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The Maha Bodhi

Founded by Bodhisattva Anagariaka Dharmapala

“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

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“Countless times I took birth in the *Samsāra*, all the time incessantly running (towards the death). In search of the Builder of this house I have been taking in misery again and again. O builder of the house! You are now seen, You can't build the house again. All the rafters and the central pole (the building materials of the house) are shattered. The mind is free from all the (*bhava*) *Sankhāra*. The craving free stage attained”

-Words of the Buddha on attaining *Samma Sambodhi*



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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 eight 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 the 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, compassion and world peace spreads. He planned the projects with a vision and care so much so that 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 had 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 appreciated by readers all over the world. Due to serious Corona pandemic worldwide and lockdown situations here in India, for a very long period, it was not possible for us to publish two issues of the journal (one in September 2019 and the other in May 2020) we are extremely sorry for the same. Hope, you will realise our predicaments.

The present issue is being released on the occasion of 156th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala, 17 September, 2020. It contains scholarly articles on the Buddha, Buddhism and related topics by eminent monks and academics from various parts of the country as well as from abroad. This issue also contains some important articles on Anagarika Dharmapala published earlier in the Maha Bodhi Journal, considering its valuable contents. We hope our readers will be benefited on reading those articles.

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

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam

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The Maha Bodhi is the bi-annual journal of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Headquarters, Kolkata. The Journal seeks to publish quality, peer-reviewed articles (English) on any aspect of Pali and Buddhism. Contributions should be submitted to the Editors. Books for Review should also be sent to the Editor Prof. Bimalendra Kumar (Email: bimal_bhu_60@yahoo.co.in / mbsi.ipmd@gmail.com).

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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 Anāgārika Dharmapāla 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. Anāgārika Dharmapāla 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.

Anāgārika Dhamapāla 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 Anāgārika Dharmapāla 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 *taṇhā* in human mind is bound to undergo in lack of proper judgment ethically. Human beings are under three active facets what Late Anāgārika 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: Anāgārika Dharmapāla 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.

Methodically, 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

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 did 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

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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 Prajāpati Gotami, who was the first *Bhikkhūṇī*, Uppalavannā and Khema, who are traditionally regarded as “foremost of the *Bhikkhūṇīs*”, Kisāgotami and Patacāra, 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 Sumeda and Sela. There were distinguished exponents of the Dhamma like Dhammadinnā, scions of noble or merchant families like Bhadda Kuṇḍalika, Sujāta, and Anopama, not to mention those of humbler origins like Punnika the slave girl, or Chanda the daughter of a poor Brahmin. The actual numbers of Theris involved is not known. Patacāra 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 safe-guard 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 child-birth. 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 Māra, 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 Theravāda 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, Theravāda 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 Pāli 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 Māra'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 Theravāda 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 *Aṅguttara*

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 Pāli canon, which somebody said a misogynistic doctrine, is the account of Siddhārtha's final challenge before he achieves enlightenment: the Evil, Māra tries to defeat the Buddha-to-be with his demonic armies, which fails miserably, so Māra utilizes his final weapon; his three lovely and voluptuous daughters. Māra'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 Ānanda 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, Ānanda

But if we should see them, what are we to do?

No talking, Ānanda

But if they should speak to us, Lord what are we to do?

Keep wide awake, Ānanda"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 Siddhārtha himself maintained that women were not equal to men but also all impure defilements. The Buddha was born in a period when Brāhmanism was already a highly advanced religion that promoted an elaborate social order structured hierarchically. His father, Śuddhodhana, was king of a small kingdom, and his mother, Mahāmāyā, is said to have died seven days after his birth.

Buddhist texts tell us that a priest told King Śuddhodhana that the boy would become either a great king or a homeless wanderer. Like all ambitious kings, Śuddhodhana. From the time the boy (the Buddha-to-be) was foretold, King Śuddhodhana 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 Siddhārtha'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 Yaśodharā, and the couple had a son named Rāhula.

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 Siddhārtha 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 Theravāda texts is devoted to the depiction of women as disgusting creatures too repulsive to touch.

Formation of the *Bhikkhunī*'s Saṅgha

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 *Bhikkhunī*'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 *saṅgha* 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, Mahāpajāpāī Gotamī 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 Vesālī, the capital of the republic of Videha on the northern bank of the Ganges. Not changing her mind, Mahāpajāpāī Gotamī and her followers, most of whom were members of Gotama's own clan, the Śākya, 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 Vesālī, 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, Siddhārtha when his mother died? She brought him up like her own son. Is not this Yaśodharā, prince Siddhārtha'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 Ānanda was horrified to find Mahāpajāpāī sobbing on the porch with a crowd of other Śākya women in such pitiable conditions. On learning the issue, Ānanda 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 Ānanda 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 Śākya 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 Śākya 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 Kabilisinh, the immediate objection was possibly Mahapajapati 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 *Bhikkhunis* 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 *Bhikkhunis*’s subordination to the *Bhikkhus* especially to mitigate action against the *Bhikkhunis*. These rules call for gestures of submission on the part of the *Bhikkhunis*, but in no way diminish the *Bhikkhunis*’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 *Bhikkhunīs*, 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 *Bhikkhunī*'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, Ānanda, women had not obtained the going forth from home into homeless in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, the Brahma-faring, Ānanda, would have lasted long, true *dhamma* would endured for a thousand years. But since, Ānanda, women have gone forth ... in the *dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder, now, Ānanda, 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 Himālayan 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 Theravāda school. Not a single occurrence of this tradition has been identified in the surviving literature of any of the Mahāsāṃghika schools.³⁵ My approach in this matter is somewhat different. In the Pāli 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 Rājagaha, 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 Pāli 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 Pāli canon were preached by women, and the most notable is the one preached by the nun Dhammadinnā to her former husband, the Buddhist by disciple Visākha.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 *Bhikkhūnīs* 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

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PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS AS DEPICTED IN SAKKAPAÑHA-SUTTA

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Sakkapañha sutta is the twenty first sutta of Dīghanikāya and belongs to its second edition namely Mahāvagga. The title of the sutta is a composition of two words, 'sakka' and 'pañha'. Sakka in Buddhist literature is the name given to the king of gods and panha means question. In this way 'Sakkapañha-sutta' is the discourse on the welfare of living beings which the Buddha gave in response to the questions of Sakka. This is the one of the most interesting mythological dialogue that has been documented in Buddhist literature so far. In this chapter, total fourteen questions have been asked by the Sakka- *Ettāvātā ca bhagavatā cuddasapi mahāpañhā byākatā honti. Cuddasa mahāpañhā nāma issāmacchariyaṃ eko pañho, piyāppiyaṃ eko, chando eko, vitakko eko, papañco eko, somanassaṃ eko, domanassaṃ eko, upekkhā eko, kāyasamācāro eko, vacīsamācāro eko, pariyesanā eko, indriyasaṃvaro eko, anekadhātu eko, accantaniṭṭhā ekoti*¹.

In my research paper, there is a humble attempt to discuss and analyze two philosophical ideas which the Buddha described in his conversation to Sakka. These questions were asked by the king of devas in his last series of questions and before that he had already asked twelve questions and the reply of those questions were very much gratifying to him. Before he came to see the Buddha, he had met the self-styled sages and made inquiries about their teachings. He then found that they held different views. Now that he had attained the first stage on the

holy path after hearing the words of the Buddha- *Ahamkhopana, bhante, bhagavato sāvako sotāpanno avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo ti*², he knew the true dhamma and hence he knew also the true Buddha and the true Saṅgha. He was now free from all doubts. He did not tell the Buddha about it explicitly but it was implied in his question to the Buddha.

“Lord, do all those who call themselves *sa-maṇa-brāhmaṇā* hold the same views? Do they all lead the same moral life? Do they have the same desire or do they have the same goal”- “*Sabbeva nukho, mārisa, samaṇabrāhmaṇā ekantavādā ekantasīlā ekantachandā ekanta-ajjhosānā*”³? The Buddha answered his question as follows:

“O Sakka! In this world people do not have the same kind of temperament. Their temperament is different. They reflect wrongly and they firmly and obsessively cling to the views that suit their temperaments. They insist that only their views are right and that all other views are wrong. Because of their bigotry all the self-styled sages and holy men hold different views, they are committed to different systems of moral values, and they have different desires and different goals in life”. The commentary and sub-commentary give the meaning of these above stated terms (*ekantavādā, ekantasīlā, ekantachandā, ekantaajjhosānā*) as follows:

Ekantavādā means ‘adherence to one end without any delusion and contradiction’- *asam-*

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*mohasampajaññavasena advejjhābhāvato eko anto etassāti ekanto, ekantovādo ete santiekan-tavādā.*⁴

- **Ekantasīlā** is in the sense of ‘behaving in the same way’ - *ekantasīlāti ekācārā*⁵.
- **Ekantachandā** is in the sense of ‘having same wrong views or beliefs’ - *ekantachandāti ekaladdhikā*⁶.
- **Ekantaajjhosānā** means ‘ending in the same way’ - *ekantaajjhosānāti ekantapariyosānā*⁷. Further, the sub-commentary explains this term as ‘execution in the same way’ - *Ekantapariyosānāti samānaniṭṭhānā*⁸.

Diversity of Views:

Owing to their different temperaments people differ from one another in their inclinations and preferences in regard to color, sound, taste and so forth. Likewise they talk about the beliefs which they have accepted on the basis of their attachments and speculations. Some cherish the belief in the immortality of soul. They say that the soul (*atta*) exists for ever, that it is not subject to destruction like the gross physical body. This is the eternity (*sassata*) belief. It has mass appeal and it does not differ basically from the religions which teach that man is created by God, and after death those whom He likes achieve salvation in heaven while those whom He dislikes are condemned to eternal hell. Then there is the annihilation (*uccheda*) belief which denies the future life and insists on the complete extinction of the individual after death. These are the doctrines of religions which claim the monopoly of truth and reject all other teachings as false. Such bigotry is the cause of differences in beliefs, moral life, aspirations and goals of life.

In this connection, the sixty two kinds of wrong beliefs can be taken into account. These sixty two kinds of wrong views are well dis-

cussed in *Brahmajāla-Sutta* and here, I would like to add some more wrong beliefs which can be discussed and may be relevant to this portion of discussion. Here we can take a note of the ten famous questions of the *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta*, known as *abyākatam* because the Buddha has expressed no opinion on these questions- *sassatoloko*”*tivā*, “*asassatoloko*”*tivā*, “*antavāloko*”*-tivā*, “*anantavāloko*”*tivā*, “*taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīra*”*ntivā*, “*aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīra*”*nti vā*, “*hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*”*ti vā*, “*na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*”*ti vā*, “*hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*”*ti vā*, “*neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃ maraṇā*”*ti vā*”⁹.

- Is the world eternal?
- Is the world not eternal?
- Is the world finite?
- Is the world not finite?
- Is the soul and the body same?
- Is the soul one thing and the body another?
- Does a *Tathāgata* exist after death?
- Does a *Tathāgata* not exist after death?
- Does he both exist and not exist after death?
- Does he neither exist nor not exist after death?

The reason the Buddha has not expounded these questions is that they are not conducive to the goal, are not conducive to the *dhamma*, are not basic to the holy life. They don’t lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening and to the unbinding- *Kasmā panetaṃ, bhante, bhagavatā byākatanti?* “*Na hetam, poṭṭhapāda, atthasamhitam na dhammasamhitam nādibrahmacariyakam, na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya samvattati, tasmā etaṃ mayā abyākatan*”*-ti*¹⁰.

