Nevertheless, let it be assumed that this term is used in two aspects: social or household dharma and spirituality. Regarding the former, we find several s tra s in *Tripitaka* or *Kagyur* in which Buddha spoke to His lay disciples how to lead a happy, content and meaningful life by carrying out his responsibility in a proper way. Among them, *Prasenjitpariprcch s tra* or *Rājāvavādasūtra*, *Dhammapada*, *Itivuttakasutta* and so forth are the main ones in which Buddha specially preached to his lay disciples showing the correct path for a meaningful life. Not only this, he also taught the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* at the request of a lay disciple known as King Indrabodhi.

After this brief on the term 'Dharma' if one simply sees the topic of discussion one may definitely assume that it is a very easy topic to be discussed. But from an academician point of view, it is not an easy, but a quite vast and profound topic because it subsumes the entire Buddhavacana. The reason is that there is not a single dharma preached by the Buddha for not the sake of human beings. Moreover, there is not a single dharma available in *Tripitaka* or *Kagyur*

(Buddhavacana) and *Tengyur* (commentarial works) that cannot be studied and taken into practice by human being in order to solve his problems. If it was not true, perhaps Buddha would not have turned the Wheels of Doctrine in the human world. He would not have given sermons in the presence of the human beings for forty-five years after becoming a Buddha. Even, followed by the attainment of Buddhahood, he chose and also made human beings only as his chief disciples and followers because, by nature, human beings are more rational, intelligent and sensible among all. At the same time, human beings are also capable indeed to be endowed with the eight freedom states and ten endowments. Such beings duly endowed with the eighteen states are very precious and rare, and is also the basic foundations for becoming an appropriate receptacle to practise the dharma in order to attain the final spiritual goal.

The entire dharma preached by the Buddha in the Wheels of Doctrine after attaining the Buddhahood has two aspects: Conduct (*cary*) and View (*dr̥ṣṭi*). Since Buddha was a very skilful Teacher, sometimes he spoke on conducts while sometimes on view through taking care of the different levels and capacities of his followers. The whole *Tripitaka* or *Kagyur* and *Tengyur* contain innumerable topics related to conduct and view of His dharma. Each and every topic is the antidote, is the solution or remedy of every problem faced by them. Among them, the above-mentioned topic of discussion elaborating in the

Prof. Das is Professor, Department of Indo-Tibetan Studies, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

following five sub-themes may be considered as one of the most important one:

1. Problems of human beings
2. Buddha's message on action
3. Essence of his view
4. Controlling of the mind
5. Effect of controlling the mind.

Problems of Human Beings

The modern age is the age of science. From one side, science has made the human-life heavenly happy, but on the other side it has given birth to many problems too for which man is tormented with attachment and hatred. On account of the blind race of modernism, man is turning back from his actual aim of life, i.e., liberation and omniscience. It is a transparent and living fact. There may be several reasons for it. Among them, the mains are: biased tendency, selfishness, jealousy and excess materialistic desire. This is the reason that from a simple man to the entire world, everyone is trapped in terrible situation today. Danger of destruction has come up before the human beings.

Today the materialistic people need to think and introspect as what the truth is that despite having the dwelling like mansion as well as not having the want of fooding and clothing, they are mentally baffled, stressed and restless. In spite of being endowed and equipped with every materialistic facility and joy, they are found frightened and possessed a feeling of loneliness. On the other hand, a real monk or seer who, despite of having no sufficient materialistic need, looks very calm, peaceful and content from inside. Despite being endowed with every materialistic facility, the materialistic people are in search of peace. Why is it so? It is because the materialistic facility is not able to provide real and eternal peace. For its sake, spiritual development is indispensable.

Buddha's message on karma

It is known to all that Siddh rtha was born as a prince of Kapilavastu. Despite having a royal life full of luxury, wealth, property and all other necessities, he chose the life style of a mendicant. Can you imagine why? Doesn't it show his sacrifice (*tyag*)? But for whom did he do it? Was it for him only? Did he keep on sharing his experience, spreading his message for 45 years that he gained at Bodhgaya for his own benefit? Now, here the question arises, what was his experience which he shared? In the context of this question, answers can be given in several ways. Let us discuss one or two among them. Before the appearance of Tath gata Buddha, we find several sacred names of social reformers in history who introduced the human dharma which was accepted accordingly too. But it was the Buddha who for the first time in history made a revolution by saying that all the wholesome and unwholesome actions² which man does being motivated by affliction³ is the root of *samsara*, the root of suffering. The goodness or badness of man does not depend upon the grace or demean of any unknown power. Therefore, man does not need to take refuge in that unknown power for his happiness and peace. Eventually, he himself is his own refuge, own protector. *Dhammapada* states:

Oneself is one's own Master.
Who else could be his Master?
By controlling oneself,
One will attain the rare Mastery (Nirv ña).
[12:04]

Man is the creator of every problem. He is responsible for his own bad or good action. Hence he is also responsible for the bad or good effect experienced by him which is produced by the bad or good action he does. Thus, it becomes very clear that happiness or misery whatever it may be totally depends upon every individual. There is no place for the second or third person

in producing the result for man. If he wants to enjoy happiness he has to do wholesome action and vice-versa. From the above, another thing is also clear that indeed nobody can save the world with a stick or some sorts of weapon, because the world is not under the control of any stick or weapon, rather it is under the control of action. Therefore, he should be very careful and conscious while doing an action. Changes of the world exclusively depend upon the action, nothing else. Buddha says:

Neither the Sages do clean the non-virtues
with water,
Nor do they remove the suffering migrators
with hands,
Nor do they transfer their own realization,
They liberate by means of the peaceful
dharmat .⁴

Thus, the Concept of Karma is one of the most important and inevitable Laws in Buddhism. This is the very Law that confirms a happy or a miserable life, existence of past and future life etc. This is the very reason that every Buddhist gives more emphasis on the practice of the said Law. But seeing the modern scenario of the human society as well as the tendency and thinking of human beings in particular doubt in the Law is subject to arise in many people. It is obvious that the modern society is full of deception, dishonesty, violence and corruption. Moreover the world today is in a state of turmoil; valuable Laws are unturned. The forces of materialistic skepticism have turned dissecting blades on the traditional concepts of what are considered humane qualities. Less number of people in the society seems to have faith in the Law. Even sometimes it becomes quite difficult to cultivate faith and belief in the Law because when we happen to see their life style, behaviours and actions. It really makes us confused and also compels us to think whether the Law really works. There are many, who,

despite being involved in unwholesome actions such as violence, lies, deception, corruption etc., are found leading a happy, prosperous and comfortable life. The execution of unwholesome actions seems to have become their daily routine.

They seem not experiencing bad retribution of their misdeeds. From Buddhist point of view, the presentation of Law of Karma and its Result is indeed very profound. Generally, the *karma* or action is divided into three: action bearing fruit in this present life, action bearing fruit in the next life and action bearing fruit in the distant future life. Among the three, the last one is more difficult to identify and is also to be ascertained by common people. It can be explained by an example, when a bird, particularly a kite or a falcon, flies in the sky and keeps on moving up and up, its shadow gradually started becoming smaller and a time comes when it becomes invisible. Can we say that the shadow of the bird does not exist at that time? No, it cannot be. The fact is that the size of the bird becomes small and when it flies up and up in the sky its shadow started becoming smaller. Gradually, a time comes when it becomes so small that cannot be seen with our gross eyesight. In course of time, when it lands on the earth, its full shape becomes visible again. In the same way, the profundity of the Law of Karma and its Result cannot be directly apprehended with our gross mind. The good or bad retributions only wait for a specific time and condition. It means unless the antidote to an action appears, the result will come without waste or loss even though limitless *kalpas* have passed. Action may lie dormant for a long time, but somehow when it meets with the accordant conditions, the result will definitely mature. Thus, one becomes afraid of the suffering of *samsara* and gains confidence in action and result. The *Karmasatakasūtra* (S tra of a Hundred Karmas) says:

Actions of all the beings
Will not be lost even in a hundred *kalpas*
When all the causes and conditions come
together,
The result will mature

The *Laghu-Smyupasthān* (Smaller Close
Contemplation) says:

It is possible even for fire to become cold
It is possible even for the wind to be leashed
by a rope
It is possible even for the sun and moon to
fall to the ground
But the maturing of *karma* is infallible

Another thing is that Buddhist Laws find its
foundation not on the changing social customs
but rather on the unchanging laws of nature.
Buddhist laws are intrinsically a part of nature,
and the unchanging law of cause and its result.
The simple fact that Buddhist laws are rooted
in natural law makes their principles both useful
and acceptable to the modern world. The fact
that the Buddhist law was formulated over 2600
years ago does not detract from its timeless
character.

Essence of his view

Actually in this part, Buddha expounded
three things— Presentation of basis, path and
result. Among the three, he illustrated several
things in the basis and the presentation of
Pratītyasamutpāda is the most important one.
The system of *Pratītyasamutpāda* is the central
viewpoint to the practise of Buddhism. It is
the heart; it is the backbone of the Buddha's
entire thought, entire philosophy. It is the root
foundation of entire Buddhist tenets as well
as the doctrine that differentiates Buddhism
from all other religions and philosophies.
Although *Pratītyasamutpāda* is the cause to
accomplish emptiness, but the realization of
subtle *Pratītyasamutpāda* is only possible only
after the comprehension of emptiness. For this

reason, Buddha said in *Śālistambasūtra* [Rice
Siddling S tra]: One who sees [comprehends]
Pratītyasamutpāda, sees [comprehends] dharma
and one who sees *Pratītyasamutpāda*, sees the
Buddha. It means on account of the origination
from cause, the conception of natural birth is
refuted as well as on account of the refutation
of natural existence, presentation of birth is
established. It is called the union of emptiness
and *Pratītyasamutpāda* or non-controversible
presentation. On realization of it, view of a self
is eliminated and correct view arises. It causes to
arise the method and wisdom in non-dual form
and also the spontaneous great compassion.
Further, the Tath gata said, “O nanda, this
Pratītyasamutpāda is very profound and subtle,
and also looks profound and subtle. For not
understanding it as it is, beings cannot come
out from the *samsāra* as if the fishes caught
in net.” Without understanding the depth and
actuality of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, different types
of misconceptions in Buddhist religion and
philosophy are liable to occur. Indeed, it is the
essence of the Buddha's entire doctrine, and
the essence of this system is found inscribed in
many stone inscriptions as:

ye dharm ḥ hetuprabhavaḥ hetuṃ teṃ n
tath gathyavadat
teṣ m ca yo nirodha evaṃ v d
mah śramaṇaḥ.

[All phenomena are produced from cause.
Its cause has been spoken by the Tath gata.
Their cessation whatever it may be
Has been spoken by the great Sramaṇa.]

Regarding the system of *Pratītyasamutpāda*
as shown in the verse, though many discussions
held as well as many books and research papers
have also been published so far. For example,
meaning of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, inner and outer
divisions of *Pratītyasamutpāda*; processing
order and reversible order of *Pratītyasamutpāda*,
twelve analogies of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, mode

of practising *Pratītyasamutpāda*, benefits of understanding the system of *Pratītyasamutpāda* and so on. As long as Buddha's doctrine exists in the world, the discussion will keep on continuing. It will not end. The reason is that the system is profound and subtle. Without having the knowledge acquired through meditation (*bh van may prajñ*) hardly the determinative knowledge of *Pratītyasamutpāda* arises. Without going to the depth a simple applicability of this system is being shared that may be implemented in our daily life. Look, a number of participants are present in a session of a workshop. Among them, some of are teachers while the rest are students. Now the question arises here, how is one called himself teacher or student? Does he ever think? Is he inherently existent teachers? Is he intrinsically established student? No, not at all. For example, I am called a teacher of Visva-Bharati University. How am I called a teacher? I teach the students of a department and depending upon those students who are taught by me, I am a teacher, and vice-versa, means depending upon me they are students. What does it show? As in the absence of me there is no existence of the students, so in the absence of students there is no existence of the teacher (Sanjib). Neither the teacher nor the students have any inherent nature. Both parties are mutually interdependent. If it is so, both should be mutually grateful to each other. None should be either arrogant or humble with their individual position, personality or property. This application can be correlated with everything such as our Hon'ble Director, Head of every department etc. None of them are beyond the system of *Pratītyasamutpāda*. For example, Mr. A has become the Head Master of a school. No sooner he becomes the Head Master, he comes under this system. Therefore, he can never proclaim that he has been selected by way of his own nature. Rather he is selected through the process of making comparison and the comparison had been made

by depending upon two-three persons. How? Because, definitely a number of three-four candidates were in the panel. When he was found better in comparison to the rest two-three, he was selected. So, how the comparison was made? That comparison was made depending upon the rest two-three. Therefore, the selected Head Master should be selected to the rest two-three candidates. Why? Because in the absence of the two-three candidates he would not have selected. Similarly, the building in which we are holding the workshop today. How has it come into being? Is it the result of the effort made by a single person? No. Number of agencies, organization and materials is involved in it. Therefore, everyone is equally grateful and indebted to each other. When such understanding will arise in us, a sense of brotherhood, a world but a family will arise in us too. On the contrary, if we just come to class, attend workshop and conference, and listen to the lecture given by the speakers and teachers, and do not apply in one's life, Buddha's doctrine will remain in the page of book and scripture.

Controlling of the mind

After waking up from the sleep of ignorance, Buddha found that the human problem is extremely intense. Whatever is happening with them in the *samsara*, mind is the root of it, mind plays a crucial role behind it. As it is said: "*manopubbaṅgama dhamma...*"⁵. Buddha, while drawing the attention to the complexity and profundity of the mind, emphasized that man needs to change his mind first before seeking any sort of change. The entire Buddhist doctrine and philosophy is centralized on the issue of mind. Buddha says in *Dhammapada*:

Do not commit any wholesome thing.
Accumulate the wholesome deeds.
Tame your mind wholly.
This is the teachings of the Buddhas.⁶

The essential meaning of the verse is, if we cultivate a good thought, then the path or means we adopt will be good, and so would be the result. On the contrary, if we cultivate evil thought, the path and the result accruing from it will also be evil. There is no compromise, no excuse, no escape and even no exception. Let me give a very simple, an interesting and useful example. Suppose, here in this hall, twenty persons are present. Among us, there is a person 'A'. He has a cheap and simple mobile and the rests have costly, branded and new modeled mobile. Now what happens? When Mr. A happens to see the rests people, a sort of an uneasy feeling arises in him seeing his status in the midst of the people. Gradually, he becomes restless and also feels himself disgraced. He starts thinking to get a mobile similar to them, even better one. Here, he is not thinking of his own status, family background and source of income. He is just thinking to get the mobile. After going to home when he does not get it, what will he do? He will adopt an unwholesome way for the sake of earning money for the mobile. As a result, he will fall into the abyss of non-virtue, thereby invites the retribution of suffering.....Now, think of the whole process. Who is the culprit? Is it the body or the mind? It is mind who instigates, who motivates to give birth to the desire of enjoying the expensive mobile. His body is simply a matter, an inanimate thing. It has no power to give birth to desire, craving or clinging. The mind gives birth to every negative emotion such as desire, craving, clinging, hatred, pride etc. For this reason, we need to make effort for controlling the mind. If we can control the mind, both the body and speech will be controlled automatically. Individuals, village, society and country are the consequences of inner thoughts, impressions and relations. As are one's thoughts and impressions, so will be the external behaviour, one's relationship with others, and ultimately the nature of one's society. The

various problems such as, like communalism, economic competition, discrimination between high and low with regard to caste and language, which confront us and with which we are fighting, are only the external manifestations of the conflicts and struggles going on inside our minds. So, unless and until we control our mind, neither can we ourselves be at peace nor can we create an ideal society. The collection of people is called society. Hence, the Buddha regards the mind as the generator of good and bad actions. It is because when the mind is good, the person will be good. Consequently the entire world will be peaceful and happy. This is the reason that all the Buddhist scriptures tell us how to control the mind.

To control one's mind is a big challenge for all and it is the most indispensable thing to be done too. However, it can definitely be done as there is variety of methods prescribed for it. Here one needs to be very clear with one thing that without controlling the mind nobody will be free from the *saṃsāra* as well as become a Buddha.

kyamuni Buddha, who once was an ordinary person, followed specific method which made him free from the *karmas* and *kleshas* leading to attain the perfect enlightenment. *Dhammapada* presents an example: "Once Drukpa Kunleg who was a great siddha of Tibet, stood before the image of Buddha which is available in the famous Jokhang temple in Lhasa and having paid homage to him, he said, "At the beginning you and me were alike ignorant persons. You, having cultivated the bodhimind, practised *s dhana* and attained the Buddhahood whereas I kept on engaging myself in worldly activities out of laziness and selfishness and so today I am here before you and to pay homage and worship you. So, may you please accept my respectful homage!"⁷ It is clear from these lines that on account of laziness and selfishness, we are still remained in the *samsara* and have been experiencing suffering without any interruption.

In fact, the entire *Buddhavacana* that is preserved in the *Tripitaka* and the Four Classes of Tantra is meant for controlling the mind. It means different skilful methods are established by the Compassionate Master (Buddha) according to the disposition, wish and capacity of the sentient beings for the purpose of controlling this restless and contaminated mind. Now there is another question: Why the Buddha was so much concerned with the wish and disposition of his followers while showing the path or giving dharma-teachings to them. The reason is that being a unique skilful master, he knew very well that his followers were of three classes— inferior, mediocre and superior as the followers of inferior mental capacity only could understand his teachings when they were explained in detail with example; the mediocre ones could understand when they were taught in little bit summarized way; and the superior ones possessed subtlest mental capacity could understand when they were taught in brief. This was the reason behind his skilful means of turning the Three Wheels of Doctrine at three different occasions and places. In the first Wheel of Doctrine which was turned at R̥ṣipattanvana (present Sarnath) he expounded the existence of all phenomena— This is the noble truth of suffering, this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering; Moving up the standard bit higher, i.e., in the second Wheel of Dharma, he spoke that all phenomena are empty by nature and if they exist, do exist on interdependent base. These two aspects of phenomena are like a single coin that has one identity but two different aspects. It means on the basis of dependent origination, existence of every phenomenon can be accepted. Therefore, it is normally explained by the scholars that the existence of all phenomena are merely a designation, an imputation, rather than naturally existent. This was spoken during the second Wheel of Dharma which he turned at G drak a in Rajgir, in

Bihar, India. While turning the second Wheel of Dharma, he simultaneously manifested himself in the form of *Kālacakra* at Dh nyak ṭa⁸ in South India (present in Amravati) and gave teachings on *Kālacakra* to Sucandra who was the king of Sambhala. Similarly, the Tibetan scholars say that the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* was taught in Oḍḍiyana at the request of King Indrabhuti/ Indrabodhi whereas the *Hevajra Tantra* was taught to Jñānagarbha by Sakyamuni Buddha just after attaining nirv ṇa. Since the followers of superior mental faculty also has two types, Buddha expounded teachings on *Prajñ p ramit* for them who wish to attain the Buddhahood in gradual manner, i.e., in the course of many lifetimes, probably by accumulating merits throughout three countless *kalpas* while for the ones who wish to attain the Buddhahood in one life or even in a few years through having superior intelligence, he gave teachings on Tantra. Finally, in the third Wheel of Dharma turned at Vaishali and other places, the Blessed One spoke on the subject, Buddha-nature, the *Tath gatagarbha* for the sake of the rest disciples. It indicates that the appearance of the Buddha and his each and every activity was not reasonless. He was so skilful and compassionate that neither any of his follower could not be found dissatisfied with his mode of teachings nor did anyone return without getting suitable answer to solve their problem.

Indeed Tath gata Buddha was very skilful and compassionate for his followers. Although it is the fact, but the essential and preliminary thing is how we should start. If we see the present circumstances of the society, particularly the human society, motivation and tendency of human beings, we will definitely see the lawlessness, i.e., violence, lies, stealth, greed, hates, slander, misconduct and so on. The competition for making deadly weapon has reached the extreme limit. It may be the cause of complete destruction of the entire creation. Men

desire victory with the help of weapons, which is not possible. Since the nature of worldly existence of suffering, it is natural to have fear, insecurity and panic in it.

There is another thing, perhaps one of the most important things to be understood is the curiosity of death. It is because there are different types of people who understand, explain and assert the concept of death in different ways. For example, there is a category of people who are not hesitated to do wrong action. If we try to explain them about the retribution of wrong doings, they will definitely say, “Who knows what will happen after the death? Let’s eat, drink and enjoy.” There is another category of people who interpret the meaning of wrong doing in different ways, i.e., like ‘To rob Paul, to pay Peter’ and so on. Why such things happen because they interpret the meaning of death in different ways.

According to Buddhism, death does not refer to complete destruction like extinguished fire of a lamp or dried water. Rather, it refers to disjunction of strength, energy and the continuum of mind from this body. Though we pass away and take birth as well at every moment, however, it keeps on flowing like the current of water or flame of candle. But on account of ignorance, we think of ourselves as permanent, eternal and hidden. Buddhists do not accept a thing to be permanent, not liable to decay and immortal as the other schools of philosophy regard it to be, say, soul. If it is permanent and changeless, then it will have to be regarded as pure, enlightened and free from the beginning, or it can never be purified. Therefore, it will remain as it was before. If the soul is accepted to exist in such mode, the effort and hardship for accumulating merits or committing unwholesome actions will have no significance and importance. On the other Buddhism is of the view that the continuum of the mind is effluent.

It can be purified by means of good action; it can be made compassionate and knowledgeable. On this basis, it becomes feasible to experience happiness and suffering. If the mind is asserted to be permanent, neither it becomes a consumer nor an agent. As such, the assertion that the soul is permanent is unsustainable. Anyhow, spiritually we may adopt one of the very methods among them prescribed for it as remedy: suppose we are sick persons and so we need recovery. What will we do? Definitely we will go to a doctor for a consultation. What will the doctor do? First he will try to know, what type of disease we have. Having diagnosed, he will subsequently advise us what is to be done and what is not, i.e., to give up the cause of the disease. Thereafter, he will prescribe medicine for it. In the same way, first we should try to understand the faults of the mind, i.e., we should know properly whether it is being motivated by attachment, whether it is overpowered by hatred or ignorance etc. Thereafter, its cause should be given up by means of the prescribed method. It means, having understood the retribution of *kleshas*, its antidote prescribed for each of them should be implemented. Maitreyanath describes in *Mah y nottara-Tantra* (Treatise on the Sublime Continuum):

Illness is the object to be known, the cause of illness is to be given up.