According to the Buddha it is impossible for a person to know the answer of these questions if he holds different views, different practices, different satisfactions, different aims and different teachers. He has taught and declared some teachings to be categorical, and some teachings to be non-categorical. The above stated questions are declared to be a non-categorical teachings and the teachings of the Buddha i.e. ‘Four Noble Truths’, declared to be a categorical teaching.

The Ultimate Goal (*Nibbāna*):

After hearing the answer of his question, *Sakka* was pleased with the Buddha. Taking his permission he asked his last question, which was related with the ultimate goal. He asked thus: “Lord, do the so-called *samaṇa-brahmaṇas* really fully proficient? Is there a real end to their yoga? Do they really live the noble life? Do they really have the ultimate goal- *Sabbeva nu kho, mārisa, samaṇabrāhmaṇā accantaniṭṭhā accantayogakkhemī accantabrahmacārī accantapariyosānā*”¹¹? The commentary and sub-commentary give the meaning of these above stated terms (*taṇhāsaṅkhayavimuttā, accantaniṭṭhā, accantayogakkhemī, accantabrahmacārī, accantapariyosānā*) as follows:

- *Taṇhāsaṅkhayavimuttā* refers to the ‘path leading to the *Nibbāna*’.
- *Accantaniṭṭhā*
- *Yogakkhema* refers to the *nibbāna*, that is devoid of the four kinds of bonds- *Yogakkhemotipi nibbānaṃ catūhipi yogehi anuppaduṭṭhattā*¹² and give rise to new existence.
- *Brahmacārī* means ‘One who is walking in the highest Eightfold Path’- *Setṭhaṭṭhena brahmaṇ ariyamaggam carantīti brahmacārī*¹³.

- *Pariyosāna* also refers to the *Nibbāna-pariyosānantipi nibbānassa nāmaṃ*¹⁴.

Definition of *Nibbāna*:

- The term is made up with the particles ‘*ni*’ and ‘*vāna*’. *Ni* is a particle implying negation and *vāna* means craving. Since craving does not exist there so it is called *Nibbāna- vānaṃ vuccati taṇhā; sātattha natthī ti nibbānaṃ*¹⁵. Also the prefix is explained by reference to the root *nikkham*, which means to abandon or renounce, so it is the “state of the renunciation of desire and craving- *Nibbānanti taṇhā vānato nikkhanta bhāvena evaṃvuttam*.”
- *Vāna* can also mean “sewing”. There is also a canonical image of desire (*taṇhā*) as “the seamstress” and so *nibbāna* can be elucidated as abandoning the desire which weaves together life to life by means of action and its result- *Sā panesā taṇhā bhavena bhavaṃ, phalena vā saddhiṃ kammaṃ vinati- saṃsibbatīti katvā vānanti vuccati. Tato vānato nikkhantanti nibbānaṃ*¹⁶.
- It is also derived from the root ‘*bā*’ which means to blow. Adding prefix *Ni* its meaning becomes ‘blowing off’. It is a symbolical expression conveying the sense of the total extinction of the process of life as a burning lamp- *nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ, padīpo*¹⁷.
- *Nibbāna* is also explained as the extinction of the fire of lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). The fire simile is one of the favourite similes constantly employed by the Buddha and used by Buddhists to elucidate the meaning of *nibbāna*.

Thus, the word *nibbāna* may here be interpreted in above mentioned ways simply

to show that all the different expressions are different in ways only and not in unfolding the essence of the fact.

There are two types of *nibbāna*, namely: *Sa-upādisesa-nibbāna* and *Anupādisesa-nibbāna*. Here ‘*sa*’ means together; ‘*upādi*’ means five aggregates and ‘*sesa*’ means remaining. When it is attained in this life together with five aggregates, it is called the former one- *Katamāca, bhikkhave, sa-upādisesā nibbānadhātu? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araham hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano sammadaññā vimutto. Tassa tiṭṭhanteva pañcendriyāni yesam avighātattā , manāpāmanāpaṃ paccanubhoti, sukhadukkham paṭisaṃvedeti. Tassa yo rāgakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo— ayamvuccati, bhikkhave, sa-upādisesā nibbānadhātu*¹⁸. The latter type of *nibbāna* is that which is ‘without basis’, which is attained after the dissolution of the body or of the five aggregates. In him in this very life all things that are sensed have no delight for him, they have become cool- *Tassaidheva, bhikkhave, sabba vedayitāni anabhinanditāni sīti bhavissanti ayamvuccati, bhikkhave, anupādisesā nibbāna dhātu*.

The way to *nibbāna* is the Middle Path (*Majjhimā Paṭipadā*), which avoids the extreme of self-mortification and the extreme of self-indulgence that retards moral progress. In his famous *Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta*, the Buddha addressed the group of five monks thus: “There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-mortification: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the *Tathāgata* — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads

to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding”. It consists of the eight factors, that lead to the final destination- *Ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathidaṃ— sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammā-ājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhī. Ayam kho sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī ṇāṇakaraṇī upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya samvattati*¹⁹.

These eight factors of the Noble Path have been divided into three steps, namely- *Sīla* (Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood), *Samādhī* (Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration), and *Paññā* (Right View, Right Thoughts). All these steps are embodied in the following beautiful verse-

“Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam, kusalassa upasampadā; sacittapariyodapanam, etaṃ buddhānasāsanam”²⁰.

Sīla, while functioning negatively, curtails all the physical and vocal misdeeds and in its process of positive functions, generates purity and creates a congenial situation for manifestation of pure physical and vocal actions. It rather prepares the ground of the holy life. *Samādhī* subdues all the hindrances to mental purity and brings one-pointedness of moral consciousness on the objects with forms (*rūpālambana*) and without forms (*arūpālambana*). It makes the mind serene, pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm and undisturbed. In this mental situation, *Paññā* destroys the darkness of ignorance and radiates the light of wisdom. The four noble truths become crystal clear and the nature of reality as impermanent, subject to suffering and substance less is understood. With dawn of such understanding, the attachment with all its strings is destroyed.

It may be seen here that in process of his rightly following the path, all the physical, vocal and mental impurities as well as the

accumulated layers of resultants of moral and immoral deeds, done through the process of innumerable cycles of existence are destroyed forever and the man in this state is no longer a composition of *Pañca-upādāna-khandha* but only of the *Pañca-khandha*. The *Upādāna* or the desire is uprooted forever and he becomes pure. It is said, therefore, that-

“The enemies that were deployed,
Greed and the rest have been destroyed,
By his, the helper’s wisdom’s sword,
So he is accomplished, all accord”²¹

If, this is the fact, it seems logically possible only in case of a man who is in the state of *Sa-upādisesa-Nibbāna*. He has his five aggregates, immensely pure, and his experiencing of the supramundane joy is understandable because of continuation of his “consciousness aggregate” (*viññāṇa-khandha*); which alone has the characteristics of knowing- *vijānana lakkhaṇaṃ viññāṇaṃ*. But in case of *anupādisesa-nibbāna*, the man puts this life-process to an end and dies, all his aggregates also cease to exist. There remains neither the knower nor the means to know. In this situation, the question of realization of bliss appears to be a myth or a mere solace for the striver. But it is really not so. The reality is that a *yogāvacara*, rightly set in the path, attains *nibbāna* and also experiences the supreme joy, commonly attested with the expressions like- ‘*sītabhūtomhinibbuto*’ or ‘I become cool to attain *nibbāna*’. The Buddha has stated more than once that he attained the state of ambrosia. His forceful statements bear the evidence to the fact that- there is such state, realizable in its nature. The statements are as – “Monks, there is a not born, a not become, not made, a not compounded. Monks, if that unborn, not become, not made, not compounded were not; there would be apparent no escape from this that is born, become, made and compounded”²². And again- “Monks, there exists that condition

wherein is neither earth nor water, nor fire nor air; wherein neither the sphere of infinite space nor of infinite consciousness nor of nothingness nor of neither-consciousness-nor-unconsciousness; where there is neither this world nor a world beyond nor both together nor moon and sun. Thence, monks, I declare is no coming to birth, thither is no going from life; there is no duration; thence is no falling; there is no arising. It is not something fixed, it moves not on; it is not based on anything. That indeed is the end of ill”²³.

There may be three possibilities regarding the question of its realization and experiencing;

- (1) Either the man does not die after attaining *anupādisesa-nibbāna*, or
- (2) There is some other meaning indicated by this state, or
- (3) Even after the disintegration of the five aggregates, there is the survival of the consciousness-aggregate.

As regard the first one, it can be safely said that the state of *anupādisesa-nibbāna* is achieved after death. There is a very clear expression about the Buddha that he died and attained this state of Freedom- “*parinibbuto bhagavā*”.

As regard the second one, we may examine the concept in the statement of the Buddha. The verse describing *Anupādisesa-Nibbāna* proceeds-

“*Abhedi kāyo, nirodhi saññā, vedanā
sītibhaviṃsu sabbā.
Vūpasamiṃsu saṃkhārā, Viññāṇaṃ
atthamāgamā*”²⁴

For material aggregate (*kāya*); there is the expression- ‘*abhedi*’, which means broken, destroyed etc.; for knowing aggregate (*saññā*) is ‘*nirodhi*’ which means ceased to exist; for feeling-aggregate (*vedanā*) is ‘*sītibhaviṃsu*’ means calmed down; for mental-disposition-aggregate (*saṃkhāra*) is ‘*vūpasamiṃsu*’ means

subdued; and for consciousness-aggregate (*viññāṇa*) is ‘*atthamāgamā*’ which means reached its end or attained its goal. Here the term ‘*attha*’ in respect of consciousness-aggregate deserves consideration. If it is interpreted as reaching an end, then there is no possibility of experiencing the bliss but its interpretation as ‘reaching the goal’ may give some clue to proceed for solution of the issue.

As regards the third possibility, a mindful enquiry in this direction may attract the attention of the researchers to the three passages occurring in three places of the *tipiṭaka* with slight changes, which are an indication towards the fact survival of a consciousness in the state of *anupādisesa-nibbāna*. It runs as:

I ‘*Viññāṇam anidassanam, anantam sabbatopabham;*

Ettha āpo ca paṭhavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati.

Ettha dīghañca rassañca, aṇum thūlam subhāsubham;

Ettha nāmañca rūpañca, asesam uparujjhati’²⁵

“There is a consciousness invisible, infinite, all pervading or accessible from every side. The water, earth, fire, air, long, short, fine, course, pure and impure here do not find footing. Both the mind and matter came to an end leaving no trace behind”.

II *Viññāṇam anidassanam anantam sabbato pabham’, tam pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtam, āpassa āpattena ananubhūtam, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtam, vāyassa vāyattena ananubhūtam, bhūtānam bhūtattena ananubhūtam, devānam devattena*

*ananubhūtam, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtam, brahmānam brahmattena ananubhūtam, ābhassarānam ābhassarattena ananubhūtam, subhakiṇhānam subhakiṇhattena ananubhūtam, vehapphalānam vehapphalatte ananubhūtam, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtam, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtam*²⁶

“There is a consciousness, invisible, infinite, all pervading which cannot be reached through the extensity of extension, by the cohesiveness of cohesion..... by the allness of the all”.

III *Yattha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati;*

Na tattha sukkā jotanti, ādicco nappakāsati;

Na tattha candimā bhāti, tamo tattha na vijjati.

“Yadā ca attanāvedī, muni monena brāhmaṇo;

Atha rūpā arūpā ca, sukhadukkhā

pamuccati”²⁷

“Where water, earth, fire, air, no footing find, there shine no stars, no sun is there displayed, there gleams no moon, no darkness there is seen, so when the sage, by wisdom of his own self pierced up to the truth, from form and no form, pleasure and pain he is freed.”

The close analysis of the contents of these three passages may reveal the fact that they all make a mention of a consciousness, invisible, infinite and all-pervading in nature and that is beyond the reach of worldly things. *Buddhaghosa* while commenting upon the term *viññāṇa*, holds the view that this *viññāṇa* is the name of *nibbāna*- “*tattha viññātabbanti viññāṇam nibbānassetam nāmam*”²⁸

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MEDITATION AND VIPASSANA IN PĀLI LITERATURE

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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

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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 do attaining Arhathood or deva's world), 183 (not doing evil and doing only kushala is necessary and purifying one own mind is the teachings of all Buddhas), 190-192 (where one's refuge should only 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 unparallel 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 dwell free from suffering. After above four killings the fifth one is tiger who is to be killed. Here tiger is doubt.), 354 (The gift of dhamma excels all gift, 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 make 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 smattha. 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 Samattha 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 Dagan 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.

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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, Vasaistha, 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 Asvaghosa 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 Asvaghosa'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 – Asvaghosa 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 Soundarnnanda 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.

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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

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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.

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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

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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 Quynh 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 Phật 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 *Astasahasrika sutra*, translated by Khuong Tang Hoi was considered the oldest Prajna Sutra (*Astasahasrika*). 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 *Astasakasrika 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 Astasahasrika 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.

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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 Sinhalese 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. Hewavitane 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)

ART TO LIVE IN PLURALISTIC SOCIETIES: LEARNINGS FROM THE BUDDHA-DHAMMA

Dr. Siddharth Singh

Prologue:

How can we comprehend the Buddhist standpoint on Religious Pluralism and how does it relate to the humanistic Buddhist ideas is a major question before the writer of the present paper. Let's think first what prompts us to reflect upon this issue. What are the chief causes of most of the problems in the present day's world? Some countries are suffering from political crisis and some from social problems. Many countries are traumatized of the conflicts among different religious groups. The misapprehension regarding each others religion, culture and society is being increased day by day among its followers. Different priests and religious teachers are trying to establish a sort of belief in their adherent's mind that their own religion and social structure is the best among all, their Gods are the supreme God and all other existing religions and communities are a danger for their own religion, culture as well as society in one way or another.

This mind of every one of us has its own categories to understand the things, its own preconceived notions towards others and its own prejudices regarding every thing. Regarding our neighbours, regarding inhabitants of our neighbouring cities, regarding inhabitants of other countries, regarding inhabitants of other continents, we have our predetermined opinions. Every individual has fixed ideas for other individuals and every group of human

beings also has their own stereotypes for other communities. When we happen to be alone, we judge others from our own personal definition of ethical or unethical, civilized or uncivilized behaviour. When we are with our family members, we make remarks towards our neighbouring people and try to find out any reason to criticize them just because that they are not as we want them to be. When we sit with our own city - men as well as with those of our neighbours, we discuss those differences which we have with the inhabitants of other cities and, lastly, we come to the conclusion that we are far better than those people of other cities. And we hold the same kind of discussion in the company of our own countrymen regarding other countries. We evaluate their food habits, living style, dressing sense, religious beliefs etc. and find a huge difference from ours own. Lastly, off course, we consider ourselves better than those. Similar approach we do have in our mind-set regarding other factors of the life like caste, creed, colour and religion.

Whatever we claim to know about other communities and nationals is transmitted to us largely through indirect mediums like different electronic and print medium and we develop a rigid, dim and partial picture of them without knowing the context, arguments and background. Accordingly, we incline to hold numerous nationalistic, social, political and religious ideas which make us feel that our nation or religion is

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better than others and this tendency prevents us from considering other culture or religion with the same respect as we have for our own.

As soon as we commence to interact with others and begin to realize the truth about their culture, we observe that the differences are not as wide and deep as we had thought of it. These differences appear as a difference because we have made multitude of personal, social, religious and national fixed ideas concerning every aspect of life whether it is the style of living in day to day life or the issues of moral values. Whosoever or whatsoever society does not appear to us in the accordance with own definition of right or good, we immediately declare it a wrong way and inferior to ours own. Even if one knot of our heap of preconceived wrong notions is untied, several other knots of the mind are being built up day after day.

Any kind of human, regional or political cooperation is out of the question without removing the erroneous conception about each others, and above all, getting rid of our mindset of having wrongly framed “ismistic” approach within us. Neither we should expect everyone of the world to be like us nor should others do so. Then what is the formula to attain a harmonious and co-existing society with several colours inside it? This situation generates the great need of mutual dialogue in order to enhance our understanding of different people, society, political and religious traditions and cultural beliefs.

Buddhism certainly can give a tremendous insight to us how we should deal with the members of our larger family. Pāli literature, especially Tipiṭaka, is comprised of enough instances to show the humanistic Buddhist viewpoint on religious pluralism in order to proceed towards making of a harmonious world.

(A) Dialogue as an essential tool of Humanistic Buddhism:

Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue are often taken as synonyms but, I consider Religious Pluralism as a phenomenon and Interfaith Dialogue as the biggest keyword of Religious Pluralism. No problem is as big as it can not be solved through the dialogue; it was well understood by Buddhism since its inception. The corollary of Buddha’s teachings is virtually a repudiation of every sort of knots, taboos and preconceived notions of our mind. It affirms that the realization of the true Dharma leads us beyond the sense of all differentiations, even between the Buddha and other things. We find the example of a monk Vakkali, who was so obsessed with the body of the Buddha that he spent all his time admiring the physical body of the Buddha. Observing thus, Buddha told him,

“He, who sees Dhamma, sees me; he who sees me sees Dhamma. Truly seeing Dhamma, one sees me; seeing me one sees Dhamma.”¹

Just before his Mahāparinibbāna, the Blessed One spoke to Ānanda:

“It may be, Ānanda, that to some among you the thought will come: ‘Ended is the word of the Master; we have a Master no longer.’ But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. For that which I have proclaimed and made known as the Dhamma and the Discipline, that shall be your Master when I am gone.”²

So, the message is fairly lucid from the above lines that Buddha did not find his Dhamma and Saṅgha for the purpose of running a religious business under the priesthoodness of successive leaders. The prime rationale of the Buddha’s teaching was to liberate the people from their mental tangles, not to establish himself as a God of them. As soon as the mental tangles

of one are untangled, a person doesn't see any difference between others and himself. It is the very objective of the ultimate knowledge in the Buddhism and it has been in the spirit of Buddha's discourses from its commencement. Defining the very objective of his Dhamma, Buddha has pronounced:

“Monks, I have taught the Dhamma compared to a raft, for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding onto. Understanding the Dhamma as taught compared to a raft, you should let go even of Dhammas, to say nothing of non-Dhammas.”³

This statement of Buddha echoes with the message that it is the Dhamma which is for human beings, not human beings are for the Dhamma. “Dhamma is a means, not a goal” – the very same thought continued in the whole history of Buddhism till date.

And one should proceed towards the fruitful dialogue keeping it in his mind. Any political, social or religious thought whatsoever can not be put on high esteem neglecting the ultimate goal of the humanity and the goal is peace. And that peace is never approachable without having dialogue from the followers of the holders of the other views. Buddha had realized long back the need of a common platform to settle the differences by sharing the ideas. Considering the necessity of dialogue with the recluses of other faiths and Brāhmaṇas for the welfare of the entire humanity, Buddha appeals to them:

“As for those things, on which we do not agree, let us leave them alone. As to those things on which we agree, let the wise put questions about them, ask for reasons as to them, talk them over, with or to their teacher, with or to their fellow disciples.”⁴

It is interesting to see that Buddha was not

in the favour of having dialogue or, better to say, debate just for the sake of exhibition of the knowledge. On the futile metaphysical questions raised by *Poṭṭhapāda* and on being asked the reason why Buddha did not expound those, he says:

“They are not conducive to the goal, are not conducive to the Dhamma, and are not basic to the holy life.”⁵

To Buddha, the objective of the dialogue was to address the real human problems rather than imaginary or metaphysical problems. *One should either keep noble silence or should have dialogue on the Dhamma*,⁶ he says.

Any kind of successful mutual dialogue can only be possible if every group participating in the dialogue and related of or involved in the conflict or disagreement could have a certain amount of respect for and confidence on other groups or faiths. One must look into the attitude of Buddha towards other doctrinal views. Once an officer of *Vesāli* named *Sīha Senāpati*, who was the follower of Jain tradition, went to Buddha and having dialogue with him and influenced by his qualities and philosophy, determined to take refuge under Buddha. Buddha counseled him not to take decision so hastily and said: “*Make a thorough examination of the matter; Sīha. Investigation is profitable to well – known men like yourself.*” This statement of Buddha was pleasant to *Sīha Senāpati* and he spoke:

“*Had I been won over as a disciple by some other sect, they would have paraded through the whole of Vesāli with banners, shouting: ‘Sīha, the general, has joined our discipleship’. But the Exalted one merely advises me thus: Examine the matter....*”

Saying thus *Sīha Senāpati* again affirmed his wish to become lay – disciple of Buddha. Observing his determination, Buddha accepted

him as a lay – disciple but with a lesson:

*“your family, Sīha, for many a day has been a will-spring to the Nigaṇṭhas (followers of Jainism), wherefore deem it right to give alms to those who approach you.”*⁷

The very same Buddhist attitude of honour and respect towards the holders of the opposite views continued even after the time of Buddha. The great Indian Buddhist emperor Asoka (3rd B.C.) declares in his Rock Edict:

*“One should not honour only one’s own religion and condemn the religion of others, but one should honour other’s religions for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one’s own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one’s own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking “I will glorify my own religion”. But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.”*⁸

The above lines of King Asoka, inspired by Buddhist teachings can certainly be a manifesto of peace in today’s multicultural society.

Once King *Ajātasattu* of *Magadha* wishes to attack the Vajji princes of *Vesāli* and conveys this message to Buddha through his chief minister *Vassakāra*. Buddha states that as long as Vajjians are following the seven factors of Non – Decline (*Aparihāniya Dhamma*) in their life, the magnificence and happiness of their life can not be diminished and it is impossible for King *Ajātasattu* to conquer *Vesāli* by fair means.

The very first factor of all seven portrays Buddha’s view of the importance of having dialogue in his following lines: *“So long as the Vajji princes assemble frequently and have many meetings, the furtherance of their welfare and prosperity is to be expected, not their decline.”*

The second factor again says:

“so long as Vajji princes assemble and disperse in harmony and unity, and carry out in harmony and unity the affairs of the Vajji country, the furtherance of their welfare and prosperity is to be expected, not their decline.” *Vassakāra*, after hearing thus, says: *“If the Vajji princes are endowed with even a single one of these factors of Non – Decline, the furtherance of their prosperity is to be expected, not their decline; how much more so if they should be endowed with all the seven factors. Venerable Gotama, there is no possibility of King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of Queen Vedehi, overcoming the Vajji princes in battle.”*⁹

Here, Buddha’s standpoint is quite clear regarding the purpose and objective of the dialogue. In the first factor, he emphasizes the importance of the dialogue in order to proceed towards absolute harmony and unity in the society and in the second factor; he affirms the implementation of the outcomes of that dialogue process within the society.