Then, having known the object to be gained, medicine is to taken.⁹

In regard the antidote referring to path, first we should make it clear that where there is a problem, there is a solution too. Further, if there is any suffering, there was definitely a cause behind it, and so there is a path to its cessation too. Secondly we should keep in mind that the suffering which is experienced by us is not eternal, inherently established and primordially existent, rather, it is temporal, it is incidental. It is obvious that a thing which is incidental and

ephemeral is definitely produced on account of the existence of a specific cause and condition. Therefore, that which is produced from a cause and condition is not stable but liable to decay too. That is why it is called as impermanent and that which is impermanent has the nature of change. Hence, suffering also is not stable but subject to decay or cease. The main thing is how we implement, how we take them into practice. Do we really try to trace its solution or not? Isn't true that Siddhartha transcended the problems in all respects by practising the path and finally became a Buddha? The Blessed One Buddha taught us the solution, showed the way of every problem. Simultaneously, he also made it clear that he just showed the way to liberation, and liberation will depend upon the goer, the practitioner. The Blessed One can never provide liberation by means of his power. Thus, one should be clear that as there are thousand types of non-virtue, there are thousand types of antidote for it too. For example, as said above that the entire *kleshas* are summarized into three— attachment, hatred and ignorance. These three have their individual antidote too. Likewise, grasping at self which is the intense delusion of the mind also has its specific antidote, i.e., it is removed by means of the transcendental knowledge of realizing the absence of self. Similarly when we explain the method of the dual *yānas* (vehicle), we say that the Theravāda which includes *śrāvaka* and Pratyekabuddhayaṇa, and Mahāyāna which includes the *Pramitayaṇa* and *Vajrayāna* have paved the way to control the mind in different ways.

Each of the two *yānas* has two streams of practice— conduct and view or doctrinal and philosophical. Regarding the aspect of conduct referring to the practice of ten virtues, observing vows of individual liberation, four means of transformation etc., looks quite similar in the both *yānas*. But when the issue of philosophical

point of view arises, we may find huge gap between these two. Let us quote the following verse and discuss on it in this regard:

All compounded things are impermanent.
 All contaminated things are suffering.
 All phenomena are empty and selfless.
 Nirvāṇa is peace.¹⁰

Among the four topics, the first two, i.e., '*All compounded things are impermanent. All contaminated things are suffering.*' do not have much difference between the two *yānas*. But regarding the issue of later two, especially the third one there is big difference. For example, the Theravāda asserts the partial *nair tmya*, i.e., *Pudgalanair tmya* only whereas the Mahāyāna asserts the actual and dual *nair tmya*, i.e., both *Pudgalanair tmya* and *Dharmanair tmya*. It is because according to Mahāyāna, every sentient being is bounded by dual fetter, i.e., *kleśavarāṇa* (obstructions to liberation) and *jñeyavarāṇa* (obstructions to omniscience) and so the remedy is also prescribed accordingly, i.e., method and wisdom leading to the dual final goal— liberation and omniscience.

Basically, from the point of Mahāyāna philosophical view, the presentation of basis, path and result is established and taken into practice in unified way: while describing the basis, path and result, they establish the two truths, method and wisdom, and two *kāyas* respectively. It means by taking the method and wisdom into practice in unified manner, accumulation of merits and accumulation of wisdom are amassed for the purpose of abandoning the delusive obscuration and the obscuration of knowledge leading to gain the dual *kāya*— *Dharmakāya* and *Rūpakāya*.

Regarding the practice of the precious dharma for controlling the mind, there are some who believe that Buddhism is so lofty and sublime a system that it cannot be practised by ordinary men and women in the workday

world. These same people think that one has to retire to a monastery or to some quiet place if one desires to be a true Buddhist. This is not a wrong conception and improper message that comes from a lack of understanding of the Buddha and his doctrine. Those who are with such conception jump to such conclusions after casually reading or hearing something about Buddhism. Some also form their impression of Buddhism after reading articles or books that give only a partial or lopsided view of Buddhism. The writers of this sort of books and articles possess only a limited understanding of the Buddha's doctrine. His doctrine is not meant only for monks or retreat-dwellers. Rather, it is also for ordinary devotees leading household life with their families. The essence of his teachings, such as four noble truths, eightfold noble path, compassion and love etc., are the Buddhist ways of live which are intended for all categories of people. These ways of life are offered to all mankind without any distinction. For example, the Kagyüpa masters say:

If one practises, he may attain liberation at home (in household life).

If he does not practise, he will not attain liberation on mountain (in retreat).

It means, for the sake of controlling the mind, we mainly need to follow the path, observe the disciplines and practise *sadhana*. The yellow robes, isolated place or cave are the auxiliary facilities or guard as a stick is a useful company for a blind.

Notes and References

1. The ten focussed objects of Dharma— Objects of knowledge, path, *nirvāṇa*, object of the mind, fortune, life span, teachings, that which arises from the main object, certainty and religious tradition (lineage).
2. The various worlds are produced from actions. *Abhidharmakośakarika*, [4.1a]

Effect of controlling the mind

According to Buddhism, when we talk about the effect of controlling the mind, we say there are two types— higher rebirth and definite goodness. Regarding the former, it refers to the birth of human beings, particularly happy and peaceful human beings, and gods while the latter refers to liberation from *saṃsāra*, and omniscience. These are the two states which can be attained by controlling the mind fully through the practice of Buddha dharma. It means when the mind of a practitioner successfully becomes free from the delusive obscuration, he attains liberation from *saṃsāra* and when he becomes free from both the delusive obscuration and the obscuration of knowledge, he attains the state of omniscience. It is because the delusive obscuration is the obstacle to liberation while the obscuration of knowledge is the obstacle to omniscience. It is clear from the above-mentioned things that the mind is the driver of our body which has continuously been motivating both our speech and body duly motivated itself by *kleshas* to commit countless number of unwholesome actions resulting to undergo various sufferings throughout births to rebirth. It will keep on continuing until this mind is not brought under one's control. Therefore, man who wishes joy, happiness and peace in this and future lives, should make his best effort by applying morality, concentration and wisdom as the antidote of their negativities to restrain it. Candrak rti says in *Madhyamakavat ra*:

Controlling of the mind is the excellent.
Happiness is drawn through controlling the mind.¹¹

3. The root of existence is the subtle-increasers. *Ibid*, [5:1]
4. *na kṣālayanti munayo jalena pāpaṃ, naivapakarṣanti kareṇa jagaddukhaṃ// naiva ca saṃkramante hyanye svadhigamaṃ, saddharmat deśanaya vimocayanti//*, Negi, Wanghuck Dotje (tr. & ed.). *Dhammapada*. p. 207

5. “All phenomena are Mind-made. Mind is the chief and forerunner (of the states). If one speaks or does an action—; with a wicked mind, Miseries shall follow him; As wheels follow the hooves of the bull.” *Dhammapada*, [1:1]
6. *sarva p pasya akaraṇaṃ/kuśalasya ca upasampad //sacittapariyodapanam/etān Buddhananuśasanam//* [14:04]
7. Negi, Wangchuk Dorje. *Dhammapada*, Sarnath: Central University of Tibetan Studies, 2013, p. 94
8. *Gṛdhrkuṭe Yathāśāstra Prajñā p ramit naye. Tath Mantranaye Prokt Śr Dh nye Dharmadeśn . (Se.Ti., p. 3).*
9. *vy dhirjñeyo vy dhihetuḥ praheyah. sv sthyam pr pyam bhesajam sevyamevam.* [4:53]
10. Das, Sanjib Kumar (tr. & ed.). *Siddhānta Ratnāvalī*. Leh: Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2005, p. 7
11. Tsering, Tashi (tr. & ed.). *Madhyamak vat ra*. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2005, p. 61 (Introduction)

Bibliography

1. *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. kra dbyi sun gyis gtso 'gan bzhes nas rtsom sgrig byas pa, mi rigs dpe skrun khang, China, 1992.
2. *bod rgya shan sbyar gyi shes bya'i rnam grangs kun btus tshig mdzod*. ha'o wun zhon dang tou shi gnyis kyis bsgrigs, mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1987.
3. Bapat, Lata. *Abhidharmakośa: A Study with a New Perspective*. Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan Pub., 1994.
4. Bapat, P.V. *2500 Years of Buddhism*. India: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1997.
5. Chandra, Lokesh. *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1959.
6. Dalai Lama. *Opening the Mind and Generating a Good Heart*. Dharamsala: 2007.
7. Das, Sanjib Kumar: *Basic Buddhist Terminology*. Sarnath: Kagyu Relief & Protection Committee, 2009.
8. Das, Sanjib Kumar (tr. & ed.). *Siddhanta Ratnavali* (Hindi). Leh: Central Institute of Buddhist Studies,, 2005.
9. Gorampa Sonam Sangye. *Siddhartha's Intent. Establishment of Interdependent Origination* (Tibetan Version), 2001.
10. *In Search of Truth* (A collection of Articles in Honour of Prof. Samdong Rinpoche), Alumni of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath: 1999.
11. Je Gampopa. *Ornament of Liberation* (Tibetan Version). U.S.A.: Institute of Tibetan Classics, 2009.
11. *Jewels from the Treasury: Vasubandhu's Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma and its Commentary Youthful Play*. David Karma Choephel (tr.), KTD Pub. 2012.
12. Lamotte, Etienne. *Karmasiddhi Prakarana: The Treatise on Action by Vasubandhu*, Asian Humanities Press, 2001.
13. Negi, Wangchuk Dorje (tr. & ed.). *Dhammapada*. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2013
14. Pandey, G.C. *Bauddha Dharma Ke Vikas Ka Itihas*. Lucknow: Hindi Sansthan, 1990.
15. Poussin, Louis De La Vallée (tr. into French). *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*. Paris: 1991.
16. Tsering, Tashi (tr. & ed.). *Madhyamak vat ra*. Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2005.

STRIVING FOR A BETTER SOCIETY: THE ANĀGĀRIKA DHARMAPĀLA WAY - AN APPROACH TO INDIAN SOCIETIES IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Prof. Suniti Kumar Pathak

In the Indian historical background an account of British colonial enterprises was not accidental. Prior to those peoples of the large continent Bharatavarsa had been divided and distributes in numerous groups and factions with trends of actions. Numerous distributions among themselves as many as possible prevailed then. Primarily every faction, better to say, claimed themselves ruling authority with numerous identities. Prior to that, the identity of the Buddhist communities had been effaced under the force of time as the Indians used to defined time as the Destroyer; that had been a Universal Truth. None had repentances for that loss.

That caused Venerable An g rika Dharmap la to shed tears then . As and when he had firstly visited the deplorable conditions of the then Mahaboodhi located at the than Gaya near the Neranjana river adjacent to Uruvala .

Prior to that some important historical facts since Battle of Palashi in 1757 followed, After the defeat of the Mughals in Buxar Battle 1764 the British rule occurred with help of a faction of Indian people in order to achieve requisite interest with the least care for others. Thereby the British colonialism could be established safely. Their settlement was then in India was assured with the least resistance. Thus the British colonialism was formerly strengthened.

However, Ven. An g rika Dharmap la had been born in British occupied Ceylon and was acquainted with the teachings of Gautama the Buddha who had then been totally forgotten by

the then peoples belonging the land where he had been born. Incorrectly, the Hindu Pandit Jayadeba (spelt on Bengali pronunciation of Jayadeva) thought the Buddha Gautama as an incarnate Vishnu by the 11th cent. A.D. Later on, in many regions Buddha had been incorrectly identified with Shiva / Mahadeva. As such, inappropriately in many instances the stone icons of Goutama the Buddha were placed along with its multiple gods with no identifications. However some European scholars introduced the Buddha in the Indian history anew.

The Asiatic Society of the Bengal Calcutta 1784

With a sincere inquisition in such for the Cultural heritage of the Indian peoples, the British however established the Asiatic Society 1784. Later on, James Princep could read out Ashokan Inscriptions scribed in Brhami Scripts c.3rd cent B.C could invite the attention of Orientalists in such of the Buddha in India. It had been known by the few. Again, Sir Edwin Arnold composed *The Light of Asia*, (1869) in lucid poems referring to his benevolence of the Buddha for redressing the causes of human sorrow as suffering.

An g rika Dhamap la came forward to uplift the then unidentified Buddhist Indians who had been almost unknown then in Indian peninsula. That could create a history by itself. Despite that none could come forward in the then Magadha in associating him. He was then lone to challenge. On the other hand he had been abused for interference in the Mohant's *Deverttar* property in adjacent to Gaya. He

had come to Calcutta, where a band of people could support an expressed cooperation for the noble cause. He was not then a lone person to determine the feature. Thus historical accounts of those days have now been a bygone memory.

The teachings of Gautama the Buddha have now been revived among the Indians with high cadet since the Maha Bodhi Society of India have actively come forwarded following the footsteps what Anagarita Dhasuiapala left. He is no more in the passage of time, his footsteps prompt us to go ahead with requisite endeavors with patience and tolerance.

A Society : An assemblage of individuals with mutual lien

A English term *society* may not be equivalent what the Buddhist approaches refer. Attention may be invited to *Brahma-yācana katha* section of a dialogic in the *Vinayapitaka Maha-vagga* in Pali .

Between Sahampati Brahma and Gautama Buddha the Awakened one may be referred.

*pātu-rahosi magadhe pubbe
dhammo asuddho samalehi cintito
.....
sokāvatiṇṇam janatanma petamaka
avekkjassu jātijarābhibhum
uṭṭhehi vīra vijita-sangāma
satthavaho anaṇa vicara loke
.....*

In Magadha peoples have been individually undergoing troubles. Those are in worries and pangs to suffer afflictions in sorrow and old age. Let thou getup the victor one. Move undaunted in universe.

The citation relates to human societies what usually are in the mud, of calamity owing to old age leading to death.

The above may be challenged as non-contextual here. Because, the about refers to

a person's manners in respective livelihood; whereas *vijita-sangāma* indicates a collective warfare between one group and other. Continually, however, Gautama the Buddha had to fight against the multiple hoards of Mara. The Buddha's teachings had been delivered for personal cause with reference to respective social environs, in plurality of human beings.

Thereby it may be submitted is response.

The ancient Indian Magadhan human societies, prior to the advent of Gautama the Buddha from Sakya origin, had been distributed in multiple factions of peoples who had not been probably of the Aryan Vedic Language speakers. Demographically, the *Kikaṭajana* who could not speak the Vedic nor mixed Sanskrit. Probably that might have prompted to Gautama the Sakya prince. He had run away in Magadha then in quest of the truth how to escape one's death followed by his or her birth. His main approach had been then a quest how to get rid of suffering in one's livelihood to avail bliss.

After his long venture homelessly from place to place he succeeded to be an Awakened One the Buddha after fighting against Mara the ignorance *avijjā* . There lies the clue of generating a new society which had then be polluted .

In Pali *Visuddhimagga* an individual *satta* (*sattva*) refers to an individual one with no specification but is *repadisu khandhesu chandoragena satta visattati satta*. Thus Bodhi-satta is above those mundane characteristics of individual by dent of merits achieved in order to rendered service of the human societies with bhramavihra; namely metta, karuna, mudita upekkha. In brief a Bodhisattva's metta is the affections what a mother who has only one child bestows all around. Our venerable Dharmapala could set an example before the human world what a Bodhisattva would have .

The Anāgārika Dharmapāla's Way

It is evident that Late An g rika Dharmap la could explore a way of positive approach how to strike upon the ignorance *en-masse*. His activities in promoting, better to say , re-awakening of the Buddha awareness among the Indians since the last quarter of the 19th cent. Presently the Buddhist thought among the Indians has re-awakened with glow of light all over by their respective sincere dedications. No scope for causing deposition of condensed in human mind what Gautama Buddha could make for human uplift . Condensing process of ignorants mind would be truncated.

A action *kamma* is adhered to its fruition *kammaphāla* and that may be either visible *diṭṭha-kamma-phala* and non-visible *adiṭṭha-kamma-phala* under the impact cravings *taṅhā* in human mind is bound to undergo in lack of proper judgment ethically. Human beings are under three active facets what Late An g rika Dharmapāla ventured to remodel anew by his

exemplary Buddhist activities up till his last breath according to the Vinaya guidance of self-restraint .e.g

1. Environments: An g rika Dharmap la succeeded to create a positive environment through multiple activates akin to generate Buddha Awareness among the people *en masse*.
2. Emotions: Bands of Buddha's disciples all over India and abroad have been now actively undergo multiple subjective operations like meditations, prayers and Buddha worship with moderate livelihood in India and abroad.
3. Ethics: Buddhist ethical principles of the middle way as enunciated in the Buddhist literature are being followed seriously to build up their distinct measures of livelihood with serenity and comparison.

Methinks, these are the vital force in a human life towards the path of Bodhisatta practices *bodhi-cariyā*.

On Getting Angry

‘My friend, who has retired from the world and are angry with this man, tell me what it is you are angry with? Are you angry with the hair of the head, or with the hair of the body, or with the nails etc.? Or are you angry with the earthy element in the hair or the head and the rest? Or are you angry with the watery element, or with the fiery element, or with the windy element in them? What is meant by a person is only the five groups, the six organs of sense, and the six sense consciousnesses. With which of these are you angry?

For a person who has made the above analysis, there is no hold for anger; any more than there is a grain of mustard-seed on the point of an awl or for a painting in the sky.

Visuddjhi Magga

MEDITATION AND VIPASSANA IN PĀLI LITERATURE

Dr. Vijay Kumar Singh

Buddhism advocates leading the life of high moral ethics with righteousness. For this there is several meditation techniques are suggested in Tipitakas. Vipassana is known as one of the best meditation technique that purifies our consciousness and helps us to lead a pious life full of high moral ethics. Some Buddhist scholars who are fond of Vipassana also claim that it is the Vipassana that can make us understand the actual meaning of Buddhist seminal teachings.

The primal and formal aim of every practitioner of Vipassana meditation is to realise and follow the eightfold path. The eightfold path as we all very well know is divided into three categories namely, Morality, meditation and wisdom. Under morality the trio of Right speech (vaca), right action (kammanta) and right livelihood (Ajiva) are covered. In the category of Meditation, right effort (vayayama), right mindfulness (sati) and right concentration (samadhi) are grouped. Lastly under the category of wisdom, right view (ditthi) and right intention (sankappa, aspiration) are packed.

The present researcher opines that the final aim of the Vipassana is to purify the citta from all the defilements. After that, the citta enters into the realm of bhavmayi prajna . This type of prajna is third of three prajnas called experiential wisdom. So the ultimate result of vipassana meditation is to generate Prajna. Nevertheless, the prajna is to here instrumental to do all the action of the practitioner and whatever he or

she will do will be for the benefit of one and all beings. The methodology of Vipassana is well known and its place in Dhammapada will be the core concern of this paper.

How to Generate Parajñā

As per the writings of Sogyal Rinpoche, (Author of Tibetan Book of Living and Dying) we came to know that we are all naturally endowed with boundless wisdom, immeasurable compassion and infinite power (capability). Yet, because we have lost touch with these inner qualities, we rarely scratch beneath the surface of the potential that we possess. When we do come in touch with our true nature, however, we can truly be of service and benefit -- not only to ourselves and our own best interests, but also to others and their needs. So first, in order to truly help others, we must help ourselves. As it is said in the English "Charity begins at home." We can begin, first of all, by getting to know our own mind. In fact, the entire teaching of the Buddha can be summed up in a single line: to tame, transform and conquer this mind of ours.

There are several verses in Dhammapada who attribute to eliminate the path lead to mindfulness in order to generating Prajna. I can collect 33 verses like this

Dr. Singh is a Professor of Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Chairperson & HOD, Dept. of Chinese & Tibetan Languages, Panjab University, Chandigarh

and there may be more. The verse no. 28 (Mahakassapathera Vatthu) where it is said that the wise one dispels negligence by means of mindfulness, he ascends the tower of wisdom and being free from sorrow looks at the sorrowing beings. In verse 33, 34, 35, a well trained man brings happiness, 37, those who control over their mind will become free from the bonds of Mara. No. 38 (where a person whose mind is unsteady, ignorant of true dhamma and whose faith is wavering cannot have his knowledge perfect), 40 (defeating Mara and making the mind secure), 58-59 (wisdom can be grown upon rubbish heap of beings), 63 (a fool is one who thinks he is wise), 80 (as engineer, carpenter and Fletcher do their work so should the practitioner tame oneself), 124 (where person with no evil if he or she has no evil intentions as an unwounded hand cannot get harmed with poison), 141 (being naked, being jatajut hair, smearing with mud or doing fast, sleeping on bare ground, covering body with dust etc. cannot purify a person but overcoming doubt can do.) 153-154 (where the clear vision with wisdom should be seen else only suffering is bound to overcome the beings), 160 (One is one's own refuge and hence one has to strive himself to attain Arhathood or deva's world), 183 (not doing evil and doing only kushala is necessary and purifying one's own mind is the teachings of all Buddhas), 190-192 (where one's refuge should only be in the Buddha Dhamma and Sangha and not in any other person or entity because it is the refuge that can do the cessation of sufferings), 202 (Attachment, hatred, and the burden of Five aggregates and the Nibbana is the only state where supreme and unparalleled bliss is

attained), 230 (wise person is praised by all including Brahma), 270 (where only a non-violent person can become an Arya), 277-284 (If we can see through wisdom then only we can understand that All conditioned phenomena are impermanent, dukkha and all dhammas are without self), 294-295 (we have to kill father and mother i.e. ego and craving, also to kill to khattiya i.e. eternity belief and annihilation belief, to destroy the kingdom i.e. sense bases and sense objects, further to kill revenue officer i.e. attachment and then only an Arhat dwells free from suffering. After above four killings the fifth one is tiger who is to be killed. Here tiger is doubtful.), 354 (The gift of dhamma excels all gifts, the taste of dhamma excels all tastes, the delight in dhamma excels all delights and the eradication of craving overcomes all ill), 369 (cutting off passion and ill will makes our boat of life and it can sail swiftly to realize Nibbana), 372 (Without concentration there is no wisdom and without wisdom there is no concentration), 380 (your yourselves your own refuge, how anyone else can be one's refuge. 100 include)

The first and most basic practice of meditation is to allow the mind to settle into a state of "calm abiding," where it will find peace and stability, and can rest in the state of non-distraction, which is what meditation really is. I can put this into the term Zhi Nas which in Pali is samatha. The philosophy is chu ma nyok na dang, sem ma chö na de. It means "Water, if you don't stir it, will become clear; the mind, left unaltered, will find its own natural peace, well-being, happiness and bliss...". That's the importance of meditation of Samatha or Zhi Nas.

1. The Contemplation of Body
 - 1) Mindfulness of Breathing
 - 2) The Postures of the Body
 - 3) Mindfulness with Clear Comprehension
 - 4) The Reflection on the Repulsiveness of the Body
 - 5) The Reflection in the material elements
 - 6) The nine cemetery contemplation
2. The Contemplation of feeling
3. The contemplation of consciousness
4. The contemplation of mental objects
 - 1) The Five hindrances
 - 2) The Five aggregates of clinging
 - 3) The six internal and external Senses bases
 - 4) The seven factors of Enlightenment
 - 5) The four noble Truths

In Dhammapada, they are plenty of verses attributed to generate Parajñā in order to gain the power to purify the citta so that the practitioner can advance on eightfold path.

Starting from the very first verse of Dhammapada to 423 verses, I have come across plenty of verses denoting the importance and symptoms about generating Prajna. I have selected the following 36 verses for my purpose of elucidating prajna which in turn serves as a tool to purify our citta i.e. mind.

I able to collect the following 55 verses pertaining to Samattha i.e. calming the mind along with the name of stories linked to them.. These are as follows:-

Verse No,1 (Cakkhupalatthera Vatthu), No. 5 (Kalayakkhini Vatthu), 9-10 (Devadatta Vatthu), verse No. 57 (Godhikttheraparinibbana

vatthu), 80 (Pandit Samnera vatthu), 81 (Lakundkbhaddiyatthera vatthu), 82 (Kanamata Vatthu), 83 (Panchsatbhikkhu vatthu), 87, 88 and 89 (Pancsata Agantukabhikkhu Vatthu), 93 (Anuruddhatthera Vatthu), 94 (Mahakacchayanatthera Vatthu), 95 (Sariputtatthera Vatthu), 96 (Kosambivasitissattherasamanera Vatthu), 99 (Annatara itthi Vatthu), 101(Tambadathika Coraghataka Vatthu), 113 (Patacaratheri vatthu), 126 (Manikarakulupaka Tissatthera Vatthu), 143-4 (Pilotikatissatthera Vatthu), 145 (Sukhasamanera Vatthu), 173 (Angulimalatthera Vatthu), 176 (Cincamanvika Vatthu), 179-180 (Maradhitara Vatthu), 222(Annatarabhikkhu Vatthu), 223 (Uttara Upasika vatthu), 251 (Panca Upasaka Vatthu), 253 (Mendakasetthi Vatthu), 282 (Potthilatthera Vatthu), 291 (Kukkutandakhadika Vatthu, verse 5 also), 294-5 (Lakundaka Bhaddiya Vatthu), 302 (Vajjiputtakabhikkhu Vatthu), 305 (Ekaviharitthera Vatthu), 320-2 (Attadanta Vatthu), 323 (Hatthacariyapubbaka Bhikkhu Vatthu), 327 Paveyyakahatthi Vatthu), 344 (Vibhantabhikkhu), 347 (Khematheri Vatthu), 368-76 (Sambahulabhikkhu Vatthu), 384 (SabahulbhikkhuVatthu),389-90(Sariputtatthera Vatthu), 399 (Akkosakabharadvaja Vatthu), 400 (Sariputta Thera Vatthu), 403 (Khemabhikkhuni Vatthu), 405 (Anattarabhikkhu Vatthu), 416 (Jatilathera Vatthu)

For Vipassana exclusively 6 verses are there. Verses no. 19 and 20 where Dveshayakabhikkhu Vatthu is directed to generate insight i.e. Vipassana in generic sense, No. 35 (Annatarabhikkhu vatthu), 153-154 (Udan Vatthu), 174 (Pesakaradhita Vatthu),

For Samattha and Vipassana both I found 7 verses.

13 and 14 (Nandthera vatthu). No. 53 (Visakha Vatthu),

I cannot resist myself describing the Dhammapada verse 57 which is directly linked to samattha and vipassana. Here the story goes:-

The Story of Thera Godhika

Residing at the Veluvana monastery, the Buddha uttered this with reference to Thera Godhika.

Thera Godhika was, on one occasion, diligently practising Tranquillity and Insight Development, on a stone slab on the side of Isigili mountain in Magadha. When he had achieved one-pointedness of the mind (jhana) he became very ill; that impaired the effectiveness of his practice. In spite of his sickness, he kept on striving hard; but every time he was making some progress he was overcome by sickness. He was thus afflicted for six times. Finally, he made up his mind to overcome all obstacles and attain arahatship even if he were to die. So, without relaxing he continued to practise diligently; in the end he decided to give up his life by cutting his throat; at the point of death he attained arahatship.

When Mara learned that Thera Godhika had died, he tried to find out where the thera was reborn but failed to find him. So, assuming the likeness of a young man, Mara approached the Buddha and enquired where Thera Godhika was. The Buddha replied to him, “It will be of no benefit to you to learn of the destination of Thera Godhika; for having been freed of moral defilements he became an arahat. One like you, Mara, for all your power will not be able to find out where such arahats go after death.”

Apart from above two, there are the following... verses related directly to both

Samatth and Vipassana. Verse No. 111 (Khanu Kondannatthera Vatthu), Verse No. 276 (you yourselves have to make effort and practice samattha and vipassana, Tathagata can only show you the way), Verse No. 384 (Sambahulabhikkhu Vatthu).

So the Zhi Nas or Samatha is the prerequisite without that the practice of Vipassana is next to impossible. It is so because due to Samath, our mind become pure, calm and ready to observe the most subtle sensation in the body that is the basic requirement of Vipassana. Without the Samatha, our mind may be ready to go forward in Vipassana but due to the polluted thought of our previous karma (of course they are) the suffering will follow us as the wheel of the bullock cart follows the hoof of the ox as it is said in the first verse of Dhammapada. So the mind need to be pollution free and then follows the Vipassana.

From the detailed description of the verses connecting Samatha and Vipassana in dhammapada verse through the stories imbibed with them, it is clear that the Vipassana meditation is a part of the daily life and practice of a Buddhist and hence it is not a practice that necessarily demands solitude or relinquish the household affairs. Although it may be accepted that a monk's practice of Vipassana may look dissimilar to a household because of their manner to hold its tit bits but after all it is the purification of mind that prevails in its meditation. It is surely as per Dhammapada 183 as below:-

Sabbapapassa Akaranam, kusalassa Upadampada
Sacittapariodpannam, Etam Buddhā Sasanam.

It goes like this, Abstinence from all evil, fulfilment of all good Purification of one's mind; this is the law of Buddhas.

LIFE OF BUDDHA IN ASVAGHOSA'S LITERATURE: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Dr. Sumanapal Bhikkhu

We come to know from the Chinese work Li-tai-Sanpao-chi and other accounts that Asvaghosa was born in a Brahmana family. Later he was converted to Buddhism and the aim of his conversion was to benefit the world with the noble Law of Buddha. Before being converted to Buddhism Asvaghosa acquired a thorough knowledge of Brahmanical literature, including the four Vedas, six treatises on Vedanga, Epics and Darsanas. His works proved that he had a profound knowledge of Sanskrit grammar. At the same time he was equally well versed in the Tripitaka.

Chinese tradition informs us that Asvaghosa was converted to Buddhism by the Patriarch Parsuva, but Tibetan legend gives the credit to Parsava's disciple Purna of the Sarvastivada School.¹ In his life of Asvaghosa Xuang Zang says that Asvaghosa was converted to Buddhism by Parsva after being defeated by him in a public discussion.

The Tibetan legend informs us that after being converted to Buddhism Asvaghosa began to propagate Buddhism in Kusumpura (Modern Patna) not only as a preacher but also as a poet and musician². With regard to music, the songs Asvaghosa Bodhisattva wrote for the drama the story of Rastrapala³ were a revelation on worldly impermanence and suffering. When performed in the city of Pataliputta, the lyrics so touched the audience of five hundred princes that they subsequently decided to be ordained and cultivate the Buddha Way.

Asvaghosa propagated Buddhism through his poems in Sanskrit. But he invented his own style and preached the difficult Buddhist philosophy. In his poems Asvaghosa wrote about the life of the Buddha and in doing so he applied

interesting literary elements. He believed that through worship and devotion to the Buddha alone a man can attain salvation and become free from the cycle of birth and death.

There were many writers by the name Asvaghosa who glorified the Buddha and his teachings. However scholars have attributed to him the following prominent and authentic works.

1. Buddhacarita, 2. Soundarananda, 3. Sraddhotpada Sastra, 4. Vajrasuci, 5. Sariputra Prakarana, 6. Sutralamkara.

Buddhacarita

I-tseing says about the Buddhacarita⁴ that it was a voluminous poem which recounted the life & work of the Buddha from the time when he was still living in the royal place till his last hour in the park of the Sala trees. He adds, "It is extensively read in all the five parts of India and in the countries of the south sea (Sumatra, Java and the neighboring islands). He clothed manifold notions and ideas in a few words which so delighted the heart of his reader that they are never wearied of perusing the poem. Moreover it was regarded as a virtue to read it in as much as it contained the Noble doctrine in a neat compact form". What the Chinese pilgrim says in eulogy of the Buddhacarita we can completely substantiate on the basis of the torso we possess. Here we have in reality for the first time a proper Buddha epic created by a true poet who permeated with love and reverence for the exalted person of the Buddha and profound reverence for the verity of the doctrine of the Buddha represents the life and the teaching of the master in noble language of art which is not artificial.

*Dr. Sumanapal Bhikkhu is Guest Lecturer, Department of Language, University of Calcutta, Kolkata & Editor, *Nalanda*.

We get the complete biography of the Buddha in the Buddhacharta from his birth to the Parinirvana. There are 28 cantos in it and these cantos are divided into four equal parts with regard to a biographical account of Buddha: (1) birth and youth until his renunciation, (2) wanderings, asceticism, battle with more Mara and Enlightenment, (3) teaching, propagation of doctrines in many countries in the four directions, (4) the last journey and Parinirvana.

In the Buddhacarita Asvaghosa has described the activities of the present life of the Buddha. He was kind towards all animals and human beings when he realized that old age, disease, and death are the causes of sorrow of mankind he became very sorry and left home in order to find out a remedy for them.

In Ramayana Maharsi Valmiki wrote the epic Ramayana to immortalize Rama, Sage Vyasa composed the epic Mahabharata to propagate the teachings of Lord Krishna Likewise the epic Buddhacarita was composed to preach the teachings of the Buddha. This work by Asvaghosa is revered by the Buddhists as Ramayana is respected by the Hindus. It is meritorious to read Buddhacarita epic because it contains the noble doctrine, given in a concise form.⁵ With the help of Buddhacarita Asvaghosa made the Buddha an incarnation of god like Rama, Krishna, etc.

In Buddhacarita we find the following characteristics:

1. Devotion to Buddha
2. Use of miraculous element
3. Refutation; of Brahmanical practices
4. The conquest of Mara
5. The gradual development of Mahayana

The central interest of the Buddhacarita is the life story of the Buddha. The poet has added to it colourful sense of love in the harem at night which prompted prince Siddhartha to run away from the palace and fight against Mara's army in canto XIII.

The poet has included a number of historical and legendary figures in order to make his stand point weightier. They are Agastya, Analya, Aja, Ambarisa, Anaranya, Angiras, Asita, Bhisma, Brahma, Dasharatha, Dhruva, Gautama Muni, Gautama Maharshi Apsara, Jayanta, Lopamudra, Manu, Maruti, Meghawati Pandu, Parasara, Rohini, Sakra, Sibi, Upasunda, Urvashi, Vemdeva, Vasastha, Videha, Vibhraj, Juhvati etc.

In sculpture we can find all the important events in the life of the Buddha depicted in the Buddhacarita. For instance, in Gandhara Art piece No. 16 (Peshawar No. 2071) we find a divine child being held by two kneeling women with Indra and Brahma pouring water over him from two flasks. Pieces No. 33 and 34 show the marriage of Siddhartha with Yasodhara No. 35 depict the, bridal procession and no. 36 depicts the plugging scene. Here Siddhartha is marketing the tired oxen and birds eating insects.

The poem turns round the history of the Buddha's life but deals especially with those scenes that have been either lightly the 1st canto describes the establishment of the touched upon or not treated at all in the Buddhacarita city of Kapilavastu.

Soundarananda

'Soundarananda' was another important work of Asvaghosa. Nanda is the proper name of Siddhartha's half brother and Sundari is the name of his wife. The aim of the title is to denote both these names which untidily signify perfect beauty.

Soundarananda is an epic written in 18 cantos. In it we find the story of the conversion of Buddha's half brother Nanda.

Nanda and his wife were excessively attached to each other. One day when the Buddha came to them for begging they gave nothing to him as they were immersed in the pleasures of the senses with their attendants. When Nanda was aware about this he was ashamed and went

to see the sage. Buddha was unwilling to accept any apology and wanted to place the bowl in Nanda's hands but as Nanda was anxious to return to his wife, he refused to oblige the Buddha so he spiritually attracted Nanda and took him to a monastery. At first Buddha failed in his attempt to convert Nanda and then the job was entrusted to Vaideha Muni.

The Muni appealed to the good sense of Nanda and he consented half heartedly Nanda was shaved and was taken to heaven where heavenly Apsaras were shown to him. Nanda found these beautiful celestial maidens to be more beautiful than his wife and wanted to win them. He was told by the Buddha that in order to obtain them, he must attain heaven at first. Then the Buddha's disciple told Nanda that the joys of heaven was temporary and a man has to return to earth as soon as his merit is exhausted So Nanda got rid of his desire for heavenly Apsaras and went to the Buddha with the request to show him the path of Enlightenment. The Buddha was very pleased by the transformation of Nanda and preached the Dharma. Nanda went to the forest to meditate and subsequently attained Arhathood. In the end the Buddha advised him to emancipate others also.

Whilst in Buddhacarita there is no express doctrine emanating from the Mahayana school, the concluding portion of the Soundarananda kavya already begins to betray a blaming towards the Mahayana. It is not sufficient for it that Nanda himself should become a saint who attains to Nirvana. He must be an apostle of the faith although it must not be forgotten that even in the Hinayana the obligation of the propagation of faith and proselytism is highly praised, as in a Sutra in Anguttara nikaya. Besides in the third great work of Asvaghosa entitled the Sutralamkara many of the semi-legendary stories are based on a Hinayanic foundation.

The story of Soundarananda is found in Pali Dhammapada and Sutta Nipata. However this

Pali version and the Sanskrit version differ in the following respects.

- (I) In Pali version, Buddha entered the palace of Nanda at the time when preparation for his marriage and coronation was complete. In the version composed by Asvaghosha the sage entered the house when Nanda and his wife were immersed in pleasure.
- (II) In Pali version Sundari cries out to her husband to return soon but in Asvaghosha's Sanskrit version Sundari exhorts a promise from her husband to return before the point on her cheek is dried.
- (III) In Pali version we do not find the name of the person who converted Nanda but Asvaghosa clearly mentions the name of Ananda as the converted of Nanda.
- (IV) In Pali version Nanda simply says that he was practicing austerities against his will.
- (V). In Pali version the She monkey (Seen in heaven) is without eye, nose, ears and tail but in Sanskrit she is only with one eye.
- (VI) In Pali version Nanda was the butt of ridicule for the monks but in Sanskrit Ananda upbraids Nanda.

The name of Nanda also figures in Theragatha verses 157 and 158 but here we find some changes in the words uttered by the Buddha and in the description of convinced how Nanda was convinced to become a follower of Buddha and Arahat.

As a literary creation Soundarananda is generally regarded as better work than Buddhacarita. Though no Chinese or Tibetan version of the work is found it is believed that it was more widely read than Buddhacarita.⁶

Sculptors like many scenes from the Saundarananda but the palace life of Nanda and Sundari seems to have been very popular with contemporary and post – Asvaghosha artists

No. 12.186 ,inn Mathura Museum the two

panels represent the palace life of Nanda and Sundari as described by the poet Asvaghosa.⁷ We find Nanda arranging the hair of Sundari, who is looking into a mirror, while a female attendant is holding a toilet casket. In the lower compartment Sundari is putting a necklace, while looking at the mirror.

In Soundarananda we find many historical, mythical and legendary figures from pre-Asvaghosa literature while emphasizing his stand point with illustrations.⁸ They are:

Adityas, Agni, Analya, Aksamala, Ambarisa, Angiras, Angada, Antidev, Arjuna, Asita, Bhargana, Bharata, Bhusima, Dilipa, Diti, Gautama, Indra, Janmejaya, Kandarpa, Kasyapa, Kanna, Kapila (Sage), Madana, Nahusa, Pandu, Rambhu, Sagar, Santanu, Urvasi, Ugratapas, Vasava, Vayati, and Yamuna.

Buddhacarita and Soundarnanda offer two different modes of salvation. In Buddhacarita Siddhartha sought the advice of many teachers. But Asvaghosa refuted their philosophies in course of the poem. In the poem Buddha attained enlightenment by virtue of Hetu working within him. But in Soundarananda we find Buddha advising Nanda to help others in attaining salvation. Thus in Soundarananda we find the seed of Mahayana.

Sutralamkara

Sutralamkara or Sutra-Ornament is a collection of legends after the model of the Jataka and Avadanas which are narrated in prose and verse in the style of Indian poetic art. Many of these legends are known to us of old as of Dirghayus or Prince long life and King Sibi. Others already show more of the spirit of the Mahayana or at best a reverence for the Buddha which is more Mahayanist in its tendency.

An example of real Mahayanist is Buddha bhakti is also furnished by No. 68, where Gautami, the foster mother of the Buddha, attains to Nirvana through the grace of the Buddha.

Vajrasuci

Vajrasuci is the work in which Asvaghosa bitterly attacks Brahmanical caste system and is full of illustration from Brahmannical texts.

In the time of the Buddha Brahmins and Sramanas were two distinguished religious sects of India. In our literature finds many descriptions about them. In the society Brahmins enjoyed those privileges that were denied to the people belonging to the other castes. For instance, Brahmins were honoured by the king and were fined less than the other castes. Even corporal punishments were not inflicted on them under any circumstances. Besides, Brahmins were exempted from certain taxes. With the heap of these evidences it can be proved undoubtedly that the Brahmins were considered to be superior in social, political and economic matters and the Sudras or the lowest class of the society received a very callous treatment in the hands of the Dharma Sastras and Manu.

This wide gulf between the Brahmins and Sudras in the society finally resulted in untouchability which, in the following age becomes a cancer for the society.

The Buddha was very diplomatic and tactful waging war against Brahmanism. IN the Buddhist scriptures we find many definitions of a true Brahmana which says that such a person is equal to a Buddhist monk in virtues, learning and conduct.

After attaining Enlightenment the Buddha spent seven days at the foot of the Banyan tree. According to Mahavagga a Brahmana visited him there. There the Buddha explained to him what a true Brahmana means he is the best and the highest kind of man. And who has no blemishes anywhere in the world. Again in the Udana we find the Buddha saying, that having cast – off all sin, making himself clean (of sin), such a Brahmana is Enlightened (i.e. the Buddha)

In Vajrasuci Asvaghosa on the one hand

criticized the Brahmanas for their costly sacrifices and Yajnas and on the other hand Brahmana that can be found in their own their literature (Brahmana and Vedic). The Buddha equals such a person to an Arahant.

Both Asvaghosa and his contemporary Vasumitra II refuted for the first time the Brahmanic doctrine of Sankhya and Vaisesika. In the society a new trend had crept in and there was a natural protest movement against the supremacy of the Brahmanic system. Our poet Asvaghosa also felt its impact.

Vajrasuci or Diamond needle is a small Sanskrit work of thirty seven verses. This work shows Asvaghosa's profound knowledge of Brahmanical religious literature. In this book the poet has used numerous quotations from the Vedas, Epics, and Law books and has justified the standpoint of the Buddha. Here Asvaghosa defends the equality of all classes of men and says "As there is similarity in joy and sorrow, in life, intellect, in functions, in conduct or in behaviour, birth and death, sexual enjoyments and in fear, there is indeed no distinction between a Brahmana and others, The poet criticizes the caste system and gives a new definition of the Brahmana – one who has the Right conduct (Sila qualities).

According to our poet a true Brahmin is not he who is born in a Brahmana family, well conversant with Vedic Literature but a man who with words, actions and mind does not trouble or injure others with body, mind and actions, is self controlled and a slave to desires, is compassionate for all sentient beings, is far away from greed and does not accept what is not given to him serves the cause of others day and night has renounced worldly life, believes in non violence and is free from attachment, hatred and contempt.

There are many parallel passages in Vajrasuci and Brahmanavagga of Dhammapada (XXVI. 383 – 423).⁹ The qualities assigned to

a Brahmana in this section of Dhammapada inspired the poet so much that he seems to have borrowed certain lines and words from it. In order to illustrate this point we may compare identical passages in Dhammapada (Brahmanavagga) and Vajrasuci. In Dhammapada Buddha says a man is not a Brahmana by reason of the matted hair or by lineage or his caste. Asvaghosa also agrees with him when he says that a man is not Brahmana because of birth or by lineage or by ceremonies. In Dhammapada Buddha says "Him I call a Brahmana who accepts nothing in this world, that is not given to him be it long, short, small or big beautiful or ugly." Dhammapada says, "No small advantage gains the Brahmana who restrains his mind from things dear to him. He averts his mind from indulging in violence. Again in Dhammapada he says - I call a Brahmana from whom lust, ill-will, pride and envy have fallen off. Asvaghosa quoting Vaisampayana says, "He who is detached from lust and hatred.... is a Brahmana."

In short, Asvaghosa the poet has tried to combat the faults of Brahmanism, and exalt the qualities of sila. The beauty of the work lies in the fact that he has expounded these qualities in the guise of the qualities of a true Brahmana. Indirectly he has preached and encouraged Buddhism.

At the same time he has very wisely recorded the changing trend (from Tapa to morality) of the religious reformers of his time.

In this work we find numerous mention of host of legendary figures and historical personages from different ancient sources.

Acala, Agastya, Arni, Dronacharya, Gautama, Indra Kapila, Mahesvara, Pandu, Panini, Ravana, Renuka's son Rama, Surya, Uma, Vyasa and Yudhisthira, etc.

Sraddhapada – Sastra

Sraddhapada –Sastra is one of the world's most famous and important Mahayana work.

However, there is a debate regarding the authorship of it. These who are reluctant to assign its authorship to Asvaghosa argue that there is no affinity of Philosophical discussion between his two Kavyas (Soundarananda and Buddhacarita) and this work. In these two poems we find mention of the ‘non-entity’ of the soul and there is no mention of ‘Tatthata while Sraddhapada’ is essentially a deviation. It believes in the existence of the soul. Asvaghosa himself says, For the purpose of awakening in all beings a pure faith in the Mahayana, of destroying their doubts and attachment to false doctrines, and of affording them an uninterrupted inheritance of Buddha –Seeds, I write this discourse.

Prof. Suzuki also says that the term Mahayana adopted by Asvaghosa points the greatness of suchness and the term was used by him to prove that this was the safest and surest means of salvation.