(B) Hindrances of Religious Pluralism and Buddhist Position:

Observing the major impediments before the making of a peaceful religious pluralistic society, the writer of this paper has endeavoured to classify the problems and demonstrated how Buddhism deals with those issues. These are along these lines:

(i) Projection of own theory as an ultimate and supreme theory:

A primary problem in the beginning of any

interfaith dialogue occurs if the participants appears in the dialogue with their preconceived notions for the holders of other views and consider their own views in the supreme position. They think themselves as protector of a specific doctrinal view they belong to and take it as their duty to guard even the dark side of their view. Buddhism has been extremely liberal regarding this issue. Buddha, himself, was not in the favour of being projected as the only omniscient personality of the world. Once, before his *Mahāparinibbāna*, Buddha was staying at *Pāvārika* mango grove of *Nālandā*. There, Sāriputta came and after paying obeisance, uttered the lines:

“Venerable sir, I have this faith in the Bhagavā that there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be, any Samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who can excel the Bhagavā in Enlightenment.”

Listening thus, Buddha said:

“How is it, Sāriputta; do you know definitely in your mind the minds of those Homage-Worthy, Perfectly Self-Enlightened Bhagavās of the past, to be able to say “such was their Sīla, practice of morality, such was their mental discipline(Samādhi), such was their Paññā, wisdom, such was their way of living and such was their emancipation?”

“I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir.” Sāriputta answered.

Buddha further asked: *‘How is it, Sāriputta, do you know.....Bhagavās of the future’.*

“I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir.” Sāriputta answered.

And now, Buddha asked:

“How is it, Sāriputta, do you know..... the present Buddha.... to be able to say “such is Bhagavās Sīla, such is his mental

discipline(Samādhi), such is his Paññā, such is his way of living and such is his emancipation”?

“I have no such knowledge, Venerable Sir.” Sāriputta again answered.

Buddha, then asked to him that if he does not know the Exalted Ones of the past, the future and the present, then how can he proclaim that *“there has never been, nor there is, nor there will be any Samaṇa or brāhmaṇa who can excel the Bhagavā in Enlightenment?”*¹⁰

Buddhism never supported any kind of doctrinal bigotry within its system in its whole historical development. Buddha even gave this freedom to his disciples to abolish the lesser and minor disciplinary rules if they felt the need of it in the future.¹¹ The scholars and preachers of Buddhism never claim the lines of Tipiṭaka as unchangeable truth, historically single handed creation and so on. Even Tipiṭaka’s own tradition depicts *‘Kathāvatthu’*, fifth and celebrated text of Abhidhamma Piṭaka, a creation by a later Buddhist teacher, *Moggaliputta Tissa* of 3rd BC i.e. not less than approximately 200 years after the Buddha’s *Mahāparinibbāna*.

Mostly, the Buddha is seen recommending the moral practices not only to *Samaṇas* but to *Samaṇa-Brāhmaṇas* both at the same time, which portrays his concern over entire religious tradition of the then Indian society. Buddha, while educating to a young man named *Sigāla* the true way of worshipping the different directions, puts both the contemporary religious traditions namely *Samaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇa* at the same platform symbolizing as the Zenith. He further suggests him to pay same respect to the sages of both the traditions in five ways i.e. by affection in act and speech and mind; by keeping open house to them, by supplying their temporal needs. ¹² *Nāgasena*, in the *Milindapañho*, says:

*“Buddha not only praises the honour of himself, but rather praises the honour of whosoever in the world is worthy of honour.”*¹³

The positive gesture of respect and honour towards opponents, which is an inevitable precondition to have any thriving dialogue with them, is embedded in the fundamental approach of Buddhism, and this virtue is the driving force for the Buddhists to open their arms most conveniently for the other views.

(ii) Overemphasis on the differences and overlook of the similarities:

Another major impediment in the process of religious pluralism is our overemphasis on the differences of the views and life whereas we often neglect the immense similarities of the basic human feelings among us. We exaggerate the differences, mostly to place our own culture at superior position while comparing with any other culture. If I ponder on the issue of religious conflict citing the example of Indian society, I observe that the biggest paradox of our educational system is that, on the one hand more than ninety nine percent of our population is religious but on the other hand we do not employ any method of providing balanced teaching of different religions in our academic curriculum in our school system. That gap of our knowledge of religion is filled up by our family members, mostly parents and grand parents. Off course, family members are also aware of a very few characteristics of the religion and that also of only their own religion. The parents and grand parents, generally with the desire to strengthen our commitment to our own religion, educate us with the overemphasis on the greatness of our own religion and put it at the supreme place among all the religions.

The scene is not very much different if we consider the approach of the scholars of religious studies. A scholar whosoever is involved in the

study of any particular religion is generally, at least in India, believed to be a religious person, and accordingly, that person also takes it as his responsibility to be committed to that particular religion he is scholar of. In order to justify his position he firstly tries to prove the exclusivity of that particular religion and project it as a better religion than all others. We put a lot of energy to search the differences rather than having a look on the possibility of the similarities among us.

Certainly, the solution of the above problem can not be assimilation of the different views in one. We should rather think how we could have a harmonious relation without abandoning our own identity. Buddhism shows a path here. Buddha advocates the necessity of dialogue on the common minimum ground rather than having bitterness without establishing dialogue at all to each other. Buddhist answer to this problem can be seen in the aforesaid statement of Buddha in the *Kassapa - Sihanāda Sutta*.

(iii) Intolerance to Criticism:

Emerging trend of intolerance towards criticism of own views is another problem in the formation of harmonious multicultural society. It, sometimes, becomes necessary for any party involved in the dialogue process to point out the genuine errors of the other party which requires a great deal of tolerance on the part of the other side. Actual examination of the capacity of tolerance of any individual or group takes place when the situation of tension appears before it. Buddha narrates a story which depicts that being calm and of composed behaviour in the perfect situation is extremely easy but that doesn't say much about the qualities of a person. How do you maintain your equilibrium in the exceedingly adverse and undesirable circumstances actually tells what you are?

Once, in *Sāvatti*, there was a lady of a household named *Vedehikā*. She had a

tremendous image in the whole society of being a gentle, even – tempered and calm lady. *Vedehikā* had a slave named *Kālī* who was hard-working, skillful and efficient in her work. A day, thought occurred to the mind of *Kālī*: “*Is anger present in my lady without showing, or is it absent? Or is it just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that he anger present in my lady doesn’t show? Why don’t I test her?*”

So *Kālī* got up after daybreak. Then *Vedehikā* said to her: “*Hey, Kālī!*”

“*Yes, madam?*”

“*Why did you get up after daybreak?*”

“*No reason, madam.*”

“*No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up after daybreak?*” Angered and displeased, she scowled.

Then the thought occurred to *Kālī*:

“*Anger is present in my lady without showing, and not absent. And it’s just because I’m diligent, deft, & neat in my work that the anger present in my lady doesn’t show. Why don’t I test her some more?*”

So *Kālī* got up later in the day. Then *Vedehikā* said to her: “*Hey, Kālī!*”

“*Yes, madam?*”

“*Why did you get up later in the day?*”

“*No reason, madam.*”

“*No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up later in the day?*” Angered & displeased, she grumbled.

Then *Kālī* decided to go for further test of *Vedehikā*.

So *Kālī* got up even later in the day. Then *Vedehikā* said to her: “*Hey, Kālī!*”

“*Yes, madam?*”

“*Why did you get up even later in the day?*”

“*No reason, madam.*”

“*No reason, you wicked slave, and yet you get up even later in the day?*” Angered & displeased, *Vedehikā* grabbed hold of a rolling pin and gave her a whack over the head, cutting it open.

Then *Kālī*, with blood streaming from her cut-open head, went and denounced her mistress to the neighbours:

“*See, ladies, the gentle one’s handiwork? See the even-tempered one’s handiwork? See the calm one’s handiwork? How could she, angered & displeased with her only slave for getting up after daybreak, grab hold of a rolling pin and give her a whack over the head, cutting it open?*”

After that this evil report about Lady *Vedehikā* circulated: “*Lady Vedehikā is vicious. Lady Vedehikā is foul-tempered. Lady Vedehikā is violent.*” Illustrating the above parable, Buddha says to the monks:

“*In the same way, monks, a monk may be ever so gentle, ever so even-tempered, ever so calm, as long as he is not touched by disagreeable aspects of speech. But it is only when disagreeable aspects of speech touch him that he can truly be known as gentle, even-tempered, and calm.*”¹⁴

Instead of endorsing the tolerance not just for the sake of tolerating any person or idea, Buddha rather recommends the cultivation of the feelings of four sublime states i.e. *Brahmavihāra* not only for friends and kins but also for enemies. Moreover, Buddhism counts those four sublime states among forty subjects of meditation (*Kammaṭṭhāna*-s) in order to achieve supreme knowledge. Those are (1). *Mettā* i.e. extending unlimited Universal love

and good will to all living beings without any kind of discrimination, ‘just as a mother loves her only child’;15(2). *Karuṇā* i.e. compassion for all living beings who are suffering, in trouble and affliction (3). *Muditā* i.e. sympathetic joy in others success, welfare and happiness and (4). *Upekkhā* i.e. equanimity in all vicissitudes of life. The application of these sublime states is expected from every Buddhist in such a great extent by Buddha that he conveys his message through an example:

*“Monks, even if bandits were to carve you up savagely, limb by limb, with a two-handed saw, he among you who let his heart get angered even at that would not be doing my bidding. Even then you should train yourselves: ‘Our minds will be unaffected and we will say no evil words. We will remain sympathetic, with a mind of good will, and with no inner hate. We will keep pervading these people with an awareness imbued with good will and, beginning with them, we will keep pervading the all-encompassing world with an awareness imbued with good will – abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.’ That’s how you should train yourselves.”*¹⁶

Buddha was well aware that the criticism by others can never be avoided. Criticism and praising by others are a part of life and one should not abandon his noble path from the fear of condemnation or in the desire of praise. Buddha says:

*“It is an old saying, not only of today. They (i.e. people) blame them who sit silent, they blame them who speak much; them who speak little too they blame. There is no one who is not blamed in this world.”*¹⁷*There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a person who is wholly blamed or wholly praised.”*¹⁸

(iv) The question of blasphemy and Tipitaka’s Perspectives:

A healthy society free from religious bigotry requires an open mind of all the involved parties to be ready for self – evaluation. An individual or a group having prejudiced mindset can never contribute in a very constructive manner to interfaith dialogue. Buddha always kept opened the door of his teachings for any kind of evaluation. In point of fact, Buddha often illustrates the six attributes of his Dhamma while delivering the sermon:

*“Well preached by the Blessed one is the Dhamma (svākkhāto), realizable in this world (saṅdiṭṭhiko), of immediate result (akāliko), inviting everyone to come and see (ehi-passiko), onward-leading (opanayiko) and to be understood individually by the wise ones (paccattam veditabbo viññūhi).”*¹⁹

Here, *ehi-passiko* quality of the Dhamma needs especial attention in the present discussion that it invites everybody to come and see the Dhamma. In other words, it invites all people to verify for themselves, that it really leads to the goal, that by practicing it, one can reach the *Nibbāna*. It doesn’t force anyone to accept it by blind faith. One must “come and see” and make an effort on the way to the goal.