According to Haraprasad Sastri this work was composed by Asvaghosa after Kaniska’s council in Kashmir Dr. Sastri is of the opinion that our poet took the cause of a few Mahayanist who were present in the council but could not impress much. So Asvaghosa composed Sraddhapada Sastra and Sutralamkara.¹⁰

From the historical point of view this work by Asvaghosa bears testimony to the evolution of Buddhist thoughts. In Asvaghosa’s time Buddhism was no longer confined to its original home Magadha and the original sutras were but inadequate. When the Buddhists penetrated in the Western part of the Gangetic basin they had to compete with the Hindu philosophers and the region was the birth place of the speculations of the Upanishads. The close contact with Brahmanism influenced Buddhist philosophy profoundly and as a result it adopted Sanskrit language as the vehicle for expressing philosophical thoughts.

Sraddhapada Sastra begins with a hymn and ends with a hymn. It is divided into five sections.

- (1) Introductory or reasons for writing the book
- (2) General statement about the Mahayana faith.
- (3) The explanation itself or the exposition of the Mahayana faith.
- (4) The practice of Mahayana faith.
- (5) Benefits of the practice of Mahayana Asvaghosa say that he composed the work keeping the following aims in mind.
 1. To save all sentient beings from suffering.
 2. To present the true meaning of Tathagata’s teaching.
 3. To conserve the gain of those who have made some advance on the path to enlightenment.
 4. To awaken and strengthen the faith of beginners.
 5. To show all the followers, the path to keep their mind free from covering and infatuations.
 6. To help all seekers, to practice right methods of practicing ‘stopping and reflecting’, so as to guard them against the false view points of both worldly minded people and the disciples of Hinayana (elementary school) besides Madhyama to middle school of Buddhism.
 7. “To explain the expedient means of reciting the Divine the name of Amitabha Buddha and to prove that those who recite are born in Buddha’s pure land.
 8. To show the readers of this treatise, the advantage of one whose faith is awakened, the inestimable advantages of the practice of Dhyana it.

The Sraddhapada Sastra or the Awakening of the faith entitles Asvaghosa to rank as the first systematic expounder of Mahayana.

In this treatise the poet has explained the fundamental doctrine of the Mahayana faiths its practice and teachings. He says “All men should respectfully believe and not speak evil of it, thereby injuring themselves more and more and others too, destroying every hope of deliverance. In fact the teaching of Asvaghosa is that one becomes identified with truth? Neither

by doctrinal belief nor by behavior, but by following the True Faith in the right way and thus ultimately is to become identified with the true principles of Mahayana Buddhism which selfless compassion for all animal life.

Asvaghosa is a poet by nature he is a highly cultivated man by training and religious devotee by conviction.¹¹ Traditional Vedic and Brahmanic conceptions dominated in his contemporary society and the poet has tried to propagate the doctrine of Buddha in a very unassuming style with a very simple language.

In Sraddhapada Sastra the poet devotes much space to preaching. But his expressions are somewhat similar to that of Tripitakas. Though

Notes and References

1. Life of Asvaghosa quoted by Suzuki, A. E. p. 257f.
2. Taranath H.B. p. 391.
3. Rastrapala was born in a wealthy family, in a village called Thullakotthita in the state of Kuru. He was ordained and practiced under Sakyamuni Buddha. Later, when he returned to his village, his parents tried to rule him away from his monastic vows by distracting him with a woman. However, the woman was so moved by his instructions on the Dharma that she became a nun. Later, Asvaghosa adapted Rastrapala's story into a drama, and personally performed the drama in Pataliputra. Yun, Hsing. *Infinite Compassion, less Wisdom the Practice of the Bodhisattva Path*, p.60.
4. T. vol. 4, no. 192. Consists of five fascicles with a total of twenty- eight chapters. Translated by Dharmaraksa, it describes the life of the Buddha from his birth to the distribution of his relics upon his parinirvana. It is Asvaghosa's most famous work and is a monumental achievement of ancient Indian literature. Yun, Hsing. p. 59
5. R.C. Sharma, Mathura Museum, p.33 (ref. plate III).
6. Sukumar Sen, (JASB, 1930., p. 81). Sarapor'iva aragga, tam aham brumi brahmano. Dha. 407.
7. B.C. Law in *Asvaghosa* has discussed most of these.
8. Dha. 393: Na jatahi na gottena, na jachahoti brahmond.

he extols the joys of solitude and meditation, a tendency towards Mahayana can be discerned. Vajrasuci which is a direct attack on Brahmanical custom of caste system is a great work defining a True Brahmana. For Asvaghosa a Brahmana is no less than a Sramana or a monk, or an Arhat Adorned with the qualities by sila.

Buddhacarita is an integral part of Vinayapitaka of Dharmagupta sect and Soundarananda is based on Dhammapada's story of Nanda with Varieties, Buddha's first sermon at Benares known as Dharma Chakra pavattana Sutra, includes the four noble Truths about suffering and eight fold paths. The same is elaborated by Asvaghosa in Soundargandha.

9. yassa rago ca dooo ca, mono makko. Capateto Sarapor'iva aragga, tam ahembruri brahamano Dha. 407
10. H.P. Shastra, Adv, V. Sang, Intro, p.XXI.
11. S.K. Dey, H.S. L. p. 76.

Bibliography

1. Dutta, Samir Kuamr. *Asvaghosa as a Poet and a dramatist a critical study*. Burdwan: University of Burdwan, 1979.
2. Keith, A. B. *The Sanskrit drama*, London: Oxford University Press, 1923.
3. Khoshla, Sarla. *Asvaghosa and his times*, New Delhi, Intellectual Publishing House, 1986.
4. Law, Bimala Churun. *Asvaghosa*, Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 2011.
5. Mitra, Rajendra Lal. *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, Delhi: PKI, 1970.
6. Puri, B.N. *The Great Kushanas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
7. Raghavan, V. *An Introduction to Indian Poetics*, Bombay: Macmillan & Co, 1976.
8. Sharma, Nripendra Nath. *Asvaghos's Buddhacarita: A study*, Kolkata: Punthi Pustak, 2003.
9. Yun, Hsing. *Infinite Compassion, less Wisdom the practice of the bodhisattva path*, Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2009.

NAGARJUNA, SHUNYATA AND ANATMAN

Dr. Amartya Kumar Bhattacharya

Introduction

Does emptiness as expounded by Madhyamaka philosophy necessitate nihilism? There is a consistent line of objections that argue that Nagarjuna and his commentators fall into nihilism unwittingly via their arguments for the emptiness of entities, and in order to begin to answer this important question, we will first need to undertake some groundwork to contextualise Nagarjuna's philosophy. Nagarjuna saw his philosophy as a back-to-basics 'original Buddhist' response to the Abhidharmika projects that dominated the Buddhist landscape when he lived and wrote, and in Section I, I will further develop the thesis that Nagarjuna was trying to assert emptiness as a necessary truth implicit within the Buddha's original teachings. We shall see that his reasons for doing this are not at all obscure, but are, he thinks, rooted in the Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination (interdependence) and impermanence (change). Section II will see us assess the implications of emptiness for phenomena, objects and persons: we lay the foundations to begin to answer what I consider to be the most dogged refutation facing the Madhyamika: the charge of nihilism. Specifically, we will look to David Burton's allegations of nihilism and examine how they impact Madhyamaka philosophy. Following on from this, Section III will present an examination of the Madhyamika method; the means by which the Madhyamika argues for emptiness. This will allow us to assess the nihilistic charges

made in Section II and give us some insight into how Nagarjuna and subsequent adherents use a negative method to convince the objector to relinquish their stance. I aim to argue that Madhyamaka philosophy at large is doctrineless and uses the negative method to achieve a total relinquishing of views in order to negate attachment and subsequently remove suffering. Section IV will attempt to tie emptiness, the Four Noble Truths and the Two-Truth method together by highlighting exactly how the Madhyamika places emptiness at the heart of the Noble Truths and how the conventional viewpoint differs from, impacts upon and to some degree leads one to the ultimate viewpoint. We will discuss why this is significant and how correctly realising the conventional truth in order to progress toward the ultimate truth can aid the Madhyamika avoid charges of nihilism. My main text for achieving these aims will be the Garfield (1995) translation of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, Nagarjuna's seminal text. Our principal chapters for this endeavour will be Chapters XVIII and XXIV (Examination of Self and Entities; Examination of the Four Noble Truths), as I feel that out of the entire work, these chapters are pivotal if we wish to refute the charges of nihilism that we find ourselves presented with. However, in order to appreciate the background within which Nagarjuna was writing and developing his thought, I will firstly spend some time outlining the Buddha's teaching of selflessness according to the Mahavagga and Kaccayanagotta Sutta – this can, I hope, provide the stepping stone we

Dr. Bhattacharya is Chairman & Managing Director, Multispecta Consultant, Kolkata.

require to place Nagarjuna's philosophy in some sort of context. The end product of this endeavour will be, I hope, an exposition and defence of Nagarjuna's position regarding emptiness of phenomena and persons, and so by extension, a rebuttal of Burton's nihilism objection.

I: Emptiness and its Foundations

Nagarjuna's formulation (it is misleading to refer to it as a 'doctrine' of 'emptiness' (shunyata) is not explicitly synonymous with the Buddha's teaching of selflessness (anatman), but is an extension of selflessness in that it argues that essence is lacking from all phenomena. This complements the early Buddhist teaching that experienced phenomena do not possess any associations of 'I' or 'mine' and thus should not be clung to. Nagarjuna's project was to argue that all entities are without essence in any form – a progression that he thought was merely consequent to the Buddha's original teachings regarding dependent origination and the lack of essential selves in humans: put like this, the entire endeavour seems utterly uncontroversial. However, Nagarjuna's views on essentialism were in stark contrast to the Abhidharmika views of the time, and I believe that this was mostly down to his conviction that the Buddha himself had implicitly refuted the notion of essentialism in any meaningful sense. With this in mind, it is worthwhile for us to examine how the Buddha formulated his own view of selflessness before we determine how and why Nagarjuna wanted to take it a step further and apply emptiness to persons and phenomena.

Firstly, it is useful for us to note exactly what the Buddha was rallying against, and this was, not to put too fine a point on it, the concept of atman present in the Hindu Vedas. The atman points to an essential self that sits outside of space and time. It is simple, unitary, persistent and unchanging. It is 'the innermost reality of the individual, the subtle essence' (Lipner,

2010: p.53). The problem here for the Buddha (and later for Nagarjuna) is the implication of an eternal or unchanging essential self. Buddhism is a philosophy and religion built entirely on the basis of life as a continual karmic flux of causally conditioned phenomena governed by dependent origination and, more importantly, the maxim in the Fourth Noble Truth that there is an end to suffering: the Buddha would struggle to claim that humans have an essential self that is born ignorant and into suffering and yet despite this essential nature, can somehow change to become enlightened and end suffering – after all, if something is, for example, essentially red, how can we say that we can change this nature to make the thing essentially blue?

It is precisely this elaboration on the Buddha's position that the Madhyamaka school founded by Nagarjuna propagates: the very fact that the atman is essential means that it is necessarily unchanging and indeed unchangeable. In turn, this means that the presence of an essential self makes accounting for the inner change that the Buddha propagated as the means to reach enlightenment (and subsequently end suffering) very difficult indeed – how can we change the unchangeable? In virtue of this apparent contradiction, any concept of a permanent, essential self must be eschewed. This is not to say that there is a permanent self or ego of some description that can be somehow quashed or removed via praxis. Nor does it mean that there is a permanent self and it is just easier or better for Buddhist praxis if the practitioner simply does not speak of it: Nagarjuna does not identify a concrete, existent essential self whatsoever – instead, he argues that all phenomena are empty of essence or self-existence.

To understand why this is the case, some perspective on both the Buddha's position (and Nagarjuna's subsequent position) can be found in the Simile of the Snake. Here, the Buddha

gives a list of associations with which it is incorrect to identify a permanent, unchanging self. This wrong-view includes ‘Look[ing] on what [one] has seen, heard, sensed, known, experienced, pursued and pondered in [one’s] mind as [one’s own]’(Gethin, 2008: p.162), or in other words, reconciling any aspect of subjective human experience as representative – either in whole or in part – of the self. This maxim is important because within the Buddhist paradigm (we cannot lose sight of the fact that Nagarjuna was a religious writer who was primarily concerned with soteriology), any I-notion (me, mine) is both a symptom of and a source of bondage to suffering (dhukha) through desire and attachment as described in the First Noble Truth:

‘This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering: Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate, is suffering; Separation from objects we love, is suffering; not to obtain what we desire, is suffering. Briefly, the fivefold clinging to existence is suffering.’ (Mahavagga [of the Vinaya], 6: 19-20)

In addition to the Buddha’s position regarding the non-existence of an essential self, both he and Nagarjuna think that clinging to an ‘I’ in any substantial form is to propagate one’s own suffering indirectly. Surprisingly, the reasoning behind this counter-intuitive claim is actually relatively simple. Whilst Buddhism does not deny that there are things in life that we experience as pleasurable – indeed, the Mahavagga has already mentioned that there are objects that ‘we love’ in existence – ultimately, these pleasurable experiences all inevitably lead to suffering. How? Well, it is basically down to misperception: we enjoy something because we find it pleasurable (insofar as it makes us fleetingly happy) and we subsequently cultivate attachment to the pleasure, and then

(erroneously) to the object. Owing to our attachment to this pleasure and the object of pleasure, we then try to replicate and reproduce this pleasure: pleasure which we have already said is necessarily fleeting and impermanent. Conventional realisation that this pleasure is impermanent (we know that eating a cake will not usually instil a permanent, deep happiness in us, for example) leads us back to the beginning of the circle: we grasp at this attachment to pleasure, gain pleasure temporarily and then experience varying degrees of anguish until we can procure this pleasure again (paraphrased from H.H. The Dalai Lama, 2000: pp.50-51).

How this relates to the self and I-notions may not be clear to the non-Buddhist, but the logic goes along the following lines: the common denominators in all of this are the subject of experience and the object of pleasure; the reified essential self to which all of these pleasurable experiences (and painful experiences) occur, and the reified ‘pleasurable’ inanimate object. Attaching substantial existence to the self and worrying about satisfying desires of the ‘I’ that we reify is a root cause of our suffering. To put it simply, once we fully realise that the self and the ‘I’ that we identify with is nothing more than a misperception – a collection of aggregates subject to dependent origination rather than one simple, unified essential entity that we ‘are’ – we realise the futility in attaching value to the satisfaction of desires that we think stem from this permanent self. Similarly, the object that we perceive as pleasurable is also mistakenly reified – it has no essential part that makes it pleasurable. With this in mind, the aim of the Buddhist path is to both remove attachment to objects and fleeting feelings such as pleasure, and to remove attachment to this notion of a substantial, essential ‘I’. Success will break the cycle and rid us of the erroneous perception that entities can exist independently outside of ever-changing interrelated contexts.

With this said, it is important to note that Nagarjuna does not deny that we perceive a conventional 'I'. It would be silly to say that we do not feel a sense of something that it is to be 'us'. For Nagarjuna, though, this is merely due to myriad dependently-arisen phenomena being experienced through the dependently-arisen skandhas (aggregates of personhood: form; sensation; perception; volition; consciousness). There is nothing about our experience that necessitates there being an essential self – it is possible for us to experience without there being an unchanging subject doing the experiencing. It is the Madhyamika view that any notion of essence should be jettisoned on account of both its inaccuracy as an ontological claim (where, upon analysis, can we find our essential self?) and its uselessness as a moral starting point for Buddhist praxis (how can we reach enlightenment via praxis if change is impossible owing to our essence?): the self that we identify and reify naturally – the conventional I – is empty of essence.

It can be argued that Nagarjuna's denial of essential selfhood and focus on the primacy of dependent origination stems from teachings attributed to the Buddha himself and were merely reassertions and slight elaborations on the Buddha's own words: I certainly think that this is how Nagarjuna saw his endeavours in the *Mulamadhyamakakarika*. We can see how this might be the case if we consider the *Kaccayanagotta-sutta*:

'By and large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'non-existence' with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, 'existence' with reference to the world does not occur to

one... ...'Everything exists': That is one extreme. 'Everything doesn't exist': That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle...' (Thanissaro Bikkhu, 1997).

This passage is profoundly relevant to Nagarjuna's project – the sutta specifies that holding that everything exists is an extreme point of view, and holding that nothing exists is the flipside of the same coin: both are incorrect, hard-line positions. Subsequently, the wise practitioner approaches from the middle (Madhyamaka does, after all, translate as 'Middle Way') and does not commit to either essentialism or nihilism. If we apply this principle to the problem of selfhood, then Nagarjuna does not want to completely affirm nor completely deny that there is a self of some description: we have already seen that he does not deny the conventional 'I' (the feeling of self that is imminent to us all) as long as it is empty of essence – he only denies the essential 'I' that we reify. There are reasons for this disdain toward essence: Nagarjuna's contemporaries were the Abhidharmika theorists that posited dharmas: necessarily existent, basic elements that account for all mental and physical phenomena, and so by extension manifest as part of the thing we mistakenly call 'self' (Bartley, 2011: p30). The Sarvastivadins wanted to use dharmas to explain persistent characteristics in persons and objects, however, their account of dharmas is lacking in terms of explaining precisely what they are and how they work, and fraught with difficulties such as incoherence about how they interact with each other and how (or why) there are 'two-worlds' (Donnelly, 2013: pp. 74-76).

That the Abhidharmikas posited unconditioned essential features of reality at all is too far a step away from the Buddha's teachings according to Nagarjuna: we have seen above that the Buddha specifically warned

against the position that everything exists – for Nagarjuna, dharmas necessarily entail this position owing to their having essence and their timeless existence in an unconditioned realm. Further to this, Nagarjuna thinks that under the Sarvastivadin account, dharmas are necessarily detached from dependent origination (as they are unconditioned). It could be claimed that this does not make much practical difference as they reside in an unconditioned realm and migrate to the conditioned realm only to manifest experiential phenomena. They then do this as part of conditioned dependent origination in our conventional sphere of experience, and so whilst they are distinct from dependent origination in one realm, they are very much a part of it within this realm. However, I think that this position is surely countered by Nagarjuna in the opening verse of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* when he states that nothing can arise from itself, from something else, from both itself and something else, or from no cause whatsoever in any realm (*Mulamadhyamakakarika* I:1).

Within this context, Nagarjuna is responding to the idea that a dharma can reside timelessly as an unchanging, un-arisen entity in an unconditioned realm: if a dharma is self-existent and unconditioned, then it cannot have caused itself as this would indeed be a cause and condition and timeless, eternal things cannot be caused or conditioned! Similarly, it cannot have been caused by something else, as this too is a cause and condition. Furthermore, it makes no sense to say that something has been caused from nothing, as this is to make a mockery of what we understand by ‘cause’. The conclusion that we are left with as a result is either the absurdity that the dharmas can still inexplicably fit within this framework, or the more sensible position that they simply do not: they are empty of essence and they too must be subject to dependent origination.

Nagarjuna challenged the Sarvastivadin account of dharmas on the basis that all phenomena are empty of essence and subject to dependent origination: this does run contrary to the Abhidharmika stance which sees timeless dharmas migrate from an unconditioned realm, and as such it is clear to me that the Sarvastivadins held dharmas as eternal in at least some sense. As a result, I feel that Nagarjuna challenged them both ontologically and epistemically even if he did not directly say so: we cannot categorise empty phenomena as eternal or timeless as this would be to separate them necessarily from dependent origination, and so the nature of dharmas is surely left open to question via Nagarjuna’s method even if their existence (in a broad sense) is not questioned.

We have seen in this section how Nagarjuna formulated his doctrine of emptiness as a logical step forward from the teachings of the Buddha. We needed to look only to the *Kaccayanagotta Sutta* and the *Mahavagga* to see the bases that Nagarjuna was working from: the Buddha himself warned against taking up either an essentialist or nihilist position in no uncertain terms, and Nagarjuna thought that if essentialism was true, then there was no chance of change – if there was no chance of change, then there was no option of liberation. That the Abhidharmika schools (specifically the Sarvastivadins) pondered essential qualities in any sense at all was a direct contravention of the Buddha’s original teachings for Nagarjuna, who quite literally saw essentialism as being a phenomenal anchor within the karmic flux; a starting point or base where there ought not to be one. Subsequently, we saw all concepts around essence shunned – be it in persons or phenomena – by virtue of the conflict with original Buddhist doctrine.

II: Emptiness and Nihilism

In the last section, we saw how Nagarjuna

came to the conclusion that essentialism necessarily contradicted the Buddha's own teachings in the Kaccayanagotta Sutta, and why he thought that to posit essentialism in any description was to exclude dependent origination – a key Buddhist doctrine – from some aspect of reality. For Nagarjuna, there is nothing controversial in his assertion that persons are empty of essence and entirely subject to dependent origination just like any other existent phenomenon. However, it does seem counter-intuitive for the non-Buddhist reader to say that we have no 'self', 'I' or 'me', especially given that vast swathes of the population seem to speak indiscriminately of the 'soul' or the 'real me'. Is to deny the presence of an essential self then to deny the existence of persons in any recognisable fashion?

The largest criticism that the Madhyamika continually has to face is that of nihilism. David Burton contends that Nagarjuna's philosophy necessarily entails nihilism whether he intended to or not: the emptiness of entities – be they persons or objects – must entail the non-existence of entities (Burton, 1999: p90). In other words, if persons are empty then it must be the case, according to Burton, that persons do not exist, and Nagarjuna has committed to nihilism. A portion of the debate here once again lies with dharmas and how they exist and operate. In order to understand this, we need to recognise that Burton thinks that the Abhidharmikas had it right, or in any case, were more correct than Nagarjuna, and is tackling the issue of selfhood from 'the other side', as it were. Whilst still adhering to the Buddha's teaching of no-self, the Abhidharmika (and, presumably, Burton) does not accept that the person is empty in the broad sense given that the person is constituted of dharmas that necessarily have essences – entities can, on this view, have determinate individual essences and still be subject to dependent origination. If persons and entities are

empty of essence, then Burton contends that the person is reduced to mere concept and cannot exist even conventionally. In other words, there must be something unconditioned that provides the basis of construction for the conditioned – we have seen how in the Abhidharma doctrines this is provided by the dharmas. It is a familiar line in Western analytic philosophy: it is not often that somebody will willingly commit to an infinite regress of causes. The philosopher generally aims to conceive of the grounding ground, or the first cause. It is, however, less of a concern in traditional Buddhist soteriology and philosophy where everything is famously explained in a circular fashion. The Buddha himself identified the 'twelve links' – a circular account of every possible experiential mental and physical phenomena: ignorance; volition; consciousness; name and form; faculties and objects; contact; sensation; craving; attachment; becoming; birth; old age and death (Gethin, 2008: pp. 210-13). With this in mind, it is easy to see how Burton arrives at this conclusion: as we said in the previous section, Nagarjuna has rejected that anything can exist independently of anything else in the very first verse of the Mulamadhyamakakarika (and then spent the rest of his treatise developing this notion). Burton aims to show that Nagarjuna must necessarily commit to nihilism via a sort of misplaced idealism. We will see how he reaches this conclusion, and how I intend to demonstrate that his arguments might be incorrect.