Buddha’s address to *Kālāma* community depicts Buddha’s stress on the importance of the evaluation of every sort of view including his own teachings. He, while addressing the *Kālāma* community, exclaims:

“Kālāmas, it is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter, which is doubtful. Now, look you Kālāmas, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Do not be led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic

*or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: 'this is our teacher'. But, O Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome (akusala), and wrong, and bad, then give them up..... And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome (kusala) and good, then accept them and follow them."*²⁰

Buddha's pronouncement of evaluation is seen in another important example also. Once a mendicant named *Suppiya* was going along the high road between *Rājagaha* and *Nālandā* with his disciple *Brahmadatta*. *Suppiya* was dispraising Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha in many ways, but on the contrary, his pupil *Brahmadatta* was praising Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. Buddha's disciples reported this fact to him. Buddha said:

*"Brethren, if outsiders should speak against me, or against the Doctrine (Dhamma) or against the Order (Saṅgha), you should not, on that account, either bear malice, or suffer heart - burning, or feel ill - will. If you, on that account, feel angry and hurt, that would stand in the way of your self - conquest. If, when others speak against us, you feel angry at that, and displeased, would you then be able to judge how far that speech of theirs is well said or ill?"*²¹

In the similar way, Buddha further cautioned his disciples not to be delighted by the praising of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha either as it may also be an obstacle for them or prevent them from the process of introspection.

Buddha's liberal attitude can be seen towards the Vinaya rules prescribed by him when, not

considering those rules as unchangeable and timeless, he allows the Saṅgha to make any changes in the rules in the form of addition or removal if it perceives the need of doing so:

"Thus Lord, honoured sirs, spoke thus to me at the time of his attaining nibbāna: 'If the Order, Ānanda, after my death is willing, the lesser and minor rules of training may be abolished'." 22

A true Buddhist will always have an attitude to welcome the diversity of views, faiths and belief systems with conviction to make a harmoniously co-existent society because, if he or she has learnt something from the Buddha's words, he knows, "*it isn't proper for a knowledgeable person who safeguards the truth to come to a definite conclusion, 'Only this is true; anything else is worthless.'*"²³

(C) Buddhist Methodology to develop an understanding to live harmoniously in a multicultural society:

The theory of interdependence (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), undeniably, is the linchpin of the whole of the Buddhist philosophy and *Paṭiccasamuppāda* establishes the basic fact of the life that the existence and survival of every living and non - living thing is dependant on several other causes and conditions. Those causes and conditions may be either living things or non - living things or may be both at the same time. If there is nothing without cause and condition, then according to Buddhist philosophy, we must think not of only our survival and protection but of the protection and progress of every aspect of this cosmos as every minute thing of the world is connected with us and, in a way, contributing to our own development. Nothing of the world can be seen as unimportant and unnecessary as the every thing of the world is depending on several other factors which we, many times, might be

not aware of.

Following its fundamental philosophy, Buddhism stresses on the great need of harmonious co – existence of the every aspect of the life. Buddhist Saṅgha has been a unique example which resolves its problem in the light of same philosophy. In the guidelines established by the Vinaya rules regarding Uposatha ceremony, one may easily observe that the Buddhist Saṅgha has to conduct their activity through the process of dialogue and the decisions has to be taken unanimously by all the members of the Saṅgha. The identification of the mistakes and decision of the non – violent punishment to the accused is not to be decided by any one person but by the whole Saṅgha after putting the error of that person before all the members.

Further, Buddha's four noble truths should not be comprehended just as a mean to depict the cause of suffering and its eradication, but it should be grasped as a remarkable methodology to reach the cause of any problem and its solution. By an example of addressing the suffering through four noble truths, Buddhism shows us a path to make an evaluation of any phenomena. By the methodology of the first link *Dukkha* of the four noble truths, Buddha suggests us to accept first any problem as a problem. In the history of conflicts we have come across the facts that several problems have worsened just because we never considered those issues as a problem and, by the time, we have realized the gravity of the problems, it became very late to handle the problems. Unless one doesn't recognize a problem, there is no question of any action to solve it. It is most necessary to accept a problem as a problem then only one can proceed to solve it. Once we identified the problem as a problem, we should proceed to reach its causes as Buddha illustrates by the second noble truth *Dukkha Samudaya* (causes

of suffering). After recognizing the cause one should ascertain its ultimate solution as Buddha does by the method of third noble truth *Dukkha Nirodha* (annihilation of suffering). And lastly, after detecting the solution of the problem, one should move in the direction of finding out the different possible paths to lead the removal of the problem as Buddha demonstrated through eight fold paths leading to annihilation of suffering (*Dukkhanirodhagāmini Paṭipadā*). This Buddhist methodology is relevant for ever to address any problem of the world in our times also.

Buddhism doesn't devote any particular section of the Tipiṭaka or later literature dealing with the solutions of the conflicts through the dialogue, but in the various section of Pāli literature we come across numerous instances showing Buddha's way of handling the problem by the process of dialogue which may throw a light on the Buddhist methodology of establishing social harmony by its humanistic ideas.

Buddhist methodology may be divided in following major categories:

Suggestion to identify the relevant questions to be addressed:

According to Buddha, it should be the most necessary issue for any society or an individual to identify the true and relevant question or the problem it has to address before proceeding towards its solution. If a society or a group or an individual is engaged in solving the wrong and irrelevant issues then the solution of those issues are also not going to help the society in any way. Buddha always warned his disciples not to focus their attention towards those questions the solution of which was of no importance in order to treat the human problems. Observing the unnecessary engagement of one of his disciples name *Poṭṭhapāda* towards irrelevant

metaphysical questions, he said:

*“This question is not calculated to profit, it is not concerned with the Norm (the Dhamma), it does not redound even to the elements of right conduct, nor to detachment, nor to purification from lusts, nor to quietude, nor to tranquillization of heart, nor to real knowledge, nor to insight, nor to Nirvāna. Therefore is it that I express no opinion upon it.”*²⁴

If the concept of relevant questions will not be explicable to us then it would not be possible to achieve the solution of those problems also, as the wrong issues will only lead us towards frivolous act to solve those.

Once a person named Māluṅkyaputta, sitting alone in meditation, was distracted from his practice by philosophical dilemmas. It occurred to him that the Buddha never declared the answers to the questions concerning the nature of the universe, the soul, and the existence of the Tathāgata after death. Bothered by the Buddha’s silence on these issues, he visited him an evening and threatened him with an ultimatum that if the Blessed One declares the answers of these metaphysical questions then only he will lead the holy life under him. If not, he will leave the order and return to his former life. In response, the Buddha calmly asks:

“Did I ever tell you to lead the holy life under me by the promise to answer these questions?”

“No, Venerable Sir”, Māluṅkyaputta replies.

“Did you ever tell me that you would only lead the holy life under me if I answered these questions?”

“No, Venerable Sir”, Māluṅkyaputta replies again.²⁵

The Buddha then reveals the cause to him why he is silent in response to metaphysical

questions by telling a brief parable about a man injured by a poisonous arrow. A surgeon is sent to treat him, and the man refuses to let him remove the arrow until he knows which caste his assailant belongs to, his name, his clan, how tall he is, what color skin he has, which town he lives in, what kind of bow it was, what material it’s made of, what type of shaft it had, what kind of feathers it had, and what kind of arrow it was. This is clearly ridiculous. Not only will the wounded man never know the answers to these questions, but he’ll end up dying in the meantime. Similarly, if anyone decides not to lead the holy life under the Buddha until he answers these speculative questions, the answers will still remain undeclared and the person is still going to die.

Once there arose a situation of a fierce battle between *Sākya* and *Koliya* clan belonging to *Khattiya*-s over the issue of farming by the use of the water of *Rohini* River. Observing the possibility of killing of innumerable beings, Buddha intervened there. He asked first the reason for the assembling of the *Sākyans* and *Koliyas* on the both sides of the river.

People answered: *“The quarrel is about water, Reverend Sir”*.

Then the Master asked the King, *“How much is water worth, great King?”*

“Very little, Reverend Sir”.

“How much are Khattiyas worth, great King?”

“Khattiyas are beyond price, Reverend Sir”.

“It is not fitting that because of a little water you should destroy Khattiyas who are beyond price.”

They were silent. Then the Teacher said to them, *“Great Kings, why do you act in this manner? Were I not here present today, you would set flowing a river of blood.”*²⁶

And the Kings stopped the war immediately. In the above context when Buddha is referring the Khatiyas as beyond price, he certainly meant of every human being as more priceless than those external material things humans are having conflict for in day to day life. Khatiyas are referred here because Buddha was addressing to them and in order to make them realized the core of the issue he illustrated their life of so much value and priceless.

Here, Buddha shows two paths: first, to have dialogue in order to track down the heart of the problem, and second, to choose the best possible solution. One can as well see the Buddha's method of solving the problems by using skillful means in this dialogue. As is apparent from the above examples, according to the Buddha, the objective of any solution process should be well identified and properly evaluated before departure for its solution. And likewise, while finding the solution it is equally important to ascertain the most appropriate solution by examining the different accessible solutions.

Instruction to understand own doctrines properly prior to be involved with others in dialogue:

There has hardly been the conflict among the true saints in the world, there has always been the conflict among those who either misunderstood the teachings of their teachers or who wanted to fulfill their own vested interests by misinterpreting their teacher's teachings. Most of the conflict occurs in this world because, those who are involved in any conflict themselves are not aware of their own religious ideals or philosophical ideas in a true sense. Buddhism always put emphasis on the understanding the Dhamma in its accurate way prior to proceed towards its application or to teach it to others. Partial and wrong knowledge is always more dangerous than having no knowledge at all. To eradicate such problems,

intra-religious pluralistic approach and intra-faith dialogue too is extremely necessary to figure out the common Buddhist ideas to be presented as *Buddhist* in order to avoid the confusion and allow scope for criticism by non-Buddhist fanatic forces. Buddha evidently says that if one grasps the Dhamma in a wrong way, then it may be severely hazardous for him. He explains his statement with the example of a snake. He says:

*“Suppose there were a man needing a water-snake, seeking a water-snake, wandering in search of a water-snake. He would see a large water-snake and grasp it by the coils or by the tail. The water-snake, turning around, would bite him on the hand, on the arm, or on one of his limbs, and from that cause he would suffer death or death-like suffering. Why is that? Because of the wrong-graspedness of the water-snake. In the same way, there is the case where some worthless men study the Dhamma... Having studied the Dhamma, they don't ascertain the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment. Not having ascertained the meaning of those Dhammas with their discernment, they don't come to an agreement through pondering. They study the Dhamma both for attacking others and for defending themselves in debate. They don't reach the goal for which [people] study the Dhamma. Their wrong grasp of those Dhammas will lead to their long-term harm & suffering.”*²⁷

Buddha does not acknowledge the importance of knowledge for debate or demonstration but to lead a life for the welfare of the whole humanity. Not knowledge itself but a purposeful knowledge is praiseworthy according to Buddha.

Proposing method of dealing with the contemporary issues:

Buddha, instead of setting up the fixed and absolute solution of all the problems by the same prescription, had established the proper methodology to understand the problems and to find their solutions. As the time, place and situation become different, the application and solution also may be selected accordingly following the same methodology. For example, Buddha's teaching of four noble truths, in a way, establishes a wonderful methodology also to identify and solve the problems. The four truths indicate the fourfold examination of any problem, viz., take a problem, establish its origin, identify its solution, and find out the tools to solve it. Just as the science of medicine has four sections, viz., disease, its cause, its ultimate cure, and the medicines for its cure.

Buddha describes the four ways of treating the questions if it appeared before any one. These are: (1) some should be answered directly (*ekamsabyākaraṇīyo*); (2) others should be answered by analyzing them (*vibhajjabyākaraṇīyo*); (3) yet others should be answered by counter – questions (*paṭipucchābyākaraṇīyo*); (4) and lastly, there are questions which should be put aside (*thapanīyo*).²⁸ Once a wanderer *Vacchagotta* went to the Blessed One and he asked the Blessed One: “*Now then, Venerable Gotama, is there a self?*”

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

“*Then is there no self?*”

A second time, the Blessed One was silent.

Then *Vacchagotta* got up from his seat and left.

Then, not long after *Vacchagotta* had left, Ānanda said to the Blessed One:

“Why, lord, did the Blessed One not answer when asked a question by *Vacchagotta* the wanderer?”

Buddha answered:

“Ānanda, if I – being asked by *Vacchagotta* the wanderer if there is a self - were to answer that there is a self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of eternalism [the view that there is an eternal, unchanging soul]. If I - being asked by *Vacchagotta* the wanderer if there is no self — were to answer that there is no self, that would be conforming with those priests & contemplatives who are exponents of annihilationism [the view that death is the annihilation of consciousness]. If I - being asked by *Vacchagotta* the wanderer if there is a self - were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?”

“*No, lord*”, Ānanda responded.

Then, Buddha further said:

“*And if I – being asked by *Vacchagotta* the wanderer if there is no self were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered *Vacchagotta* would become even more bewildered: ‘Does the self I used to have now not exist?’*”²⁹

Actually, *Vacchagotta* was immensely obsessed with these kinds of metaphysical questions and had been visiting the Buddha to ask same type of questions again and again for a long time. Compassionate Buddha would give detailed answers of his questions making him get rid of his confusions. Lastly, observing no result of earlier methods, Buddha applied the method of silence which proved more effective on *Vacchagotta* than any well-expressed answer or discourse.

It was the Buddha's way to maintain silence when the inquirer is merely foolishly inquisitive, or give a detailed reply in any one way out of the

earlier mentioned first three methods when He knew the inquirer to be an earnest seeker.

While dealing with the problem at the level of dialogue, all the parties should identify the problems first, and then they should proceed towards the solution either by addressing that problem directly, or by analyzing the problem thoroughly or by putting aside the common trivial issues creating the problem for all the parties.

Setting certain guidelines to solve the conflicts through dialogue:

The Buddha's way of dealing with the questions sets a guideline how to handle the contemporary problematic issues of world. Each and every problem has its own complexity and enormity and, therefore, requires a particular kind of treatment. First step towards solution through dialogue requires a dignified way of linguistic expression from the side of the entire group involved in any dialogue process. Actually, Buddhism defines a person as a true monk who is controlled in tongue, who is moderate and sweet in speech.³⁰ Knowing the fact that a single wrong word may spoil the entire dialogue process, Buddha says at another place: "Speak not harshly to any one: Those thus addressed will retort. Painful indeed is vindictive speech; Exchange – blows may touch you." ³¹ As answer to the criticism of Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, he advises his disciples to establish the dialogue with the critiques without having any sort of anger on them and unravel their false notions by putting forth the fact before them. He says to the monks:

*"When outsiders speak in dispraise of me, or of the Doctrine, or of the Order, you should unravel what is false and point it out as wrong, saying: 'For this or that reason this is not the fact, that is not so, such a thing is not found among us, is not in us.'"*³²

Furthermore, Buddha, while observing the causes of the conflict among the members of the community, explains that the presence of six sources in a person may be the basis of his conflict with others viz.: (i) anger and ill-will (ii) harshness and mercilessness (iii) enviousness and grudging (iv) craftiness and deceitfulness (v) evil desires and wrong views and (vi) obstinateness and stubbornness because of him being infected of worldliness.³³

Then he suggests the seven ways of managing the conflict (*Adhikaraṇasamatha*) within any community. At least, three out of those seven are worth to mention in the present discussion on the Buddhist view of dialogue.

First of those seven is called *Saṃmukha Vinaya* i.e. proceeding requiring the presence of group of monks and of the party accused. Describing it, Buddha says:

*"As to this Ānanda, monks dispute, saying: 'It is dhamma' or 'It is not dhamma' or 'It is discipline' or 'It is not discipline'. Ānanda, one and all of these monks should assemble in a complete order; having assembled, what belongs to dhamma should be threshed out; having threshed out what belongs to dhamma according to how it corresponds here, so should that legal question be settled."*³⁴

Another important way of settling the disputes is explained in the fifth guideline named *Yebhuyyasikā* i.e. decision of majority. It says:

*"If these monks, Ānanda, are not able to settle that legal question in this residence, then, Ānanda, these monks must go to a residence where there are more monks, there one and all must assemble in a complete order; having assembled, what belongs to dhamma should be threshed out.....so should that legal question be settled."*³⁵

Very important is the last guideline named *Tiṇavattḥārako* i.e. covering up as with grass. Regarding it, Buddha says:

*“As to this, Ānanda, while monks live striving, quarrelling, disputing, much is perpetrated and spoken that is not worthy of a recluse. Ānanda, one and all of these monks should gather together in a complete order; having gathered together, an experienced monk from one of the factions of monks, rising from his seat, having arranged his upper robe over one shoulder, having joined his palms in salutation, should inform the order, saying: Reverend Sirs, let the listen to me. While we were striving, quarrelling, disputing, much was perpetrated and spoken that was not worthy of a recluse. If it seems right to the order, I would confess whatever is the offence of venerable ones as well as whatever is my own offence, both for the sake of the venerable ones and for my own sake,.....so as to obtain a covering up as with grass.”*³⁶

After that, an experienced monk from the other faction of the monks also does the same act. It is called *Tiṇavattḥārako* i.e. covering up as with grass to settle the disputes.

Epilogue:

Finding solution is not possible without finding the cause. Buddhism is the philosophy which believes that no effect is without cause and removing the cause is the solution itself. When Buddhism investigates any problem, it starts from its root and examines where actually the danger of human beings lies? Where actually this disbelief on others exists? Which factor is responsible for all these religious, social and political problems? Then Buddhism finds that it is the mind and only our mind that has the capacity to make this earth a heaven if it is pure

and a hell, if polluted. The problem as well as its solution is the product of mind. The victory and defeat are the mental notions. Love and hatred also exist in our mind. The brightest gift to the humanity has always been offered by the mind and all the ghastly destructions of the world are also the contribution of the mind. The very first verse of the *Dhammapada* begins with the statement: *“Mind is the fore-runner of all conditions. Mind is chief: and they are mind made. If, with an impure mind, one speaks or acts, then pain follows one even as the wheel, the hoof of the ox.”*³⁷ Those who participate in a dialogue with cleansed mind can be most benefited by the outcomes of the dialogue. As a clean and bright cloth catches the colour easily in which it is dipped, similarly, an undefiled mind easily grasps the benefits of a useful dialogue.³⁸

With its humanistic ideas, Buddhism opens its door for all kinds of different views for a meaningful dialogue and acceptance for dissenting views, which categorically illustrates that there is neither such thing exists like blasphemy in Tipitaka nor is the thought of counter-attack on critiques. With the ideas of conquering self rather than others³⁹, Buddhism tends to propose a way of life that is utterly compatible with a multicultural; democratic and egalitarian society. It never fanatically claims its own standpoint as the only possible correct standpoint. When we say, for example: “My path (or ethics, religion, food habits, behaviour etc.) is *also* correct” - then this statement creates no conflict. But when we claim: “My path (or ethics, religion, food habits, behaviour etc.) is the *only* correct path”, then it produces conflict. Buddhism talks of finding common similar ground to sort out our conflicts rather than overemphasizing our differences, that is why, wherever it travelled in its long history, it neither tried to destroy the contemporary tradition nor it had a conflict with those cultures and it successfully co-existed with them in a great harmony.

Intra-religious pluralism is no less important than inter-religious pluralism. Unless we understand our own position properly by having intra-religious dialogue, we can never move towards a truthful dialogue with others. Furthermore, a successful and productive dialogue must have the possibility of equal status of all the parties involved in it. Every group must be considered as an independent representative of a certain set of ideas and no party should be considered as superior to others as in that case it would be difficult for other parties to be involved in the dialogue with dignity and honesty. Last, but not the least, the efforts of finding similarities should not be that much stretched that the independent identity of any ideology or philosophy could be endangered. The beauty of the world does not exist in its homogeneity but in its diversity with proportionate harmonious unifying elements. And that can be achieved only by knowing each

other more deeply.

Now, what could be the Buddhist standpoint in the age of religious bigotry and hostility in the certain areas of the world? Buddhism, as it takes in the entire sphere of life, tends to hold the middle path of accepting the policy of many truths, many paths between two extremes of religious bigotry and unnecessary syncretism. Extreme exclusionism makes a religion/faith fanatic whereas extreme inclusionism brings a fatal danger to the original identity of that religion/faith. Extreme exclusionism reflects lack of compassion whereas extreme inclusionism shows lack of confidence in own faiths. Buddhism needs to remain centrally connected to its basic humanistic ideas to be compatible with any religiously pluralistic society, without hatred for other faiths or without over-sacrificing and over-mixing the principle ideas of Buddhism.

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GOTAMĪ, THE ROLE MODEL OF BUDDHIST WOMEN

Dr. Karma Sonam Palmo

Gotamī was born into the Koliyan clan of Devadaha as the sister of Māyā, the Buddha's mother. The sisters Māyā and Gotamī were both married to the Śākyan king Śuddhodana, but within days of the Buddha's birth, Māyā passed away and Gotamī raised the Buddha while her own son Nanda's care was entrusted to one of her chief maids. Gotamī was undeniably the perfect role model for Buddhist women in the past and remains the most inspiring historical figure for Buddhist women throughout the world to this day. Gotamī was not only influential as the leader of nuns, more importantly she was the epitome of female spirituality. She became one of the foremost female *Arhats* and proved that women were by no means less capable spiritually than men. The Buddha recognized her as the foremost of the nuns in spiritual experience:

*Etadaggaṃ , bhikkhave, mama
sāvikānaṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ rattaññūnaṃ
yadidaṃ mahāpajāpatigotamī. (A I.25)*

Monks, chief among my women
disciples, who are nuns of long
standing, is Great Pajāpatī the Gotamī.¹

The great spiritual achievement of Gotamī

Gotamī's attainment of Arhathood is one of her greatest contributions to Buddhist women apart from the formation of the nuns' order. In fact, according to traditional accounts it was the women's spiritual capability argument

¹Eng. Trans: *The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara-Nikaya) Vol. I, The Pali Text Society, Lancaster 2006: 21.*

Gotamī, the Role Model of Buddhist women

that enabled the foundation of the nuns' order. It was only after the Buddha declared that women are able to achieve all four levels of spiritual attainment, Arhat being the ultimate result, that the lineage of the ordained women was established.² As the first nun and the one behind the founding of the nuns' order, Gotamī completed the task she initiated with the fruition of her spiritual practice.