As Burton is approaching this issue from the Abhidharmika position, it is important that we recognise what this position entails. In the first section, we saw Nagarjuna's attitude to dharmas, and at this point it is prudent to go a little more in depth as to the Abhidharmika formulation of dharmas. As we have already seen in Section I, dharmas are the foundational components of the world; they are irreducible to any parts and so are in this sense basic and have

an own-nature or essence that distinguishes each type of dharma from the other types of dharma (seventy-five types in all) (Burton, 2001: pp. 90-91). Burton specifies that according to the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma, there are four categories of conditioned (samskrita) dharmas (form; consciousness; consciousness-factors; non-consciousness conditioned factors) and only one category of unconditioned dharmas (asamskrita): the seventy-five types of dharma fall into one of these categories (Burton, 2001: p.91).

The conditioned dharmas are, as the name suggests, wholly subject to dependent origination in that they have the characteristics of birth, impermanence and decay, but pointing this out is not a rebuttal of Nagarjuna's point in any real terms and seems to me to be mere assertion rather than argument. Burton appears to be simply stating that the Abhidharma gives an account of how dharmas with essences can work within a Buddhist paradigm. He is right – it does. However, Nagarjuna is not saying that the Abhidharma does not offer an account of how dharmas can work within the Buddhist paradigm; he is saying that the account itself is incorrect in virtue of its essentialism. Such a stance, claims Burton, means that at the very least – nihilism notwithstanding – Nagarjuna must commit to the position that there are no unconditioned dharmas. I think that this is also true. However, I have already argued in Section I that Nagarjuna's method necessarily leaves precisely how dharmas exist and operate open to question without seeking to make any further assertions about them. Nagarjuna's endeavour is, as I see it, a doctrineless philosophy concerned with illustrating the absurdity of essentialism rather than pushing an alternative doctrine to be clung to and propagated, and so I am not convinced that this line of attack is a comprehensive, convincing rebuttal of any sort.

As a consequence of Burton's interest in

Nagarjuna's formulation of emptiness (and his own project of refuting it), Burton predictably pays particular attention to chapter XVIII of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* (Examination of the Self and Entities). This is perhaps Nagarjuna's seminal elaboration upon selfhood, entities and their emptiness. Here, Burton appears to categorise Nagarjuna as some sort of idealist (temporarily, at least) by specifically arguing that the whole of chapter XVIII could be an exercise in establishing the mind-dependence of entities, concepts and persons (Burton, 2001: p.101). This would mean that Nagarjuna thinks that objects and entities do exist, but that their existence is as conceptual constructions of the mind rather than actual concrete entities independent of the mind. The unintended outcome of this idealist position is, according to Burton, nihilism: if all entities are empty of essence and thus conceptually constructed, then there can be – as we have seen in Nagarjuna's objections to unconditioned dharmas – no unconditioned/unconstructed bases out of which the conditioned and constructed entities can be built (Burton, 2001: p.109). If this is the case, then – according to Burton – not only are we falling into nihilism regarding persons and entities, but it also follows that it is pointless to speak of discovering the ultimate truth or of enlightenment: if the Four Noble Truths are mere conceptual constructions with no inherent reality, then what is the function in accepting them? They are relegated to figments of our imagination. Similarly, if there is no substantial existence behind a person, what is it to change our habits and reach enlightenment?

However, I think that Burton has missed a trick here. If we analyse chapter XVIII of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* not as a standalone representation of the entire *Madhyamaka* philosophy, but in context with the rest of the treatise (particularly chapters XXIV and XXVII), we can see for ourselves what

Nagarjuna thought and possibly reach a different conclusion. Firstly, though, we will look at chapter XVIII on its own merit. This chapter aims to argue that entities arise only in a context of innumerate causes and conditions because they lack inherent essential existence. To put it slightly differently, emptiness provides the very basis needed for entities to arise, change, decay, and so on. Is this to fall prey to the very infinite regress that Burton seeks to avoid? In the very first verse, Nagarjuna writes:

‘If the self were the aggregates,
It would have arising and ceasing (as properties).
If it were different from the aggregates,
It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.’ (Mulamadhyamakakarika, XVIII:1)

At first glance, this passage may seem contradictory: it appears as if Nagarjuna is saying that the self is simultaneously equivalent to the skandhas and not equivalent to the skandhas. However, when we consider what we said in Section I – that Nagarjuna is disputing the existence of a permanent self rather than a sense of self – the passage is not as problematic. Jay Garfield argues that all Nagarjuna is doing here is stating that the bases of Buddhist psychology are empty: if we posit a permanent self that is identifiable with the skandhas, then we must concede that our permanent, inherently existent and essential self is in a constant state of flux, open to change and always being conditioned by outside factors. Obviously, we would be loathe to say this – how can the self be permanent in any recognisable sense if it is always changing and arising/ceasing? Similarly, if this posited self is distinct from the skandhas, then the relationship between skandhas and person becomes arcane at best and completely unknowable at worst. In any case, if the self was entirely distinct from the skandhas, we would be put in the bizarre position

of claiming that whatever sense experience occurs to whatever skandha is somehow distinct from what is happening to me as a conventional person (Garfield, 1995: p. 246). How can we address this problem? Well, Nagarjuna has an answer for this, too:

‘If there were no self,
Where would the self’s (properties) be?
From the pacification of the self and what belongs to it.
One abstains from grasping onto “I” and “mine”.’ (Mulamadhyamakakarika, XVIII: 2)

This is crucially important. The last two lines of the karika outline Nagarjuna’s solution to the problem of selfhood and its subsequent attachments: if we stop trying to think of a substratum in which the properties we associate with the self inhere, we simply see attributes as causally-conditioned associations that merely exist rather than exist in something. Only then do we break the cycle of reification of both self and other entities: we saw in Section I that both the Buddha and Nagarjuna think the reification of self and entities propagate suffering, and in this passage, we can see Nagarjuna hint at a conventional I – that is, the feeling of a sense of I; one that does actually have properties. It is important to note that neither I nor Nagarjuna are claiming that there is a permanent self on a conventional level. When I speak of a ‘conventional I’, I am referring only to the sense of self that is apparent and immediate to all of us who have not achieved liberation. We must tread carefully with our use of ‘self’ here, for as Candrakirti writes, ‘Not only does [the self] not constitute the basis for ego-clinging on the ultimate level, it [the self] has no existence even on the level of conventional reality’ (Madhyamakavatara, 122). He is not disputing that we have a sense of I that is apprehended, but arguing that this does not constitute anything that should be termed ‘self’: ‘self’ necessarily

has connotations of permanence and inherent existence.

Can we reconcile the position of no-(essential) self and still speak about a conventional 'I'? Burton thinks not: as we have already seen, he thinks that to speak of a person as empty (of essential self) or as mere conventional conceptual designation (the perceived conventional I) is to reduce both to mental constructs and deny their reality, thus slipping into nihilism. Taken individually, it is easy to see how Burton might argue that these *karikas* present a nihilistic view. However, we will see that far from reaching into nihilism (or eternalism, for that matter), Nagarjuna does indeed take the Middle Way that Burton concludes cannot lead to anything but nihilism. I hope to show in the next section that he achieves this without slipping into the throes of nihilism at all.

III: The Madhyamika Method

Perhaps Nagarjuna's apparent dichotomy in *Mulamadhyamakakarika* XVIII: 2 are not as problematic as it first appears. It is widely acknowledged that the Buddha graduated his teachings depending on the ability and understanding of his students. Such a method makes perfect sense to us in a modern context, too: when I began my philosophy degree, we did not delve into the intricacies of modal logic in the first week. Following this, the argument for the Madhyamika is that even if it were possible to merely communicate the realisation of emptiness directly as a doctrine (we have already stated that viewing emptiness as a doctrine is inaccurate, and it would also vastly understate – neglect, even – the experiential and meditative aspect vital to this realisation), the novice would not be equipped to grasp the full *gravitas* of the teaching.

As such, the realisation of emptiness must

be guided through several stages, beginning with the coarse and crudest type of rejection of essentialism, and ending in the subtlest (Lobsang Gyatso, 2001: pp.52-3). To visualise how this might work, think of crossing a river on a raft (a popular Buddhist metaphor): the raft is useful to us only for as long as it takes us to complete our journey across the river. From then, it is pointless to carry the raft with us, and so the wise among us discard it.

Furthermore, it can be said that the Madhyamika has no doctrine. In the *Prasannapada*, Candrakirti writes that the Madhyamika 'pursues his own thesis only until the adversary gives up his', and this recurring sentiment is indicative of why I think that positing the Madhyamika conception of emptiness as a doctrine in its own right is inaccurate (*Prasannapada*, 19). Is it sensible to say that Nagarjuna therefore wants to eventually refute doctrinal Buddhism rather than redefine or add to it? This would fit with his wider project of pushing the realisation of emptiness as the key to liberation: if the doctrines that the Buddhist practitioner is adhering to are wrong, then liberation will not be accessible or achieved. The only concern of the Madhyamika, then, is realisation of emptiness and not developing or critiquing metaphysical bases for the experienced world outside of this pursuit. If we bear this in mind, we look back on Nagarjuna's critique of the *Abhidharma* in a different light: he is not refuting their metaphysical perspective in favour of replacing it with his own metaphysic *per se*, but rather refuting the *Abhidharma* metaphysics in order to propagate a 'no-view about reality' (Nayak, 2001: p.15).

Depending on our stance regarding this explanation of Buddhist methodology as a whole (and Madhyamika methodology specifically), we can either accept that talk around a mundane, conventional I is permitted as a mere stopgap on

the greater path, or we can, as Burton presumably does, rubbish it as an incongruence that confuses the Madhyamika position. In my opinion, Burton makes a fatal error by confusing Madhyamaka refutations of Abhidharmika positive assertions as doctrines in themselves, and whilst he claims to be sympathetic to Nagarjuna's project of whittling down doctrine until the realisation of emptiness, I do not think that he has fully grasped either the methodology or the real aim. The Madhyamika is characterised by their lack of positive assertions about reality. Nagarjuna himself wrote:

'The victorious ones have said
That emptiness is the relinquishing of all views.
For whomever emptiness is a view,
That one will accomplish nothing.'
(Mulamadhyamakakarika, XIII: 8)

Given that Nagarjuna was concerned with propagating the 'Middle Way' between both eternalism and nihilism (everything exists versus nothing exists) as per the Buddha's own teachings in the Kaccayanagotta Sutta, it appears to me that his attack against the Abhidharma is concerned only with the idea that dharmas exist with a permanent essence that can exist in the past, present and future, and not against the existence of dharmas as a whole. To elaborate, his enterprise simply has no need for dharmas insofar as the Madhyamika is not concerned with making positive assertions or arguments for metaphysical bases – dharmas do not concern Nagarjuna. For this reason, it is true that Nagarjuna does not challenge their existence explicitly or directly even if his method does leave their mode of existence open to question. This being the case, then Nagarjuna is emphatically not arguing that all entities are conceptually constructed only in the mind, nor is he committing to the notion that they exist in some other way – he simply advocates no view at all. As we can see in the above karika,

Nagarjuna wants the practitioner to disseminate all views – that is to say that the Madhyamika should hold nor make any positive claims about reality. In practical terms, this stops any notion of formulating a Madhyamaka metaphysics dead in its tracks, as there is no room for discourse on what does or does not inherently exist. Nayak put it rather succinctly when he said that 'a Madhyamika thinker... has no metaphysical axe to grind' (Nayak, 2001: p. 8).

Consequently, I think that Burton has missed the point somewhat and is actually presenting a classic example of the very reification that the Madhyamika seeks to destroy. Whilst he and other Buddhist schools/scholars expend time and energy looking for a first cause to ground all entities and persons, Nagarjuna is not at all concerned with this reification: Nagarjuna is concerned only with reiterating what he thinks is implicit within the Buddha's original teachings and providing a method by which we can reach enlightenment. The Buddha himself said that he did not want his words to be a ground for metaphysical debate or to be adhered to merely in virtue of some arbitrarily assigned truth value (Thanissaro Bhikkhu, 2010). With emptiness, Nagarjuna is sidestepping any metaphysical bickering by arguing for the futility (and outright absurdity) of debating metaphysical positions! Burton would, of course, likely respond that emptiness is in and of itself a positive statement about the nature of reality: we are, after all, arguing that other conceptions of selfhood are incorrect in virtue of emptiness. This is again, I argue, a misunderstanding: emptiness itself must necessarily be empty of essence, lest the Madhyamika drift into contradiction and undermine her entire project. For Nagarjuna, holding emptiness as mere view is, as we have seen, incorrect: emptiness is not something real to be uncovered or realised as 'real' in contradistinction to ultimately unreal objects of conventional perception – we cannot have a view

of emptiness in virtue of its emptiness. After all, ‘Emptiness is the relinquishing of all views’.

With all this in mind, I am inclined to ask whether our current debate with Burton around Nagarjuna’s philosophy is somewhat misguided – Burton is rallying against Nagarjuna on the grounds of the purely metaphysical charge (dharma, essence and ultimate grounds for dependent origination) of nihilism. Whilst this is important for many Western (and some Buddhist) philosophers, we have already seen that the Buddha did not want there to be any metaphysical disagreements surrounding his words (at least in the social context in which he lived and spoke), only doctrines to be utilised for correct practice that can be abandoned after use (remember the raft?). He remained famously silent on the ‘big’ questions, seeing them as a distraction from addressing the here and now. It should also be obvious by now that the metaphysics are of minimal concern to Nagarjuna, too. What is crucial is the recognition of emptiness of everyday phenomena in order to further Buddhist praxis and to reach enlightenment, and this sits squarely within the paradigm first outlined by the Buddha. It then follows that Nagarjuna accepts the twelve links as a comprehensive account of all possible phenomena and so is not at all worried about discovering or justifying a basic entity or substratum from which everything else can emanate.

Just as Burton is forming part of his critique of Nagarjuna on the basis that Nagarjuna is either misinterpreting or misunderstanding Abhidharma doctrine outside of its own context, I contend that he too misinterprets and misrepresents Nagarjuna’s project in relation to its context as a reiteration of the Buddha’s original teachings. Whether or not we think this metaphysical niggling is important is of course open to much more debate than my

word count allows, but it is important for us to note that Nagarjuna does not seek to create a metaphysical framework as his end product – he actually seeks to remove views that he sees as obstructing wisdom and truth rather than instil new ones – these too would obscure wisdom and truth and further remove us from liberation! To this end, Nagarjuna’s eventual ‘deeper’ view of ‘neither self nor no-self’ can begin to make more sense. It is simply the Middle Way between selfhood and no-selfhood:

‘That there is a self has been taught,
And the doctrine of no-self,
By the Buddhas, as well as the
Doctrine of neither self nor nonself.’
(Mulamadhyamakakarika, XVIII: 6)

Can this make sense? Well, surprisingly, maybe it can: we have already said that the Madhyamika is not concerned with establishing a metaphysical position as such, but with removing views. If we take this as our central tenet, all the Madhyamika is really saying is that clinging to either a position of self or a position of no-self is still clinging to something. Neither a conception of self nor a conception of no-self actually aligns with an existent entity from the ultimate viewpoint. Ergo, by not subscribing to either, the Madhyamika is staying true to the same Middle Way that he has been concerned with sticking to all along – the Middle Way avoids metaphysical extremes and recognises the uncharacterisable nature (for lack of a better word) of existence.

I hope that I have illustrated how the method of the Madhyamika affects their philosophy: we see metaphysical extremes discussed, negated and abandoned in favour of a Middle Way that aims to make no positive metaphysical assertions about the nature of reality or the entities that appear to exist within it. Nagarjuna appears to have thought that metaphysical attacks against his philosophy were doomed to failure instantly,

owing to the fact that they posit a metaphysic in the first place! As such, Burton's criticisms of emptiness and its formulation would be repudiated by the Madhyamika as a shining example of precisely the sort of clinging that the Madhyamika aims to subdue and remove via their negative method. In the next section, I will attempt to tie this together by demonstrating how and why Nagarjuna placed emptiness at the very heart of Buddhist praxis in relation to the central tenets of the entire Buddhist worldview in all of its variations – the Four Noble Truths.

IV: Emptiness, the Noble Truths and the Two-Truth Position

We now move forward to chapter XXIV of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* – The Examination of the Four Noble Truths. This is vital in contextualising the Madhyamaka school's philosophy and consolidating the rest of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* – Jay Garfield argues (correctly, in my view) that this chapter is really about the nature of emptiness itself, its relation to our conventional reality, and the construction of a negative argument refuting nihilistic charges (Garfield, 1995: p. 293). I will extrapolate Nagarjuna's means to achieve this and show how Nagarjuna provides a convincing negative argument against nihilism.

It is with regard to the Noble Truths that we can really see why Nagarjuna and his subsequent commentators were so keen to avoid metaphysical jousting, but it is also here that Burton's argument can appear to gather some veracity by proxy. As we saw in the prior sections, Burton contends that if all phenomena are given reality only in virtue of conceptual constructs and not in virtue of essential existence of some type, then it follows that nothing exists objectively and the Madhyamika slips into nihilism. This is not a new criticism, and in *karikas* 1 and 2 of chapter XXIV, Nagarjuna's opponent claims that if everything is empty, then

the Four Noble Truths cannot exist:

'If all of this is empty,
Neither arising, nor ceasing,
Then for you it follows that
The Four Noble Truths do not exist.
If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
Then knowledge, abandonment,
Meditation, and manifestation
Will be completely impossible.' (*Mulamadhyamakakarika*, XXIV: 1-2)

We can see in this objection where Burton might have got his inspiration – the positions of the objector and of Burton are close. Though not identical in content, they both have nihilism as their conclusion. Whereas Burton is primarily concerned with the existence of concrete entities such as persons, trees and so on, this objector is taking the same line of attack to try and refute Nagarjuna at the very core of his Buddhist practice: simply put, if the objector can prove that Nagarjuna's position contradicts or somehow precludes the Noble Truths, then there is no discussion to be had – he simply cannot hold his position and still claim to be a Buddhist.

As such, I feel that this section constitutes the absolute crux of Nagarjuna's project. In earlier sections I have examined how the Madhyamika approach might impact everyday understanding of phenomena: empty persons, existence of entities and so on. I also argued that such metaphysical niggling was really something of a by-the-by for both Nagarjuna and the long line of commentators in his wake: Nagarjuna is only concerned with providing a method with which to escape suffering because of his Buddhist beliefs and his acceptance of the Four Noble Truths. So how can Nagarjuna and the Madhyamika respond to the charges made against them by the objector?

The Madhyamika defence hinges on the objector's misunderstanding of emptiness and a

misunderstanding of the Two-Truth position. As we have already stated elsewhere in this paper, emptiness is not the ‘true essence’ of existence; such reification of emptiness is as erroneous as the reification of any other concept or entity. The objector is, Nagarjuna holds, foisting their own misunderstanding of emptiness onto Nagarjuna – putting words in his mouth, if you will:

‘We say that this understanding of yours
Of emptiness and the purpose of emptiness
And of the significance of emptiness is
incorrect.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.
The Buddha’s teaching of the Dharma
Is based on two truths:
A truth of worldly convention
And an ultimate truth.’ (Mulamadhy-
amakakarika, XXIV: 7-8)

The Two-Truth position (conventional; ultimate) is primary here and warrants some exposition. Garfield argues that the Two-Truths have a unity between them. That is to say, that both are ‘true’ to equal degrees insofar as one is not presented as an untruth in relation to the other, and one is not sublated by the other. What is true for Garfield, though, is that the ultimate truth takes precedence for the Buddhist soteriological ends, but this is not to place one over and above the other (Garfield, 1995: p.297). Initially, it seems as though Garfield’s reading may present a problem, however; I cannot help but wonder that if one truth is given precedence on soteriological grounds (realisation of the ultimate as a release from suffering), then surely it is simply given precedence ipso facto?

Khensur Rinpoche writes that conventional truths include all of the perceived phenomena that we see around us, whilst ultimate truths are the emptiness(es) of these phenomena from inherent existence (Khensur Jampa Tegchok, 2012: p.232). A superficial reading of this might agree with Garfield’s reading that both

truths are ‘true’ – at least from their respective referential frames. It might, however, jar with his argument that neither sublates the other: for the unenlightened, conventional truths are indeed ‘true’, but similarly, for the awakened, the ultimate truth is true seemingly at the expense of the conventional – the ultimate truth for Khensur Rinpoche trumps the conventional on at least some level because it reveals the truth about how entities actually exist rather than how they appear to exist (Khensur Jampa Tegchok, 2012: p.232). Garfield – correctly, in my view, given the eventual importance of relinquishing views – rejects this reading of an appearance/reality distinction as out of context with the rest of the text (Garfield, 1995, p.297), and stops just short of equating the Two-Truths with each other completely, writing that ‘the understanding of ultimate truth is in an important sense the understanding of the nature of the conventional truth...’ (Garfield, 1995: p.299). It is likely that from the conventional viewpoint that Garfield and I both presumably occupy, the ultimate truth and complete realisation of it is the higher ideal – it is here that we see the relinquishing of views that Nagarjuna earlier championed as the hallmark of the enlightened Madhyamika. If we switch this around and ask if it is true that for an enlightened being, their position of ultimate truth is still the higher ideal, I think it is obvious that the answer has to be ‘yes’. However, it is clear now what Garfield meant when he said that the Two-Truths were equally weighted: although he came dangerously close to wholly equating the two (erroneously), his initial thought that they are too important to each other to rank in terms of ‘more true’ or ‘less true’ is, I feel, correct. How can this be? Is it as simple, then, as saying that the difference between the Two-Truths is a shift in outlook and frame of reference? It seems to me that there is an irrefutable contingency between the ultimate truth and the conventional truth: we express – or

at least try to guide people towards realising – the ultimate truth through writings such as the *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, and this means that the ultimate truth is, in effect, being pursued through conventional means – we are still grasping at views in order to attain a different, progressive view in order to realise emptiness and remove views. Indeed, we would struggle to conceive of any alternative means of pursuit or communication! To relate this back to *karikas* 1 and 2 (of *Mulamadhyamakakarika* XXIV), the *Madhyamika* response is simply to say that the Four Noble Truths are conventional truths: they exist conventionally in that we can assess their truth in relation (to link back to dependent origination) to the observable world that we inhabit. As they are conventionally true, they are useful to us on our quest to realise the ultimate truths. This is where the close similarity but also significant differences between conventional truth and ultimate truth are most applicable: Garfield thinks that to realise conventional truths (interdependence, the Four Noble Truths and so on) basically is to realise ultimate truth (emptiness), but whilst I can agree to a very close correlation, it also seems obvious to me that the two are not the same.

To elaborate, I appeal to Khensur Rinpoche, who expresses this ever so succinctly when he writes that ‘The fact that the two truths are one nature does not mean that they are the same thing’ and continues to argue that for two things to be ‘the same’ requires that they be nominally identical: this would mean that they share the precise same name and be the precise same thing (Khensur Jampa Tegchok, 2012: p.233). Obviously this is not the case: the conventional truth might be incredibly closely connected to the ultimate truth, but it is not the same: if it were the same, the two ways of referring to it would be redundant. As a crude example (but one that performs our task more than adequately), we can again borrow a word or two from Khensur

Rinpoche: if a table is conventionally true (insofar as we apprehend it, it has the characteristics that consensus agrees a table should have and is subject to dependent arising, decay and so on), then we can say ‘yes, there is a table’. However, this conventional truth does nothing to speak of the table’s emptiness – if we merely say ‘there is a table’; it is not conveying anything about the emptiness of the table. Similarly, speaking of the emptiness of the table is not identical with speaking of the table *qua* table (Khensur Jampa Tegchok, 2012: pp.236-7).

As a result, we can say with some degree of confidence that whilst the Two-Truths are not the same, they are incredibly closely related and that conventional truths, when viewed from an ultimate perspective, are false in one important sense – they are views. This need not be a problem, though; we said earlier in the paper that Buddhist teachings are graduated and we can see them as a raft to be utilised to get past the river, but discarded once we traverse the difficult terrain. I do not see why this cannot also be the case here; once the enlightened mind has seen ultimate truth (emptiness), then the views held at the conventional level can simply be dispersed.

How, we may ask, does all this affect the Noble Truths? Well, we have seen that the objection is simply false, for it is not the case that emptiness necessitates that nothing exists: we have seen the *Madhyamika* argue that things do exist, just not in the manner that the unenlightened mind perceives them to. Similarly, we now know that the Noble Truths are conventional truths to be used to reach the ultimate position. Further, to hold that emptiness is false would be to hold that dependent origination is false, as we said in Section I. In this case, the Buddha’s teaching of the Noble Truths actually do become problematic – if the objector is arguing that emptiness is false,

then they are, according to Nagarjuna, in effect stating that nothing can change as dependent origination must too be false. We can see how this argument is going to unfold – if dependent origination is false and there is no arising, ceasing, change or development and decay, then how can suffering arise? Such a position is necessarily a contravention of the First Noble Truth (suffering exists) as well as the Second Noble Truth (suffering has a cause) – how can we account for the existence of suffering if it is not dependently arisen? If it were to exist under its own power, then it must have an essence; this in turn means that suffering cannot be changed or ended. This is of pivotal importance: for suffering to have an essential existence would preclude it from dependent origination and thus make it very difficult for the Buddhist to account for the impact of the Buddhist path – how do we change what is basic, immutable and thus unchangeable? This issue is sidestepped completely, though, if we realise that suffering (along with every other conventionally existent phenomenon) is simply empty of essence.

For Nagarjuna, the final nail in the coffin of the objector's argument is delivered with the realisation that the Fourth Noble Truth (the Buddhist path to suffering's cessation) can only be true in virtue of emptiness because without emptiness, no change is possible for or in any phenomenon at all. Nagarjuna has turned the objector's own argument against the objector to illustrate how – contrary to the objection – nihilism is not the necessary conclusion of Madhyamaka philosophy. Ironically, though, we can see that the objection itself does spell trouble for the Noble Truths. Subsequently, it is not the Madhyamika that is misguided, but the objector.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we now return to our initial question – does emptiness as expounded by Madhyamaka philosophy entail nihilism? We

have seen why Nagarjuna was keen to eschew any notion of selfhood for all phenomena and entities as a means both to relieve suffering and also to eventually end suffering. We also discussed how we must be careful to avoid the reification of emptiness, as it would be very easy for us to fall into the trap of holding emptiness to be a 'true' representation of some sort, or a substratum that is eternal and independent of entities – this would not be nihilistic, but it would be eternalistic, and for the Madhyamika, this is just as undesirable an outcome. It must be the case, as mentioned earlier, that emptiness is itself empty if the Madhyamika wants to make any sense. This is to say that if we attempt to analyse emptiness – to find it – we see nothing except a lack of inherent existence. Emptiness is not a substance, entity or existent essence, but a lack of all these things.

To briefly demonstrate this, let us return to the table example. We can disassemble a table in our minds to visualise of all its constituent parts; legs, tabletop, screws et cetera. But if we tried to look for the table's emptiness, what would we find? We cannot strip down its parts and discover some thing that emptiness is, but rather we find that we cannot find anything except the table's lack of essential, inherent existence. The table is simply dependent – this is the realisation of emptiness. This cannot be the same as nihilism: the table still exists, for we are looking right at it!

As a result, I simply cannot agree with Burton that emptiness leads to nihilism. We have seen how Nagarjuna and his subsequent commentators sought to refute essentialism not to push an agenda that says 'nothing exists', but rather 'nothing inherently exists' – something markedly different. I have argued that the Madhyamika does not – in accordance with traditional Buddhist teachings (the twelve links) – require nor desire a *causa sui*. Consequently, Burton's appeal to an essential,

necessary metaphysical grounding ground for the subsequent dependent origination of all entities is misplaced and entirely irrelevant to the Madhyamika thinker who is primarily concerned with the ‘relinquishing of views’ to negate attachment to entities for a soteriological ends. Following this line of thought, the importance of emptiness to the Four Noble Truths has been demonstrated in Section III, namely that change requires emptiness and the Four Noble Truths all hinge on change – if there is essence it is necessarily immutable and cannot be changed. If it cannot be changed, how do we

are either irrelevant to the Madhyamika or misrepresentative of the Madhyamika position, and it is my sincere hope that I have justified and vindicated my own position in this paper.

Bibliography

1. Bartley, C., *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. London: Continuum, 2011.
2. Burton, D., *Emptiness Appraised: A Critical Study of Nagarjuna's Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1999.
3. Candrakirti, Madhyamakavatara, In Jamgön Mipham (Eds.), *Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary*. Boston: Shambhala Publications 2004.
4. Candrakirti, Prasannapada, In Sprung, M. (Trans.), *Lucid Expression of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters of Chandrakirti Translated from Sanskrit*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
5. Garfield, J., *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
6. Gethin, R., *Sayings of the Buddha: New translation by Rupert Gethin from the Pali Nikayas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
7. Jones, R. H., *Nagarjuna: Buddhism's Most Important Philosopher*. New York: Jackson Square Books, 2010.
8. Lipner, J., *Hindus: their religious beliefs and practices*. London : Routledge, 2010.
9. Lobsang Gyatso & Woodhouse, G., *Tsongkhapa's Praise For Dependent Relativity*. Boston: Wisdom Publishing, 2001.
10. Khensur Jampa Tegchok, *Insight Into Emptiness*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.
11. Mahavagga (of the Vinaya), 6: 19-20. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe13/sbe1312.htm> [Last accessed: 03/05/2013]
12. Nayak, G.C., *Madhyamika shunyata: A Reappraisal*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 2001.
13. Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World: Ethics for the New Millennium*. London: Abacus, 2000.
14. Thanissaro Bikkhu, *Kaccayanagotta Sutta, SN 12.15*. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.015.than.html> [Last accessed: 03/05/2013] 36, 1997.
15. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Wings to Awakening: Part I*. Metta Valley Monastery, 2010.

BUDDHISM IN VIETNAM IN THE BEGINNING OF CENTURIES

Bui My Diem Loan

Introduction:

Vietnam's geographical position has made it a prime candidate for trade with India. The several mountain ranges formed Indochinese Peninsula, which span from Tibet in the northwest to the sea in the southeast. Among these ranges lie the valleys of big rivers, most importantly the Mae Nam that forms the Thai delta, the Mekong River, and northern Vietnam's Red and Da Rivers. Sea-routes were the most important channels to connecting India with Vietnam.

The Buddhist belief promoted after Asoka's dynasty in the year 300 BC., following the voyages of sailors and traders were probably the journeys of Buddhist monks to propagate Buddhism. With their boarded knowledge contributions, the influence of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sanskrit literature could be thoroughly integrated into Cambodia, Champa, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In Cambodia, archaeologists have found four stone tablets carved in Sanskrit. Relations between the Champa kingdom and China began in the years 190-193 A.D. in Quang Nam province the Dong Duong Buddha statue, one of the most beautiful examples belonging to the Indian Amravati carving school, was found.

It is known that in 300 B.C., during Emperor Asoka's reign (247-232 B.C.), after the Third Council for compiling Sutras (*Két tãp*), many Buddhist delegations were sent to West, East and South East Asia. A delegation headed by

the two monks *Uttara* and *Sona* was sent to *Suvannabbumi*, the golden land. Historical materials from Burmese Buddhism relate that the two monks came to Burma to propagate Buddhism. Traders setting off from Central India could go by the land route crossing the Three Pagodas Pass and sail along the *Kamburi* River to the Gulf of Thailand. Further to the north, it was possible to get to the Gulf of Thailand by a land route, which nowadays connects *Moulmein* with *Tak Rahaeng*, a town on a branch of the *Mae Nam Wang*. There was another route linking the Mae Nam with the *Mekong* River, crossing *Karat*, *Sitep* and the *Mun* river valleys. It was this route, which led directly to the *Bassak* region in the midstream of the Mekong River in the Cambodian Kingdom. Indian migrants probably founded this kingdom before the Christian era. In the beginning of this Era, Indian monks might have come to Laos by this route and from there crossed the Truong Son ranges to Vietnam's Thanh Hoa or Nghe An provinces. Further to the North was the route connecting India with southern China, crossing Assam, Burma and Yunnan province. This route had used since the second century AD or even before this time.

All of the geographical and historical facts above refute the theories that Buddhism first came second hand from China, spreading from India to China and then from China to Vietnam. In fact, nobody denies that there were water and overland routes connecting India and China

Mr. Bui My Diem Loan is a Researcher, Department of Pali, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, Bihar.

without crossing Vietnam, most importantly the two land routes through Central Asia. Nobody can also deny the fact that Vietnam is almost influenced by Chinese Buddhism. According to historical materials, however, Indian monks introduced Buddhism directly into Vietnam a very long time before it entered Southern China. When did Buddhism firstly emerge into Vietnam? How many of Buddhist monks come? In addition, where did they come from? These questions are not easy to answers until now.

I- Ne Le Fort and Asoka's Missionary Delegation

In Giao Chau Record of Liu Han Qi, he wrote: "*Ne Le Fort in the Southeast of Dinh An district, distant seven miles from the river still remains the tower and dharma-hall which built by King Asoka, the woodcutters call it Kim Tuong*".

Where, then, did Ne Le Fort stay in Dinh An district? The earliest known mention of that fort is *Shui jing zhu* of Li Dao Yuan: "*The Quan Tac wharf comes from it, but it goes from the east of the district to An Dinh and Truong Giang of Bac Dai. When the tide was low, we can see the trace of the dragon ship of Viet King. Flowing to the east, there was Ne Le Fort which was built by King Asoka*" (see Book 37, p. 6b4-6).

The name of An Dinh appeared early in the *Han qian shu* (Book 28, 10b9-11a-25) where it is the one of among ten district in Giao Chau, including Luy Lau, Lien Lau, Phu Lau, Me Linh, Khuc Duong, Khuc Bac Dai, Khe Tu, Tay Vu, Long Bien, and Chu Dien.

According to Prof. Le Manh That, the word Ne Le, which is Han form, is often used as a transcription of the Sanskrit word naraka means hell (*Lich Su Phat Giao Viet Nam I*, 31). In Tam Dao Mountain, there was Tay Thien pagoda, which had a genealogy on Hung Kings. This pagoda is also named Chua Dia Nguc, or Hell Temple (Naraka Temple). Did this temple take

name by the word 'naraka' out? The point of interest is that An Dinh located around the mountain of Thach Ban or Tam Dao ranges, Phuc Yen province, where there was ancient Co Loa with evidence from the iron made-arrow. Straightforward, such as archaeological records show that since the Hung Kings (reign 2000 B.C.-43 A.D.) this land was once the military and political centre of Lac Viet government. In his work-'*History of Buddhism in Vietnam*', Prof. Le Manh That wrote that the woodcutters in Vietnam, thus to the 380 to 420 A.D., could see the temple and tower built by King Asoka (reign 247-232B.C.) in Ne Le of An Dinh district. It is more or less an allusion to Sona's mission sent by King Asoka. So it is not unreasonable for Linh Nam Chich Quai to record Chu Dong Tu was taught Buddhism by the Buddhist monk named Phat Quang.

Based on one Chinese scholar's materials, King Asoka's stupa can been found in Giao Chau (ancient Northern - Vietnam) at the Nele ("muddy") wall, affirming that the Nele wall is the present Vietnamese coastal city of Do Son. South India was the first region, which witnessed the appearance of the Mahayanist Bat Nha Sutra (or *Zhi hui jing* in Chinese, and *Prajna* in Sanskrit). For example, the Diamond Sutra, well known in Vietnam, is one of the most important Mahayana Sutras in the *Prajna* collection. Based on the collection of *Prajna* Sutras, the learned *Nagarjuna* promoted the famous "Middle way" (*Madhyamaka*), which had a profound influence on Vietnamese Buddhism, as it did on China. An analysis of the Zen (*Chan* in Chinese) literature of the Zen masters of the first two Zen sects in Vietnam, *Vinitaruci* and Vo Ngon Thong, shows clearly the deep influence of *Prajna* ideology. It is quite likely that the *Mahayana Prajna* was directly transferred from South India to Vietnam through Indonesia and Champa. In China, although Lokesama translated the first *Prajna* sutra during the Han dynasty, by the end

of the second century AD, its influence was not enduring and wide. Only after *Kumarajiva* came to China at the beginning of the fifth century did the *Prajna* sutra become widely popular there.

II-Chu Dong Tu and the monk Phat Quang

1- Ven. Phat Quang and the mount Quynh Vien

The story of *Linh Nam chich quai's Nhat Da Trach* recorded Chu Dong Tu was taught Buddhism by a Buddhist monk namely Phat Quang at Mount Quynh Vien which is a mountain at Sot port at the border of Vietnam and Champa in present day Nghe An-Ha Tinh province. Le Thanh Tong King wrote the poem as:

*“Remained temple still named Vu Muc
Famous mount still reminds the ancient
Quynh Vien”*

When did Ven. Phat Quang appear in Sot port?

In *Ping di ji (Qian Han Shu 12-4a3)*, it recorded that: *“In spring season (the 2th century AD), Huang Zhi country offered rhinoceros and horns”*. Huang Zhi is described as, *“Floating by ship from Huang Zhi to Pi Sun about eight months, then again passed more two months to arrived the border Nhat Nam of Tuong Lam country”*(Qian Han Shu 28, 32b3-5). In another hand, there were relations between China and other countries by sea-roads in the early and late centuries passing through Vietnam. Therefore, the theory of the existence of Ven. Phat Quang in the middle of the third century B.C. or the second century B.C. can be confirmed.

According to *Linh Nam chich quai*, Buddhism entered into Vietnam from the Sot port-Southern Vietnam where still remains the Champa Culture. From the traces of Champa still exist today, we can understand from the Sot port to the southern Vietnam was the land of Champa; from the Sot port to the northern Vietnam, we cannot find out any trace which

related to Champa culture. Therefore, Mount Quynh Vien may be not belong to Vietnam's map in the time of Chu Dong Tu. Ven. Phat Quang may be a Champa person, or an Indian monk who was trying to propagate Buddhism into Vietnam. As a result, Chu Dong Tu became the first Vietnamese Buddhist. This story was recorded later in *Tien nan yun lu*. How, then, did Chu Dong Tu receive the Buddhism?

2- Chu Dong Tu-the first Buddhist in Vietnam

In *Linh Nam chich quai*, the couple Chu Dong Tu and Tien Dung made business with many foreign traders. One day, Dong Tu set off in a boat with a foreign merchant. They stopped at Quynh Vien Mountain for fresh water and food. Dong Tu met an Indian monk called Phat Quang in a tent there. This monk taught him Buddhism. Before his leaving for home, his master gave him a stick and a hat and said to him, *“Everything is coming from here”*. Arriving back in his country, Chu Dong Tu explained Buddhism to Tien Dung. Later, they left their business and set out to practice Buddhism.

If Chu Dong Tu was the first Buddhist, when did he live?

Nhat Da Trach story only wrote him live in the Hung King's third generation. Of which was the third generation of Hung King?

Buddhism began to spread to countries around India during the reign of *Asoka* Emperor. This Great King ordered the monks to travel everywhere to spread Buddhism, in particular the *Sona's* delegation to land of gold (*Suvanabhumi*). Is this gold land in Southeast Asia? This issue is still controversial. However, based on Chinese archaeological records, namely *Shu ji* and *Qian han shu* as well as such as Oc Eo archaeological site, the southern Vietnam in the early centuries AD was full of beach of the trader ships not only of the nations of Indian civilization, but also of the distant countries of the Roman civilization.

So spreading Buddhism to this land is issue event.

Moreover, the Southern Vietnamese land from the South of Sot port brought back traces of Indian culture. Vo Canh stele, which wrote in Sanskrit, was found in Vo Canh village in Nha Trang, was identified by researchers in the second century AD. For the Sanskrit language to be engraved on stone, Indian civilization at that time was the dominant Buddhist religion, which spread in this land for a relatively long time. Indirectly, Indian civilization must exist in South Vietnam in the centuries before and after the Western calendar. Thus, the Hung King of the Chu Dong Tu time can be identified in the preceding centuries of the Western calendar, possibly the first or second Hung Nghi King, around the 2th-3th century BC. According to Prof. Le Manh That, this guess of the date of Chu Dong Tu's acceptance of Buddhism's event is perfectly in line with the views of Zen Master Chan Nguyen (1647-1728) in his *Thien Nam Ngu Luc* (see *Chan Nguyen Thien Su Toan Tap III*, 1983). Master Chan Nguyen recorded the story of Lu Gia is defeated by Han Vu Empire. In this work, he wanted to emphasize that Truc Vien Pagoda had exited from Lu Gia reign in Mount Thay in Son Tay, about 110 BC. This also means that Buddhism existed in Vietnam in the second century BC.

In his *Dao jiao yuan liu* (1845, pp.9a11-b5), Master An Thien wrote again the Chu Dong Tu's story as: "*Under Hung King's reign, at Mount Quyinh Vi, there was Chu Dong Tu who travelled and mounted to a hermit's hut. A Buddhist monk namely Phat Quang stayed there. He was an Indian monk with over 40 years old. That monk gave to Chu Dong Tu a hat and a stick, and said that, "All of psychic power is from these things". Dong Tu taught Buddhism to his wife-Tien Dung after go back. Later, both of them left home to practice Buddhism. On the way of their*

return, Dong Tu had to build a cone stick. In the midnight, the castle appeared with curtain is covered with gold and jewels, soldiers are guarded in the courtyard".

As it is said, Linh Nam Chich Quai tells us Buddhism that Chu Dong Tu was taught was psychic power Buddhism. This Buddhist tradition remained until the 6th century AD; later is added by meditated Buddhism, but it does not lose its influence. It still exists as the first tradition class in Vietnamese Buddhism, a basic one from which to build new Buddhist traditions, complementing it through the history of Buddhism development in Vietnam.

III- The Faith, the Politic and the Thought in the Hung King time:

The Hung Vuong era is proved to have lasted until 43 A.D. (the end of Hai Ba Trung time). It suggests that the Chinese though claimed that Vietnam (or Giao Chau at that time) was its southern province, in fact, violated the sovereignty of Vietnam. The existence prior to the first century B.C. of a Viet Ca (Song of Viet) records that the Viets at that time had their own language, spoken and written that differed from Chinese (The old style Vietnamese is Chu Nom (Sino-Vietnamese) which is different from Chinese). Moreover, the Vietnamese people already knew how to grow flowers called *Uat kim huong*, one kind of tulip, to make offerings to the Buddha. These facts prove that Vietnam during the Hung era was an independent country with nationalistic tendency blended in Buddhist influence. Besides, devotion of ghost is a feature of the Vietnamese belief. In *Qian han shu* (25, 1a5-10), Zi Shao Sun (43-32 B.C.) recorded the story of Viet people's demon belief which was told by Yong Zhi to Han Wu Di such as: "*Vietnamese people have believed demon custom, demon worshipers can see the devil. The ancient*

Dong Au worshiped evil spirits then his life span was 160 years old". Hun Wu Di, then, required the fortune-teller set up the demon temple for worship a hundred devils, also worship God, but used the chicken for divination.

The combination of worshipping the dead and using chicken so far still exists in the funeral customs of Vietnamese. For example, when worshiped for the dead, they give three eggs; in the opening of the tomb that is celebrated three days after burying, one chicken was dragged three rounds and let it go, they believe that the dead soul will follow the chicken that goes out of the tomb.

In the context of such a belief and academic thoughts, Buddhism has introduced into Vietnam. In fact, Chu Dong Tu and Tien Dung built their castle by using straw hat and walking stick. We can say that the substance of Buddhism at that time was psychic power.

According to *Liu du di jing*, the humanistic thought refers to compassion, but this compassion "not limited to loving people, but also covering the entire beings". Such humanistic thought expresses not only the teachings of love compassion in Buddhism, but also the humanitarian traditions of the Hung Kings.

As above, when introduced into Vietnam, Buddhism coexisted with polytheism. Some of the Buddhist dogmas accord with the concepts of Vietnamese ethics. Such as, if you behave kindly towards everyone, you will be treated kindly; gods punish the evil and help the honest, etc. Vietnamese people consider Ph t or the Buddha as God closely supervising the lives of human beings on earth. Yet, unlike God, the Buddha tries to convert wrongdoers by means of mercy. Buddhism permeates into Giao Chau civilization as easily as water permeates ground. Vietnamese fairy tales have penetrated many elements from fairy tales and the precursors of

Indian Buddhism. The *Tam Cam story* is a story of karmic retribution in it the Buddha plays god who can see injustice in the world. The word "But" is a direct word from word Buddha that is not from the Chinese pronunciation 'Fo'. Indian visitors propagated the Buddhism by leaving their faith in Giao Chau, they often told the story from Buddhist *Jataka* in their rest time. The Indian monks brought into Vietnam the Theravada sect, which emphasizes self-enlightenment. Later Chinese monks came to Giao Chau to disseminate the Mahayana sect, which emphasizes enlightenment for all beings.

In Giao Chau at the beginning of the third century the *Astahasrika sutra*, translated by Khuong Tang Hoi was considered the oldest Prajna Sutra (*Astahasrika*). The Prajna Sutra translated by Lokasoma appeared later by the end of the Han dynasty (25-220 A.D.) at the second stage of Prajna Literature. The *Astakasrika Sutra* is the oldest in the whole of the Prajna Literature. It surely came to Vietnam from Southern India and not from China before it was translated. In the Luy Lau Buddhist centre, there were monasteries or schools where the Prajna sutra was taught, including the Astahasrika sutra, later translated into Chinese by Khuong Tang Hoi.