Gotamī's life took a radical turn when her foster son Siddhārtha, who later became the Buddha after his enlightenment, visited home for the first time since departing on a spiritual journey in search of truth. This visit of Siddhārtha as the Buddha had a great impact on his parents, son, cousins and other fellow Śākyans. His father Śuddhodana, despite having been unhappy when Siddhārtha left the palace, welcomed him wholeheartedly on his return. As the Buddha shared the knowledge he had gained and experienced through his spiritual practice, many of the fellow Śākyans started to follow his teachings. Among them was his father, who being highly motivated by the teachings and diligent in practice, soon became a *stream-enterer (rgyun zhugs, srotāpanna)*, the first resultant stage of spiritual practice. Gotamī's son Nanda and the Buddha's own son Rāhula also went forth as ordained monks during this visit of the Buddha to Kapilavastu.³

²See, *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka, Cullavagga). Volume V, Luzac & Co, London 1963: 354.*

³Bode, "Women Leaders of the Buddhist Reformation (from Manorathapurani, Buddhaghosa's commentary on

The Buddha had come home after five years of his great enlightenment. As he had been sharing his knowledge with the people for some time, he already had ordained males among his followers and so Nanda and Rāhula also joined the order. However, when Gotamī desired to go forth as ordained, this was not as simple as had been the case for her son Nanda and grandson Rāhula. Although she was the queen of the Śākyan clan and the foster mother of the Buddha, she could not go forth as an ordained nun as had Nanda and Rāhula. Gotamī had to take the initiative to obtain this opportunity for herself and other women who also wished to be ordained. According to the traditional accounts, initially the Buddha did not approve Gotamī's request that women be permitted to go forth as ordained, yet she persisted until eventually succeeding.⁴

Shortly after the Buddha left Kapilavastu for Vaiśālī, his father Śuddhodana passed away following his attainment of Arhathood.⁵ Witnessing the triumphs of her husband, son and grandson, Gotamī did not want to simply rejoice in their achievements. She was strongly inspired to lead an ordained spiritual life herself and persisted to achieve it. Eschewing all comforts, she undertook a long journey barefoot, with a shaven head and rough robes, followed by five hundred female aspirants to Vaiśālī where the Buddha was residing. There, despite initial reluctance, through the argument of women's equal capability to achieve all spiritual attainments, Gotamī's goal was finally

the Anguttara Nikaya),” 525. Also, see Pruitt's note. 1. of Dhammapala, *The Commentary on the Verses of the Therīs: Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā: Paramatthadīpanī VI*, 47: 182.

⁴The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka). Volume V, (Cullavagga): 352-55.

⁵Bode, “Women Leaders of the Buddhist Reformation (from Manorathapurani, Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Anguttara Nikaya),” 525. Also, see Dhammapala, *The Commentary on the Verses of the Therīs: Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā: Paramatthadīpanī VI*, 47: 182.

accomplished. Soon after her ordination, with profound motivation towards her spiritual practice, she attained Arhathood and became the role model as a spiritually realized woman, a female Arhat, for those who were also aspiring to such an achievement. Gotamī clearly expresses the stages of her realization and attainment of fruition by saying:

Suffering is understood; the cause of suffering allayed.

I've experienced cessation; I've cultivated the path.

I have worshipped the teacher, and done what the Buddha taught;

Laid down the heavy load, and loosed the ties to life.

The reason for which I went forth from home to homelessness is finally attained by me: destroying all the fetters.⁶

Gotamī proudly announced that she had finally reached a state thus far attained only by males and assumed to be outside the reach of women. Along with her initiative concerning the spiritual rights of women, she had demonstrated women's spiritual capability and triumphantly proclaimed:

I witnessed the joy of peace [attained] by the male Śākyan heroes.

They were the men who formerly had been born as our husbands.⁷

⁶*Pariññātaṃ mayā dukkhaṃ, dukkhahetu vivajjito; Nirodho mesacchikato, maggocāpisubhāvito. Paricīṇṇo mayāsattā, kataṃ buddhassa sāsanam; Ohito garuko bhāro, bhavanetti samūhatā. Yassattāya pabbajitā, agārasmānagāriyam; So me attho anupatto, sabbasaṃyojanakkhayo* - 120-122, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīpadānam, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans. “Gotami's Story (Gotami Apadana),” in *Buddhism in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed. (1995), 120.

⁷*Sākiyānīhi dhīrāhi, saha santisukhaṃ phusiṃ; Ye tadā pubbajātiyam, amhākaṃ āsu sāmīno* - 217, 7.

Gotamī, remembering her responsibility and with great care for her fellow nuns, advised them that just as she had achieved her spiritual goal, Arhathood, they should do likewise:

The great Buddha made women nuns, only at my beseeching.

So, if you love me, be like me, and follow after him.⁸

The fellow nuns were grateful to Gotamī and did not lack zeal in their spiritual practice, and soon after Gotamī's achievement, the five hundred women also declared their attainment of Arhathood. Addressing the Buddha as a hero, the women acknowledged that it was Gotamī the foremost of all, whom they are grateful to for their victorious achievement:

Hey, hero, it was Gotamī who pitied all of us. Perfumed by your good karma we slew the imperfections. Defilements gone, we have abolished existence and now we are like elephant cows who, breaking every single fetter, dwell without constraint.⁹

The then prevailing attitude to gender is apparent from one of Gotamī's verses where she seeks the Buddha's forgiveness for any wrongdoing. She addresses the Buddha as the chief of the worlds, saying,

It is thought, chief of the world, that women

Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/> ; Eng. Trans. Ibid., 130.

⁸*Thīnaṃ adāsi pabbajjaṃ, sambuddho yācito mayā; Tasmā yathāhaṃ nandissaṃ, tathā tamanutiṭṭhatha.* – 128, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/> ; Eng. Trans. Ibid., 121.

⁹*Ahonukampikā amhaṃ, sabbāsaṃ cira gotamī; Vāsītā tava puññehi, pattā no āsavakkhayaṃ. Kilesā jhāpitā amhaṃ, bhavā sabbe samūhatā; Nāgīva bandhanaṃ chetvā, viharāma anāsavā.* – 223-224, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/> ; Eng. Trans. Ibid., 131.

are all flawed, if there should be some flaw in me, compassion-mine, forgive it.¹⁰

Gotamī had finally proved that women were not all flawed and were also capable of attaining qualities so far thought to be within men's capability only.

The grand passing away of Gotamī

The occasion of Gotamī's passing away was yet another magnificent event highlighting female spiritual power. She did not face an untimely death or succumb to illness; rather, she chose the time of her death with full awareness. Living among her fellow nuns in the nuns' residence at Vaiśālī when the Buddha was also residing in the same town, a thought arose in her that it was time for her to pass away forever. Following this she reviewed her spiritual practices and their fruition, becoming confident of her realization and the exhaustion of all factors leading to rebirth. Gotamī thought it best not to prolong her life and witness the passing away of the Buddha.¹¹

She considered this to be a perfect time to pass away, while the Buddha was still alive and the ordained communities were flourishing in harmony. Just as such thoughts arose, the earth shook and thunder roared with the wailing and weeping of goddesses dwelling in the vicinity, such as Pṛithvi (earth goddess), Lakśmī (wealth goddess), and Yakśini (attendant of the wealth god) who were the supporters of spiritual practitioners in their mundane matters.

¹⁰*Itthiyo nāma lokagga, sabbadosākarā matā; Yadi ko catthi doso me, khamassu karuṇākara.* -143, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/> ; Eng. Trans. Ibid., 123.

¹¹"I cannot bear to look upon the Buddha's final passing" - Ibid., 118. Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu // 'dul ba phran tshesgs kyi gzhi// **Lhasa (Iha sa):** (H 6) 'dul ba, tha 1b1-467a3, f. 171b - "de'i phyir ji srid bcom ldan 'das bzhugs shing dge slong gi dge 'dun mthun pa de'i tshes bdag yongs su mya ngan las 'da'bar bya'o/_"

Gotamī's resident five hundred fellow nuns also experienced a strange feeling and wondered what was happening. They went to see Gotamī to ask what had caused the shaking, roaring and wailing:

In solitude, sister, we were dampened with tears; the solid earth trembled, the gods' thunder roared. There, it is as though someone's crying is heard: What does this mean, Gotamī?¹²

When Gotamī shared her wish to pass away to her friends, they voiced the same wish. Together, they left the nuns' residence to see the Buddha and seek his permission to pass away. On the way, they met laywomen lamenting the passing of their leader and asked her not to leave them. Gotamī, ever confident, replied "Enough with all your crying, children: today's a day to laugh!"¹³ By this she meant it was a day to laugh because it was a day that vindicated her achievement of female spiritual power. In other words, she had achieved the goal of going forth as ordained, had destroyed all the fetters leading to the unending cycle of birth and death and had had the opportunity to celebrate her achievement with the Buddha, Ānanda, Nanda and Rāhula as she says,

My wish I've had for very long today will be fulfilled.

This is the time for drums of joy! Why are you crying, children?¹⁴

¹²*Nipacca sirasā pāde, idaṃ vacanamabravuṃ; 'Tattha toyalavāsittā, mayamayye rahogatā. Sā calā calitā bhūmi, nādītādevadundubhī; Paridevācasuyyante, kimatthaṃnūna gotamī* – 106-107, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 119.

¹³*Tāsaṃ sokapahānatthaṃ, avoca madhuraṃ giraṃ; 'Ruditena alaṃ puttā, hāsakāloyamajja vo.* 119, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 120.

¹⁴*Cirappabhuti yaṃ mayhaṃ, patthitaṃ ajja sijjhate; Ānandabherikāloyaṃ, kim vo assūhi puttikā.* – 126, 7.

She advised them to be 'strong and fervent' if they loved her, to appreciate the Dharma's great stability and to be like her.¹⁵ Jonathan Walters, in *A Voice from the Silence: The Buddha's Mother's Story* equates Gotamī to the Buddha, saying that "Gotamī is held up as the female counterpart to the Buddha."¹⁶

However, since the Śrāvakayāna tradition does not believe in the possibility of multiple Buddhas at a time, a hierarchy exists between the Buddha and his male and female followers who have achieved Arhathood. The Buddha is believed to have been a Bodhisattva for many eons before attaining full-enlightenment. A Bodhisattva is someone who wishes to become a Buddha for the sake of benefitting many sentient beings, thereby engages in countless benevolent activities over innumerable lifetimes.

By contrast, while the Arhats also wish to benefit others, they are less motivated than Bodhisattvas and are more individualistic. Moreover, there is a clear gender demarcation attached to becoming a Buddha in Śrāvakayāna Buddhism, while none exists for becoming an Arhat.

Nevertheless, Gotamī was indeed a Buddha-like figure for her fellow women and the undoubted role model for female spiritual achievement. After she decided to pass away, Gotamī informed the Buddha: "I wish to go out totally, abandoning this body; grant me permission",¹⁷ conveying the same message to

Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 121.