Conclusion

The spread of Buddhism in Vietnam continued from the beginning of the Common Era through the following centuries owing to the contributions of Indian, Central Asian, Chinese and Vietnamese monks themselves who had studied Buddhism in India or China. The records show that many Chinese monks followed a Southern route and stopped in Giao Chau before going to India to look for Buddhist teachers. For example, Yu Fa Lan, Yu Dao Cui at the beginning of the fourth century and Ming Yuan at the end of the fourth; Sui Ming, Wu Xing, Tan Rui, Zhi Neng, Hui Ning and Yi Jing

in the fifth, sixth, seventh centuries. Not satisfied with Buddhism in China and the translated sutras, they wanted to continue their study of Buddhism in India. Their journeys were long and dangerous. Storms, diseases, pirates, and the like threatened their survival. Thus, in order to prepare for their journeys they had to improve upon their physical strength, their knowledge of Sanskrit, astronomy, and the customs and habits of the people at their destination. Giao Chau was a very convenient place for such preparation. When they went and especially when they came back, they talked with monks in Giao Chau about their new knowledge of Buddhism and different Buddhist sects. They deposited there their Sutra books, which they had collected. All of this led to the further spread of Buddhism in Giao Chau. Some Vietnamese monks also set out to look for Buddhist teachers together with Chinese monks, going “Southward” and “Westward”. Sometimes they went by themselves on the trading boats of

Indian merchants. Some of their names were Giai Thoat Thien (or *Moksadeva*), Khuy Xung, Hue Diem, Tri Hanh, and Dai Thanh Dang. Before arriving in India, they passed many Buddhist kingdoms in South East Asia and Southern Asia. Most of them went to India because they were not satisfied with the amount of Buddhism that had reached their country via monks from India, China or Central Asia. They wanted to see with their own eyes what Buddhism was like in India and what society and people with Buddhist beliefs were like there. They made a great effort to study Buddhism and Indian society.

Buddhism continued to spread throughout Vietnam until the late stage of Chinese feudal domination and even until Vietnam became independent in the tenth century. Therefore, previous Indian missionaries and others helped to build up and developed the Buddhism in Vietnam.

References

1. H.G. Quaritch Wales, *A Newly Explored Route of Ancient Indian Cultural Expansion. Indian Art and Letters*, 1-31.
2. V. Rougier, *Novellas Decouvertes Chames au Quang Nam*, Befeo XI, p. 471; and A.K. Coomarasvamy, *The History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 197.
3. Pelliot, P., *Deux Itheraires*, Befeo, IV, pp 142-143; and G.H. Luce Pe Maung Tin, “Burma Down to the Fall of Pagan”, *Burma Research Society*, 29.
4. Translated from Le Manh That, *Lich Su Phat Giao Viet Nam I (The History of Buddhism in Vietnam I)*, NXB Thuan Hoa, 1999, 22, 26, 30.
5. Li Dao Yuan (?-529), *Shui Ching Chu* 37, p.6b4-6.
6. K. Mukerji, *Indian Literature in China and the Far East*, Greater Indian Society, 1919, 92-93.
7. Institute of Chinese and Nom Studies, *Literature of Ly-Tran periods, Vol. III*, Hanoi: Science & Society Publication, 1978, p.657. King Le Thanh Tong composed 13 poems entitled *Minh Long Cam Tu (Natural beauties of the peaceful nation)* praising the beautiful scenery of the 13 coastal ports where he passed by on the way to conquer Champa in 1470.
8. *Nhat Da Trach Truyen, Vietnam Han Yu Xiao Shuo Zong Zhan II*, Taiwan: Xue Sheng Shu Ju Yin Xing, 1992, 202- 204.
9. Pan Ku (39-92C.E.), *Qian han shu* 10, p.5a8-9 & 98, p.8b4-6; *Qian han shu* 98, 8b4-6.
10. Janse, Olaf, *Archaeological Research in Indochina I*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1956, p.146. Also, see Giles, Lionel, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum*, London, 1957, 567b.
11. Li She Chen (1518-1593), *Pen Chao Chang Mu* 14, 69b4-5.

LIFE SKETCH OF DEVAMITTA DHARMAPALA

“Upasika”

Is the biography of an outstanding spirit of the East, walking at first uncertainly, beset by clouds of doubt, then with increasing poise and increasing spiritual certainty, on the highway of truth. That walk was frequently interrupted in its later stages by meditation and critical hygiene; towards the end of that road the man left the highway for the guru, the wanderer left his secular ascetism for the yellow robe and the Sangha, the Buddhist priesthood. This spirit in human form was a worshipper at the shrine of knowledge and truth. A life's work was completed, “in the footsteps of the Buddha”. This man was called, at first, Hewavitarne Dharmapala. The world, - Asia, Europe, America, subsequently heard the Message of the Buddha, the Dharma from the Anagarika Dharmapala. The Anagarika Dharmapala died the Bhikku Sri Devemitta Dharmapala.

Hewavitarne Dharmapala was born on September 17th, 1864 in Colombo, Ceylon. His parents were devout Buddhists. At the age of seven, we see this Buddhist boy in a Christian school, because there was no Buddhist school. He there conceived an antagonism towards Christianity. At the age of 14, he took a strong stand. It was the time of the Wesak festival, and young Hewavitarne asked permission to remain absent from school for that day. His request was refused, whereupon he took his books and walked out. He celebrated Wesak, but had to pay for it by receiving a severe caning on the following day.

When Col. Olcott and Madam H. P. Blavatsky came to Ceylon, Dharmapala joined

them. He became interpreter for Col. Olcott, while the latter toured the island. Through Col. Olcott's intervention the Wesak Day was made a national holiday in Ceylon. Then Dharmapala felt that he had not been caned in vain.

H. P. B. had great influence over Dharmapala and he revered her to the end of his life as his spiritual mother. In 1884, he proceeded with her and Col. Olcott to Adyar, Madras.

In 1889, we find him returning from Adyar, to prepare for a trip to Japan, to which he had received the invitation from a Japanese Buddhist, Noguchi by name.

The steamer that carried Dharmapala and Olcott to Japan, left Colombo on the 18th January 1889.

Unfortunately Dharmapala got ill on this journey. A warm welcome awaited the travellers at Kobe. The principal priest of the seven Buddhist sects came to the jetty to greet them. During his illness in Japan Dharmapala received most careful attention from the Japanese people. At Kyoto there was a convention of High Priests and Dharmapala attended that convention in an invalid's chair.

In early May, Col. Olcott and Dharmapala gave a farewell address. Their mission was ended. Yet Dharmapala had to leave in advance of the Col., on account of his illness. He parted from his friend in tears, his devotion to Col. Olcott was so great.

On his return from Ceylon, Dharmapala stayed at the Theosophical Society Headquarters.

He remained in Ceylon till the end of 1890.

He was urged by a strong desire to visit the Buddhist holy places in India, and accompanied by a Japanese Buddhist monk, he visited Sarnath and Buddha Gaya.

January 22, 1891 was the most important day of Dharmapala's life, for on that day his life's mission began. He, from that day on, determined to revive Buddhism in its native land, - India and regain the Buddha Gaya temple for the Buddhists.

He left Gaya for Calcutta on March 18, 1891, en route for Burma.

While in Calcutta he made the acquaintance of two noble men, both prominent members of the Theosophical Society, who remained his lifelong friends and patrons. One was, Babu Neel Carnal Mookerji, who received him like a brother, and on whose home he remained whenever he was in Calcutta. The other was the veteran editor of the '*Indian Mirror*', Sree Narendranath Sen, a man of great influence and moral force. He was deeply touched by the moral tone of the young Dharmapala and gave the noble aspirant much encouragement.

Returning from Burma, he stopped at Adyar en route to Ceylon. Here he got the sad news of the departure from earthly life his revered friend, H. P. B., and wept in his grief.

In May, 1891 he founded in Ceylon the Maha Bodhi Society, one of the main objects of which was to regain Buddha Gaya for the Buddhists.

Thus, the Buddha Gaya Mission proceeded to India and reached Gaya on 17th July, 1891.

Dharmapala now shifted his centre of activities to Calcutta and M. B. S. began its work there in 1892, Creek Row. In May of that year the first number of the *Maha Bodhi Journal* was published.

Meanwhile Dharmapala had entered into correspondence with Dr. J. H. Barrows of Chicago, which ended in the latter's inviting the

young Singhalese Buddhist to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago to be held at the World's Fair (1893). The invitation being accepted the young Buddhist delegate from Ceylon left Colombo for America on the 20th July, 1893. His heart was filled with noble aspirations and even on the steamer he met many who felt his zeal and appreciated him.

On his arrival at the Albert Docks in London, he was met by Sir Edwin Arnold, the author of '*The Light of Asia*'. While in London he also met Prof. Rhys Davids, the famous Pali scholar, who gave him much encouragement.

After a short stay in the English Capital he sailed for New York on the "City of Paris". There he arrived on the 2nd September, 1893.

The reception accorded him in his arrival in Chicago was most cordial. Many were they who came to greet him and draw the young stranger into their friendship.

In that Metropolis ablaze with lights, which had drawn to its enclosures visitors greater in number than were the warriors in the army of Xerxes, when that Persian potentate undertook to fight Greece, the young Singhalese received responses to the warmth of feeling which he sent out.

For amidst all these millions from all parts of the world, the humble votary of the Dharma maintained himself with dignity and became marked out from thousands by the very absence of all ostentation, by that mild unobtrusive manner, which was so distinctively his own. In that avalanche of humanity, many-tongued and of varying thought and deals, this young hero from Lanka proved his worth. The daily papers were loud in their admiration of that stately Young Oriental with the dreamy eyes.

He delivered numerous lectures in halls filled to their utmost capacity. The Papers remarked with high appreciation of the dignity with high appreciation of the dignity with which

this youthful yellow-robed Priest walked to the platform and the earnestness with which he explained the life and the teaching of the great Aryan Sage. Many of the different Churches and Societies invited him to speak and everywhere the impression was the same. He was referred to as the “gentle Dharmapala”, and success followed him at every step.

When all his work in Chicago had been finished, Dharmapala desired not to prolong his stay at the metropolis.

His experiences there had been many-sided, he had met people from all parts of the globe, prominently, however, Americans, the inhabitants of the land. He had been much admired, partly because of the purity of his nature, but to a great extent also because, as a brilliantly robed, Oriental, he presented a striking figure and was a pleasing asset to drawing rooms.

He had seen much that he liked, but more that was foreign to his nature and which could never get his approval. He left Chicago a wiser man, but he never forgot the deep impressions he had gained there, the many friends he has made and the courtesy and kindness he had received. But he was now more a Buddhist than ever.

He had previously met with the “isms” of the West in books, but they were then, after all, but in print. When he came into actual touch with them, they became unacceptable to him. And ever more ardently he harboured the inward desire to see the States of America converted to Buddhism. With this ideal in mind, he determined to revisit U.S.A. and teach the Dharma.

After bidding farewell to his numerous friends, he departed from the place on which he had left the impression of the “Doctrine and the stamp of his personality.”

Steamer carried him across the mighty continent to the shores of the “Golden West”,

- California, the land of sunshine and of roses. Here on a high elevation, overlooking the broad ocean, stand the city named San Francisco the “Queen of the Pacific”. Here our traveller remained for sometime; he delivered lectures in various places, and here, as elsewhere, he made many friends.

Leaving this place of beauty, he had yet to pass through its most charming spot, “the Golden Gate,” that nature-blest Strait, which makes San Francisco impenetrable to foes, and is, at the same time marked as one of the great beauty-spots of the world. In its very centre the sun goes daily to rest, and presents a scene, the charm of which is unsurpassed and not unmindful of these golden beauties did the mind filled with the golden Dharma pass this place. The Anagarika drew this scene into his heart and it lingered there.

On the 17th October, 1893, the steamer that carried this distinguished traveller reached Honolulu. Here fate had reserved its “good-will” for him; for here, for the first time, he met the lady, whom he was wont to call his foster mother, the lady who so deeply sympathised with him in thought and deed, and whose generous gifts, in later days, helped him to materialise some of his fondest dreams, - Mrs. Mary Foster. She came to the steamer to greet him, being introduced by Dr. C. R. Marques, a member of the Theosophical Society.

As the steamer moved on over the mighty sea the shores of his native land drew gradually nigh, and, when finally he did disembark, he found that it was indeed his own homeland. Friends, by the thousand, came to greet him, and shout of welcome rent the air. Thus was he received, this son of Lanka, returning home from foreign shores. To his dear ones he was more dear than ever, and the nation was justly proud of him. He had given name and fame to the Isle of Lanka, which up to now had been but

a seldom mentioned place to the world at large.

He had meanwhile affixed the name 'Anagarika' to the Dharmapala.

He remained in Ceylon for some time, giving lectures and telling the people of his experiences abroad.

But longing drew him northward again, and the beginning of April, 1894, saw him wending his way back to the land of the Buddhas, the sacred land, where first the "Lamp of Truth" was lit.

In Calcutta he found many eager faces to greet him. But the greater numbers of these were driven by the urge curiosity, rather than by the desire for spiritual knowledge.

The major part of 1895 was spent in attending to the work of Calcutta. The Journal had to be brought out, lectures arranged for, and affairs generally to be put in order. In all these activities, he received the valuable assistance of his friend and President of the Maha Bodhi Society in India the Sree Narendranath Sen.

The Anagarika was, however, not happy in Calcutta. The intolerance caste spirit in religion prevailing in India worried him. His cosmopolitan mind could not endure those prejudices.

He went to Gaya, he was lonely. But the work had to be carried on. He attempted to install the Image of Buddha.

But he encountered severe objection. The Mahant refused, his men assaulted Dharmapala, the Image was desecrated. He now left it to the Law courts to decide - was this a Buddhist Temple or otherwise. He opened the "Buddha Gaya Temple case".

On May 31, 1895, he was cross examined for several trying hours; again on May 7th of the same year. May 14th, 1895, was the final day of the case. But the Magistrate reserved judgement till the 2nd week of June.

The Anagarika was in Burma when the news of this judgement reached him, which was to the effect that the Law Court recognised the self-evident fact that the Maha Bodhi Temple was a Buddhist Temple.

But unfortunately, the struggle was not at an end. In April 1896, Dharmapala received the unpleasant order to remove the Image from the Burmese Rest house, where it had found a resting place since the day of the Mahant's refusal to admit it in to the Temple. After its removal it remained for a while at the private residence of friends and is now in the shine room of the Vihara in Calcutta.

During all these trying months the Anagarika once more found in unfailing friend in the Sree Narendranath Sen, who lent the pages of his daily paper to Dharmapala's support, and feared not to vigorously attack the Government for its queer attitude.

The news spread - Burma was angry, Siam lukewarm, but Ceylon fuming, still the matter remained as it was, and the Buddhists had not succeeded in reclaiming this noble House of Worship.

The case was reopened and the new struggle lasted for years. Its ending was a tragedy to the Maha Bodhi Society, it was lost to the complainant, and Dharmapala had to see half-a-lifework doomed.

In the early part of 1902 he started on another tour of America, and landed at San Francisco. Here he was the guest of Mrs. Wadham, a large-hearted and motherly lady, whose house was ever open to friends from East or West.

While there, on the 24th of July, 1902, he heard of the death of his colleague Swami Vivekananda, that Great worker in the field of progress, who laid down his earthly burden at Belur by the Ganga riverside in June, 1902.

Dharmapala remained in California till the end of 1902. Thence he proceeded to Chicago.

His work there was a continuation of that commenced some years previously, when he had visited the States on the invitation of Dr. Paul Cams, a famous Oriental Scholar.

He spent now much time in studying the agricultural and industrial methods of the United States and visited the science faculties of different universities.

But his heart was not satisfied. He was impatient with the pseudo-interest of the Americans in the Dharma. They did indeed attend his lectures; they applauded him, but they showed no tendency towards being drawn into the Noble Faith. He had learned their agricultural and modern methods he argued, why then could they not learn and embrace the Dharma?

But there was no response, and the eager missionary left the United States an unhappy man. He carried with him the treasure of the knowledge of scientific technology in agriculture and industry to introduce it into India and Ceylon; but the treasure from these lands, which he offered in return, the American refused to accept.

On his return journey to India in January, 1904, he encountered a rough passage on board the "Umbria", between New York and Liverpool. On his arrival in England he proceeded to London where he once more looked up old friends. He found Sir Edwin Arnold a changed man; time and illness had done the work, - Sir Edwin was an invalid. Among the new friends he made then, was the Russian exile Prince Kropotkin. This gentleman introduced him to many of his countrymen.

During the remaining part of his journey, the Anagarika visited the Continent, and stopped at many of the important cities of France and Italy.

Years went by, times were not ready for the great industrial undertaking that this friend of the poor had planned. He spent some years in Calcutta developing his Maha Bodhi Society.

In 1911 he lost his noble friend and colleague Narendra Nath Sen, who in that year left the earthly world for the greater existence.

In 1915 there were riots in Ceylon into which the Hewavitarne family were unfortunately drawn.

During the years of the Great War the Anagarika was in Calcutta under the surveillance of the Government. He remained, however, in his own official dwelling and continued the publication of the "*Journal*".

The meantime the liberal donations from his friend, Mrs Foster, had made it possible to erect a building. This work the Anagarika commenced immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. And today an imposing edifice in the honour and the service of the Buddha Dharma stands in the heart of the great Indian Metropolis. It is directly opposite to the Calcutta University and a pretty artificial lake standing between the latter and Buddhist Vihara, adds greatly to its charm.

The Vihara itself is a capacious brownstone building, where both art and solidity are prominent. The shrine room on the second story is a temple of peace and beauty. Frescoes after the style of Ajanta and Sigiriya adorn the walls and elegant Buddha statues, of alabaster or of bronze, give the place an air of solemnity. Daily flower offerings and burning lamps testify to the fact that the worship of the Tathagata is again alive in the land of His birth.

On the ground floor the lecture hall is a capacious room. Here noble discourses are held, attended always by large audiences, on whom once more, - from the frescoes on the walls - the benign face of the Buddha looks in silent blessing.

But the Anagarika's health, which had been poor for some time^ now developed serious symptoms. A stroke of paralysis robbed him of the use of both legs. On the invitation of his friend and pupil, Mr. Strauss, he went to Switzerland

for treatment, and there at a hospital in Zurich underwent an operation, which was successful to the extent of returning to him the use of his limbs, He was now 61 years of age.

From Switzerland he once more turned his steps to America travelling via London. This was in 1925. In October of that year he paid his last visit to Chicago, where he had many friends, who were happy to once again greet the popular orator of the Parliament of religions of 1893; the memory of that time lingered with them as it did with him, and together they exchanged pleasant reminiscences. Thence homeward bound on the Western route, he visited San Francisco, to meet his benefactress and foster mother, Mrs. Mary Foster.

He remained at San Francisco sometime, and Mrs. Foster explained to him how much she needed his influence. She asked him to recite to her some Buddhist gathas, to which request he gladly acceded. This recital gave much peace to the mind of the lady.

He now changed his programme of travelling, because Mrs. Foster's munificence had made it possible to found a Buddhist Mission in England. The Anagarika chose the Eastern route. Meanwhile he had received a telegram from his brother, informing him a Vihara would be erected at Sarnath.

He therefore left San Francisco on the 20th November, 1925, Mrs. Foster, now 79 years old and of feeble physique still accompanied her guru friend to Oakland, which city is divided from San Francisco by the Bay of that name, the latter being crossed by comfortable passenger steamers which run at regular intervals of 15 minutes.

Arriving in New York, he boarded the steamer "Majestic" and on January 31st 1926, landed at Southampton.

He proceeded at once to London to attend to the business there. A house was purchased

at Madelay Road, Eeling, near London and the Buddhist Mission found its first official home in July, 1926.

Later the Mission removed from that place and established permanent Headquarters at 41, Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, London.

His untiring activities proved unfortunately too much for the ardent missionary. He developed bronchitis, which caused him severe suffering during the cold months of 1927. He was, therefore, obliged to seek the sunny Orient again. On returning to Ceylon, he took up his residence at the Maligakanda Foster Seminary.

A few years went by, and in December, 1930 passed away that noble lady who had given so bountifully of her substance for the promotion of the great Cause.

The Anagarika received this sad news somewhat belated, which pained him deeply. Her name is never to be forgotten by all progressive Buddhists.

Mrs. Foster was born on the 21st September, 1844, and passed away on the 10th December, 1930, at the ripe age of 84 years and three months. Her labour for the Buddhist Cause commenced in 1903, and for 27 years she was unflinching in her loyalty to the Cause and its ardent Promoter.

The work at holy Isipatana was nearing completion, - and in March, 1931, the Anagarika proceeded thither to see the Mulagandhakuti Vihara standing finished in all its architectural glory. The vision of the young dreamer of 1891 found its abode in stone and beauty in 1931.

Regarding Sarnath, the Anagarika writes in his diary, - "In 1901 I bought the land by means of a gift from my dear mother. Three years later a donation from the Raja of Bhinga made it possible to add another 10 bighas. In 1915 I received the first donation from Mrs. Foster for the erection of a building there. In November 1923, the foundation stone of the Vihara was

laid by Sir Harcourt Butler and immediately the work proceeded.” Thus the name of the Anagarika Dharmapala joined the list of those noble devotees, who, in the past, erected stately monuments in honour of the glorious Founder of the Religion of Peace.

But what human frame can endure the constant strain the ever-recurring ordeals through which this untiring labourer in his Lord’s vineyard had passed for years? His constitution was broken, he was but a wreck of his former self. But the greater peace descended upon him. Those who met him felt the stronger flow of love and good-will that emanated from him.

There was but one desire left unfulfilled. He wished to enter the holy community of the Brethren - the Sangha - and, as an ordained monk of the Order, lay down his mortal frame. Fate granted him this favour. In 1931, the Anagarika Dharmapala entered the Sangha.

In his diary he gives us the following account of this event: - “The Thera Srinivasa shaved me, and sandalwood-paste was then put upon my shaved head. Thereupon I bathed, and following that, a white dhoti was given me, and a turban tied round my head, I now was taken to the Vihara., There Boruggamuwe Revata Maha Thero administered Pansil, after which a bundle of yellow robes were tied round my neck and Srinivasa and Mandesara Theros took me to a room, where I was made to wear a yellow robe, next I was presented to the Maha Thero, who gave the Ten precepts. Later a group photo was taken in the marble hall.”

“How happy I feel that at Holy Isipatana I was admitted to the Bhikkhu Sangha.” He was henceforth known as the Venerable Devamitta Dharmapala.

April 1933 marks the month when a great career was ended, when he who had striven to restore Sarnath, and seen his ideal realised, laid down his body there, where too he had received his ordination.

We still recall his words of the last two months, - “Most that I undertook to do in this life, I accomplished. But there is much left to be done. Do you, my followers, never give up the work even at great sacrifice. After twenty years I will come and rejoin you.”

A week before his final passing, he fell into a state of partial coma. Still his mind was ever at Buddha Gaya. And when from that place some Samaneras came to his bedside, he asked them why they had left Buddha Gaya, for he himself had placed these young priests there while he was still quite well.

He had great faith in the Paritta sutras and often asked the priests to chant them for him. He was quite prepared for the call. He gave up medicine because he knew his hour had come, and medicine would no longer help him. He was very eager to go.

He gave instructions regarding his cremation, which was strictly carried out. He was carried to the cremation ground by the Samaneras and with the chanting of priests; his body was consumed by the flames.

The ashes were divided. One part was kept at Sarnath, where it is resting under a stupa. The other portion was sent to Ceylon, where on arrival at Talaimanar, a special train awaited it and bore the urn to Colombo. It is now resting in a casket in a sacred place on the Island.

(The Maha Bodhi Vol. 50, No. 9-10, September-October 1942. Pages 314-323)

THE LAST HOURS OF THE LATE VENERABLE SRI DEVAMITTA DHAMMAPALA

Brahmachari Devapriya Valisinha

“Let me die soon, let me be reborn twenty-five times to spread Lord Buddha’s Dharma”. This was the last wish of the late Venerable Sri Devamitta Dhammapala, as he lay sick in the bed at Holy Isipatana with a fever to which he eventually succumbed on 29th April last. It was not the wish of the coward or the imbecile but the earnest yearning of the undaunted spirit seeking fresh opportunities for greater service to humanity. Every minute of his remarkable life had been spent for the good of humanity and it was impossible for him to lie idle in bed. He was now compelled to a life of inactivity which was against his very nature and he longed to free himself from it. How often did he during his last days express a desire to pass away and be reborn with a better body and mind to serve Buddhism.

Towards the end of March I returned to Calcutta from Isipatana in order to finish the work in connection with the Wesak number of the *Maha Bodhi Journal*, which I was arranging to issue on the 1st May. I had left the Venerable Dhammapala in apparently good health for, though mentally he was alert and fresh as ever, continued ill-health had greatly weakened his body. He gave me several fine articles for the Wesak issue of our Magazine including the first chapter of his autobiography. Thus back in Calcutta I was completely engrossed in my work when I was shocked to receive the following telegram of the 16th April: “Venerable Dhammapala very ill, come at once”. Without waiting for a moment I caught the very next train and reached Isipatana during the early hours of the following day. One of the Samaneras met me

at the gate and gave me the welcome news that Venerable Dhammapala was very much better. Reassured thus, I rushed into his little room to find him seated on his bed absorbed in deep meditation. Seeing me he smiled and remarked, “I asked the bhikkhu not to wire you as there was no necessity.”

It is indeed remarkable how those who had gone through the fierce battle of life surmounting great odds unscathed even during the severest part of the fight should, at last, succumb to grim death as a result of a trifling illness caused by a little oversight. On the night of the 13th April there had been torrential rain at Isipatana and while the Venerable Dhammapala was sound asleep, water had leaked in from the roof thoroughly wetting every article in the room. North Indian roofs are usually flat with a parapet all around it as a protection for those who used to sleep on it during summer. Openings are left at different points of the parapet for the rain water to escape. It had so happened that during the hot season the Venerable Dhammapala had got one of the Samaneras to close the holes in the parapet and pour water on the roof so as to keep it cool inside. The closing of the outlets in the parapet round the roof had been quite forgotten by all and during the torrential downpour on the 13th April the top of the roof had been turned into a veritable tank, the water leaking inside. I found that, as a result of getting wet that night, the Venerable Dhammapala had contracted fever and so sending for immediate medical attendance, I commenced nursing him myself. The Doctor did not take serious view of the case,

diagnosing it as malaria. A couple of days thus passed without any complications, but as there was no sign of improvement I consulted Dr. Sobharam and later on Major. A. J. Culham, the Chief Civil Surgeon of Benares. Major Culham was of opinion that it was a case of enteric but their treatment failed to effect any improvement, the patient getting weaker every day. "We have to fight two forces, first his disease and then his will-power, probably he will win", were the remarks of one of the Doctors at a later stage as the Venerable Dhammapala himself did not cooperate with us. He did not want to prolong his life if it was going to be of no use to the world. Many a time he refused to take medicine, saying that it was unnecessary expenditure on his withering body. "Leave the money for Buddhist work", he would tell me and pour the medicine into the spittoon.

On the 20th, his condition became serious and I thought it advisable to send a telegram to his relations in Colombo. Responsibility lay heavy on my shoulders and at distant and lonely Isipatana I wanted someone who could share it with me. The Doctors were very grave and I could guess what was going on in their minds. So I wired to Calcutta asking Dr. P. Nandi, one of the leading physicians in Calcutta, to come up at once for no one understood Venerable Dhammapala's ailments better than Doctor Nandi. The reply came much to my relief that an assistant doctor was coming up on the 22nd, and that Dr. Nandi himself would arrive on the 23rd. In the meantime on the 22nd, the Doctors pronounced the case as critical. "Let me die soon, let me be reborn. I can no longer prolong my agony; I would like to be reborn twenty-five times to spread Lord Buddha's Dharma" repeated Venerable Dhammapala. At eleven o'clock in the morning his pulse began to fail and death was imminent. A tense silence prevailed in the room as heavy as a spell and there was many a hushed whisper and smothered sob around

the bed of the dying leader. He was not fully conscious of all that was happening around him, while with heavy hearts we devoutly arranged his bed facing the Vihara so that he may have a full view of the great work he had completed. He looked for a moment at the sacred and stately edifice with that longing of the affectionate parent for his growing offspring and in a flash this was changed into one of reverential love as he several times raised his folded hands in adoration.

At Atapirikara was offered and we placed an image before him while the Samaneras chanted Pirith, listening to which the great leader fell asleep, and he was still sleeping when the assistant doctor arrived with oxygen from Calcutta. Waking up a little later he only asked "Why all this delay?"

Dr. Nandi arrived in the 23rd, and the joy of our leader was unbounded. Ever since they had met each other they had been like brothers and I could hardly suppress the tears that rushed into my eyes as I saw how the two like-minded men met each other in mutual understanding and regard - one in the throes of death and other determined to save him. After a prolonged and careful examination Dr. Nandi pronounced the case to be pneumonia. The arrival of the doctor changed the whole atmosphere of the place. Utter hopelessness and depression which were so long predominant gave place to hope and confidence for, not merely was he the healer but a guide, philosopher and comforter to us all. To our infinite joy and relief the patient began to come round; in the doctor's presence he no longer refused medicine for he had implicit faith in him. "I shall be happy to take your medicine and die", he told the doctor.

On receiving news of his serious illness the samaneras who were sent to Buddhagaya, returned on the 24th and peeped into the sick room. "From where are they coming?" enquired

Venerable Dhammapala. “From Buddhagaya”, replied Revd. Sasanasiri, who was standing close by. When he heard this there was quite an agitated look in his face giving an index to the worrying emotions in his heart and then at last he asked to everyone’s surprise: “When her child is dying will the mother run away?” Those present readily understood what he meant, for Buddhagaya was of greater importance to him than his own life. Throughout his illness Venerable Dhammapala kept harping on the Buddhagaya question. Not a day passed without an reference to it. It had been his greatest ambition to recover the sacred site for the Buddhist world. Lately he had re-started the movement and was contemplating a vigorous campaign when he unfortunately fell ill. “If I live another two years I shall see that the Holy Temple is restored”, he told me once. His plan was to take up his residence at Gaya itself and from there carry on his last battle. He expected the whole Buddhist world to stand by him like one man, but in this he was sadly mistaken. It was as a rude awakening that he received a copy of a memorial sent by the Congress of Buddhist Association in Ceylon dealing a death blow to his life-long aspiration.’ It was the greatest shock of his life and I can vividly recollect his pain and anguish when he read it. Alas! he never recovered from the shock. How could he forget such treachery even on his sick bed? Space does not permit me to dwell on everything he said in this connection; but I must say that the restoration of Buddhagaya to its rightful owners is a work which he has left to Buddhists to complete and I hope that it will-be taken up in right earnest by the entire Buddhist world and not look back till they succeed, thus crowning with success the great and heroic task initiated by the greatest of Buddhist Missionaries for the last seven hundred years.

Venerable Dhammapala’s nephew, Mr. Rajah Hewavitarne, arrived from Colombo on the 26th, a day earlier than we expected.

I had been fervently hoping that he would arrive before the patient’s illness should take a serious turn and so his welcome presence lifted a heavy load from my head. Relief was immense. Venerable Dhammapala recognised him at once, affectionately stroked his face and enquired about his brother Neil. He also asked what action they were taking against the memorial sent by the Buddhist Congress. As hours passed by he showed signs of recovery but it was only the last flicker of the flame before it went out. The end was soon to come, and bathe the Buddhist world in tears. As the patient was not taking sufficient nourishment, food had to be injected much against his will. On the 27th, all of a sudden he called me and wanted pen and paper to write something very important. He was semiconscious at the time, and after scribbling something with great effort he closed his eyes. There were three lines of which the first was very indistinct while the last two read as follows: “Doctor Nandi, I am tired of injections; I may pass away.”

On the 28th, his condition showed no improvement although Dr. Nandi was hopeful and asked us not to worry. After staying at Sarnath for five days, Dr. Nandi left by the evening train, giving full instructions to his assistant to continue the treatment. The patient passed a restless night and though very much worried at the time little did we think of what the morrow held in store. In the morning of the 29th he was almost unconscious, and spoke nothing at all except mutter my name once. The usual sponge bath was given by the assistant doctor but unlike on other days the patient did not turn to a side. He showed no desire for food and his eyes were half-closed.

Mr. Rajah Hewavitarne and all the inmates were anxiously watching by his bedside in silence when at about 12 o’clock the temperature began to rise and in spite of all the efforts of the Doctor

it rose to 104.6 by 2 o'clock. We now realised that the end was near and Mr. Hewavitarne summoned all the Bhikkhus and Samaneras and requested them to chant Pirith. While the priests were thus chanting the great leader breathed his last peacefully at 3 o'clock. There was a serene smile on his face bespeaking of happiness and contentment. Thus ended the remarkable career of the greatest Sinhalese of modern times of the most lovable and dominating personalities of his age. Not only did he save the Sinhalese from national degeneration and extermination but also won them a place of high honour

amongst the great nations by his humanitarian activities throughout the world. This is not the place to make an exhibition of his services to humanity, but it may be said without fear of contradiction that his services in the cause of his country's welfare and his services to the cause of Buddhism throughout the world are unsurpassed by those of any one during the last seven hundred years. A grateful nation will no doubt treasure his memory ranking him with such immortal Missionaries, as Asoka, Mahinda, and other great figures in the history of Buddhism.

(The Maha Bodhi Vol. 41, No. 7-9, July-September 1933, pages 278-284)

The Practice of Selfless Kindness

Subhuti, when a disciple is moved to make objective gifts of charity, he should also practice the Sila Paramita of selfless kindness, that is, he should remember that there is no arbitrary distinction between one's self and the selfhood of others and therefore, he should practice charity by giving, not objective gifts alone, but the selfless gifts of kindness and sympathy. If any disciple will simply practice kindness, he will soon attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Subhuti, by what I have just said about kindness, the Tathagata does not mean that a disciple when making gifts should hold in his mind any arbitrary conceptions about kindness, for kindness after all is only a word and charity should be spontaneous and selfless.

Subhuti, if a disciple bestowed as alms an abundance of the seven treasures sufficient to fill as many worlds as there are grains of sand in the Ganges river, and if another disciple, having realized the principle of the egolessness of all things and thereby had attained perfect selflessness, the selfless disciple would have more blessing and merit than the one who merely practiced objective charity. And why? Because Bodhisattvas-Mahasattvas do not look upon their blessing and merit as a private possession.

-

Diamond Sutra

DHARMAPALA'S NEW BUDDHISM AND YOUNG ASIA

Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar

Dharmapala was born in Ceylon, travelled in the two Hemispheres and worked in India. He was a world-man, and it so happens that his life has a message which is not meant exclusively for the Ceylonese or the Indian but for every man and women of flesh and blood. It appears to me that one of the most appropriate descriptions about Dharmapala's thoughts and activities is to be found in then almost untranslatable, although very elaborately explained Pali word, *Sammaditthi* (right, correct, comprehensive or complete view, observation, seeing or understanding), which constitutes the very foundation of Sakya the Buddha's teachings.

Dharmapala gave concrete evidence of his right observation or proper understanding of the realities of the world when he discovered the truths, first, the Ceylon is today a part of Greater India, and secondly, that India, Ceylon and Burma are integrally associated with the rest of Buddhist Asia. The old Sakyan cult of right observation was thus applied by Dharmapala to modern conditions and practical problems of the day. Thereby he has succeeded in revivifying Buddhism and becoming virtually an architect of new Buddhism. This new Buddhism is not the Buddhism that is to be discovered in old Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Burmese and other texts or archaeological monuments but the Buddhism as an instrument of daily life and the actual realities.

Another evidence of *Sammaditthi* or right observation was furnished by Dharmapala while travelling in Japan, Korea, Manchuria and

China. In that *milieu* it became a part of his social philosophy to preach, as it was my experience to observe on the spot, that India, Ceylon, and Burma needed the spirit of Japan or Japanese Buddhism. For a Ceylonese Hinayana Buddhist, as he was, to invite Japanese Mahayana Buddhism into regions in which Buddhism is either alleged to be extinct or prevalent mainly in the Hinayana form is a tremendous psychological or spiritual revolution. Incidentally it is worthwhile to emphasize that the Mahayanic Buddhism of Japan as of China, equipped as it is with its gods, goddesses, saints, votive offerings, etc. is to all intents and purposes identical with the Pauranic-Tantric neo-Hinduism, say, of Hindu Bengal as of other regions of Hindu India, as analyzed in my *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes* (Shanghai). Dharmapala perhaps was not interested in this aspect of the identity between Japanese Buddhism and Modern Hinduism. But his *Sammaditthi* was profound enough to counsel him to believe that if Buddhism was living anywhere in the world, it was in Japan. He wanted for India, Burma and Ceylon a living Buddhism, the cult that obtained in ancient and medieval times in the land of its origin, namely, the system of devotion to life in the now and the here, the pursuit of *appamada* (energism) as well as indifference to *anagata* (the future) and *atitama* (the past), combined with genuine appreciation of the "life beyond" (*Dhammapada* and *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*). Dharmapala's discovery of these features of ancient Indian Buddhism in the Japan of his days has enabled him to function as a maker of Young Asia.

Today a part of this Young Asia movement is seen to be realized in the Maha Bodhi Society of Calcutta, which, established as it is by the Ceylonese go-aheads under the inspiration of Dharmapala himself, had been serving to bring under one roof the Chinese, the Japanese, the Burmese, the Tibetans, the Ceylonese, the Bengalis and other Indians several times a year. Then the foundations have been laid at Sarnath, Benares, of the International Buddhist University, which, again is growing into a centre of co-operative cultural creations of the Buddhists of all Asia, nay, of the Euro-Americans as well.

While paying homage to Dharmapala's contribution to the intellectual life and social philosophy of Ceylon, India, the rest of Asia and the world we cannot remain indifferent to the fact that he was first and foremost a hero of action. In this regard, - like his great contemporary Vivekananda, - he may be compared to the Japanese energist of the sixteenth century, Nichiren. Indeed, both Dharmapala and

Vivekananda have continued for our own times the age-long tradition of *charaiveti* (march on) and *nanasrantaya srirasti* (prosperity is not for the person who is tired by travels), of which the *Aitareya Brahmana*, the oldest Vedic book, speaks so eloquently as the ideal of the Hindus.

Young Asia is today self-conscious enough, thanks to the activities of men like Vivekananda and Dharmapala at home and abroad, to dead Euro-America to acquire some of the *Sammadittihi* and to feel that, after all, a new age has made its appearance. It is an age in which domination of one race by another is to be a thing of the past but in which the diverse races, cults, faiths and cultures are to meet on a platform of equality, freedom, and mutual respect. Dharmapala has then like Vivekananda to be appraised as one of the apostles of international peace and world-wide brotherhood.

(Prof. Sarkar delivered this speech at the meeting held in Calcutta to observe the 3rd death anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala)

(*The Maha Bodhi* Vol. 4, No.6, June 1936, pages 289-291)

ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA: THE LION OF LANKA

Anagarika Priyadarsi Sugatananda

The 17th of September, 1949 marked the eighty-fourth anniversary of the birth of the Anagarika Sri Dharmapala, father of the Buddhist renaissance in Asia and the greatest Buddhist missionary and reformer of modern time.

The immortal greatness of this man, who alone rebelled against the apathetic indifference into which his people and their religion had sunk under the influence of foreign domination, and inspired them by his example to fresh hope in the future of their ancient cultural inheritance, will live for all time in the memory, not only of the people of Ceylon, but of all those, particularly in India, to whom he brought again the sublime teaching given by Lord Buddha twenty-five centuries ago. It was as a young man of twenty-six that Anagarika Dharmapala first came to India, and from that time he dedicated himself to the tremendous task of reviving Gautama Buddha's message of spiritual liberation in the land of its origin. He had already seen how, in his own land of Ceylon, Buddhism was rapidly decaying through the almost irresistible force of Western influences. A Western education, obtained inevitably through a Christian mission school, was an indispensable qualification for entrance into any post of importance, either Government or commercial, and to gain official favour and support the educated Sinhalese were forsaking Buddhism and taking, nominally, at least, to Christianity. This pernicious trend he determined to oppose by every means in his power. In doing so he displayed his vigorous and uncompromising personality to such effect that he put to shame his weaker compatriots. Like all truly great men he made enemies, but this fact did not deter him from his self-imposed mission. The enemies he had were more than

counterbalanced by the staunch supporters who gathered around him wherever he went. The zeal and burning sincerity of his faith and patriotism found a response in the more progressive minds of his day. He became their spokesman, and his breadth of vision opened up to them vistas of hope that had been closed to their generation. From him they drew a renewal of faith in their country, its honourable traditions and, above all, in the sublime religion of the Buddha, which has in the past given peace, happiness and prosperity to the island of Lanka.

It was this courageous spirit of faith and selfless devotion to an ideal that Anagarika Dharmapala brought with him to India. The first need he saw with absolute certainty was to remind the people of India of Buddha's teaching and to revive the ancient glories of the sacred places associated with Lord Buddha's life. The Buddha preached a doctrine of self-reliance and activity. To the people of India this was a pressing need, as they too were sunk in the demoralizing apathy that comes in the wake of foreign rule. They must be roused to recognition of their noble heritage and inspired with the will to live up to it. The Western tendency to depreciate everything of Asiatic origin had gone on long enough; it was time to reassert the spiritual values of the East against the encroaching materialism of the West. This was the keynote of the Anagarika's lectures both in Indian and Ceylon, and it is worthy of note that he found some of his most ardent supporters among Americans and Europeans. His strong and fearless personality won respect from all with whom he came in contact. When he founded the Maha Bodhi Society of India and began his task of restoring the sacred places of Buddhism it was due largely to the help given by a wealthy American lady, Mrs. Mary Foster of

Honolulu, that Sarnath was enabled to become once more a centre of Buddhist life and culture.

In 1893 the Anagarika went to Chicago as a delegate to the Parliament of Religions where he won instantaneous success. It is a matter of sober historical fact that he and Swami Vivakananda, representing the two principal currents of Indian religious thought, Buddhism and Vedanta carried all before them at a congregation of leaders of the greatest religions of the world. It was an acknowledged triumph of the living spiritual power of East.

Carrying his missionary propaganda into Europe, Anagarika Dharmapala founded the Maha Bodhi Society in London, where he worked in co-operation with the group of English Buddhist already established there. With his yellow robes, flowing hair and leonine head he was a commanding figure in the metropolis and his eloquent and inspired lectures attracted many followers. He also became well known through his writings, which displayed the same qualities of sincerity and insight into truth that marked his discourses. His manner of presenting the Dharma of Lord Buddha was forceful and at the same time endowed with the grace and beauty that spring from a noble nature. Authoritative and persuasive, his lectures and writings appealed equally to the intellect and the heart. Whether he wrote of the profound truths of Buddhist philosophy in terms to command the respect of the loftiest intellect, or spoke movingly of the compassionate heart of Lord Buddha, his words carried the conviction that truth and realisation of truth alone can give. In his personal life also he never by the slightest degree deviated from the high ideals he taught. Every waking moment of his day was filled with some useful occupation; organizing, lecturing, writing or travelling from place to place on his long missionary tours he kept ever before him the Buddhist principle of Viriya or energy, and his whole life was a pattern of unselfish striving for the welfare and enlightenment of others. It is not too much to say that he wore himself out

in service for humanity and for the propagation of the Dharma. Shortly before his death, the culmination of a long and painful illness, he summed up his spirit's indomitable aspiration in these words: "Let me die soon; let me be reborn. I can no longer prolong my agony. I would like to be born again twenty-five times to spread Lord Buddha's Dharma." These words exemplify the spirit that animated the whole of his life and labours. It was not for any personal gain that he led a strenuous life for the propagation of religion. With his genius he might have won fame as a politician or man of letters - or he might have retired from the world to seek his own salvation in the peaceful forest retreat far from the noisy haunts of men. But the cries of a world in travail, a multitude of people lost in the darkness of ignorance and praying for guiding light, could not go unanswered. His answer was to surrender his life and all the great resources of his mind to the task of helping them. Today his work is bearing fruit, in the greatest reawakening of Buddhism for many centuries.

Over two thousand years ago the Dharmaraja Asoka symbolised Lord Buddha proclaiming the Dharma to the four corners of the earth in a magnificent sculptured capital of four lion heads. Today that symbol is free India's honoured emblem. It represents an ancient simile that goes back to the very origins of Buddhism, that of Sakya Sinha (the Lion of the Sakyas) uttering the lion's roar of Dharma. And in the magnificent lion like profile of the Anagarika Dharmapala, son of the Sinhalese race, there can be traced a modern echo of that great Aryan symbol. For he was indeed a lion like protector of the Dharma, and one who proclaimed it in resonant tones to the four cardinal points, giving it the compelling force of his own noble, courageous and indomitable strength. As missionary, reformer and patriot his name will be forever associated with the growth of Asiatic independence and the cementing of the ties of friendship that have existed from time immemorial between India and Ceylon

(The Maha Bodhi Vol. 57, No. 10, October 1949 Pages 315-317)