¹⁵Ibid., 121.

¹⁶Jonathan S. Walters, "A Voice from the Silence: The Buddha's Mother's Story," *History of Religions* 33, no. 4 (1994): 373.

¹⁷*Parinibbātumicchāmi, viḥāyemaṃ kaḷevaram; Anujānāhi me vīra, dukkhaṅtakara nāyaka.* – 137, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., "Gotamī's Story

her son Nanda, grandson Rāhula and Ānanda. The Buddha, Nanda and Rāhula, having gone beyond the path of training and understanding the nature of impermanence, were not emotionally moved. However, Ānanda, still on the path and as such not yet spiritually matured, grieved and wept hearing that Gotamī would pass away. Gotamī, remembering Ānanda's help with women's ordination, consoled him by saying: "You really shouldn't mourn when the time to laugh has come! . . . your toil is bearing fruit."¹⁸

There were likely many who continued to doubt the spiritual capability of women, regardless of the Buddha's proclamation that women were as capable as men. When Gotamī informed him that she wished to pass away forever, the Buddha told her to perform miracles so that those he refers to as 'fools' who still doubted the spiritual capability of women may be proven wrong.

Yet still there are these fools [children] who doubt that women too can grasp the truth. Gotamī, show miracles, that they might give up their false views.¹⁹

(Gotami Apadana),” 122. ;

Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu // ‘dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi// **Lhasa (lha sa):** (H 6) ‘dul ba, tha 1b1- 467a3, f. 171b -172a - “*bdag bsam bzhin du yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’ bar ‘tshal lo/ /_de skad ces gsol ba dang/ bcom ldan ‘das cang mi gsung bar bzhugs nas skye rgu’i bdag mo chen mo go’u ta mis/ bcom ldan ‘das la lan gnyis lan gsum du ‘di skad ces /_/gsol to/ /btsun pa/ bdag bsam bzhin du yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’ bar ‘tshal lo/ /bcom ldan ‘das lan gnyis lan gsum du cang mi _gsung bar bzhugs nas skye rgu’i bdag mo chen mo go’u ta mis yang btsun pa bcom ldan ‘das la ‘di skad ces gsol to/ /btsun pa/ bdag bsam bzhin du yongs su mya ngan ‘da’ _bar ‘tshal lo’*”

¹⁸*Evam vilāpamānaṃ taṃ, ānandaṃ āha gotamī; Sutasāgaragambhīra , buddhopaṭṭhānatappara. Na yuttaṃ socitaṃ putta, hāsakāle upaṭṭhite; Tayā me saraṇaṃ putta, nibbānaṃ tamupāgataṃ. Tayā tāta samajjhitaṃ, pabbajjaṃ anujāni no; Mā putta vimano hohi, saphalo te parissamo. – 162-164, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherāpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāḷi-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/> ;Eng. Trans., Ibid., 125.*

¹⁹*Thīnaṃ dhammābhisamaye, ye bālā vimatiṃ gatā; Tesam*

While supernatural powers such as miracles are concomitant to spiritual achievements, the Buddha advised against demonstrating them for personal benefit. However, in Gotamī's case, the Buddha tells her to show them so that those who believe that women are less capable spiritually may be proven wrong. Accordingly, paying homage to the Buddha, Gotamī leaped into the sky and appeared in many forms, appearing and disappearing she walked through the walls and the sky. She sank beneath the earth, walked on water as land and flew like a bird to Brahma's abode. Making the earth a canopy with mount Meru its handle, she walked around the sky.²⁰

With these and many other miracles, Gotamī amazed everyone in the vicinity – humans, gods and goddesses. Her fellow nuns who wished to pass away with her also displayed some miracles. Paying homage to the Buddha, they rose up into the sky and gathered like stars, telling the Buddha that they had also perfected their spiritual practice and now wished to pass away with Gotamī.²¹

Gotamī walked back to her residence with her fellow nuns, followed by the Buddha, Nanda, Rāhula, Ānanda and others who were present. Having reached her hut, Gotamī sat cross-legged and entered into the deepest meditational equipoise, never to arise again. There was a shower of flowers from the sky, the earth and the mountains shook, and people and the gods wailed. The Buddha then announced to his monks that Gotamī had passed away into

diṭṭhippahānatthaṃ, iddhiṃ dassehi gotamī –178, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherāpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāḷi-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid. 126.

²⁰Ibid. 126 -127

²¹Ibid. 131-132.; Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu // ‘dul ba phran tshegs kyi gzhi// Lhasa (lha sa): (H 6) ‘dul ba, tha 1b1- 467a3, f. 172a – “*dge slong ma lnga brgya po de dag gis kyang bcom ldan _‘das kyis zhabs gnyis la mgo bos phyag ‘tshal nas ‘di skad ces gsol te/ /btsun pa/ bdag cag kyang bsam bzhin du yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’ bar ‘tshal lo/ _*”

nirvana and they were to pay homage to her for the last time.²² The Buddha, monks, gods, goddesses, snake gods, demons and Brahma honored her. *Vinaya kṣudraka-vastu* gives the account of Gotamī's cremation ceremony as follows:

After the passing away of Gotamī along with her fellow five hundred nuns, Nanda, Anirudha, Ānanda, Rāhula carried Gotamī's palanquin. The Buddha also held the palanquin with his right hand. The rest of the monks carried the other nuns' [palanquins]. After great offerings were made to those deceased, they put down the palanquins in a solitary place. Then the king of Kośala Pasenadi along with his entourage of the queen, children, ministers and the villagers gathered heaps of various scented woods and cremated the bodies of Gotamī and her five hundred fellow nuns. Thereafter, everybody returned after the Buddha gave teachings on impermanence.²³

Gotamī's passing was so overwhelming that the Apādāna makes a striking comparison

²²"Gotamī's Story (Gotami Apadana)," 137-138.

²³Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu // 'dul ba phran tshogs kyi gzhi// **Lhasa (lha sa):** (H 6) 'dul ba, tha 1b1-467a3 (vol. 10), f. 174b – 175a – "de nas tshes dang ldan pa dga' bo dang/_ ma 'gag pa dang/_ kun dga' bo dang/_ sgra gcan zin gyis skye rgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi'i khyogs bteg go/_ bcom ldan 'das _kyis kyang phyag g.yas pas bzung ngo/_ dge slong lhad ma rnams kyis kyang dge slong ma lhad ma rnams kyi khyogs bteg go/_ de nas mchod pa chen po byas te khyer nas sa phyogs bar skabs _dben sar khyogs rnams bzhas go/_ de nas bcom ldan 'das kyis skye rgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi dang/_ dge slong ma lnga brgya po dag gi lus las bla gos phud nas dge slong rnams _/_ la bka' stsal pa/_ dge slong dag/_ skye rgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi dang/_ dge slong ma lnga brgya po 'di dag lo brgya nyi shu lon yang lus la gnyer ma dang/_ skra _dkar med cing bu mo lo bcu drug lon pa lta bu la ltos/_ de nas yul ko sa la'i rgyal po gsal rgyal btsun mo'i tshogs dang/_ gzhon nu dang/_ blon po dang/_ grong mi dang/_ yul mi _dang bcas pas dri sna tshogs kyi shing gi phung po spungs nas skye rgu'i bdag mo chen mo go'u ta mi la sogs pa dge slong ma lnga brgya po'i sku gdung dag bsregs so/_ bcom ldan 'das _kyis kyang mi rtag pa dang ldan pa'i chos dag bshad nas gtsug lag khang du gshegs so'"

between her passing away and that of the Buddha's:

The Buddha's great nirvana, good, but not as good as this one:

Gotamī's great going out was positively stellar.²⁴

Indeed, Gotamī's passing away and funeral were significantly grander than those of the Buddha's, as well as those of her husband and the Buddha's father Śuddhodana. The Buddha recognized Gotamī as the 'most wise' and 'a master of great powers':

Know this, O monks, she was most wise, with wisdom vast and wide.

She was a nun of great renown, a master of great powers.²⁵

"The reason for which I went forth from home to homelessness is finally attained by me: destroying all the fetters."²⁶ Said before her passing away, clearly shows that, for Gotamī, it was not simply the status of being ordained that she aspired to when asking the Buddha to permit women to go forth from the state of home to homelessness. Being ordained and attaining Arhathood are not mutually exclusive, for many the former facilitates the latter though they are not necessarily dependent on each other.

²⁴*Buddhassa parinibbānaṃ, nedisaṃ āsi yādisaṃ; Gotamīparinibbānaṃ, atevacchariyaṃ [atīvacchariyaṃ (sabbattha) mogallānabyākaraṇaṃ oloketabbaṃ] ahu.* – 272, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., "Gotamī's Story (Gotami Apadana)," 136

²⁵*Paṇḍitāsi mahāpaññā, puthupaññā tatheva ca; Rattaññū bhikkhunīnaṃ sā, evaṃ dhāretha bhikkhavo.* – 282, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 137.

²⁶*Yassatthāya pabbajitā, agārasmānagāriyam; So me attho anuppatto, sabbasamyojanakkhayo.* – 122, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīapadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 120.

Gotamī achieved the same bliss of Arhathood as her male counterparts: “I witnessed the joy of peace [attained] by the male Śākya heroes. They were the men who formerly had been born as our husbands.”²⁷ Hence, in addition to being a successful leader of the nuns’ order, Gotamī was even more successful as the leader of the female Arhats. Gotamī’s five hundred fellow nuns, having gone forth to be ordained with her, decided to leave the world with her, honored as the five hundred female Arhats. Thus, all of these women were not only great nuns but great Arhats.

Gotamī expressed joy over her own achievements as well as those of the nuns at the time of her death, in saying: “My wish I’ve had for very long today will be fulfilled. This is the time for drums of joy!”²⁸ Moreover, as a mother figure to the nuns, she made sure to remind them of their goal: “The great Buddha made women nuns, only at my beseeching. So, if you love me, be like me, and follow after him.”²⁹ Those were Gotamī’s final words to her fellow nuns; words of great love, care and leadership. Indeed, she was the most extraordinary leader of the Buddhist nuns. Gotamī was the champion of women’s spiritual rights and is indeed a legend in the world of Buddhist women.

²⁷*Sākiyānīhi dhīrāhi, saha santisukhaṃ phusiṃ; Ye tadā pubbaḷḅāṭiyāṃ, amhākaṃ āsu sāmīno.* – 217, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherāpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 130.

²⁸*Cirappabhuti yaṃ mayhaṃ, patthitaṃ ajja sijaḥate; Ānandabherikāloyaṃ, kiṃ vo assūhi puttikā.* – 126, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherāpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 121.

²⁹*Thīnaṃ adāsi pabbajjaṃ, sambuddho yācīto mayā; Tasmā yathāhaṃ nandissaṃ, tathā tamanutiṭṭhatha’.* – 128, 7. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherāpadānaṃ, 2. Ekūposathikavaggo, Apadānapāli-2, Khuddakanikāya, Tipiṭaka (Mūla), <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>; Eng. Trans., Ibid., 121.

BOOK REVIEW

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Paccavekkhakā

Ujjavalo Kumāro ca Sambhuppasādo Ādako*

Visaya-āharaṇaṃ

Pāli-sāhicce tikicchā ti sippassa rūpeṇa vaṇṇataṃ ekaṃ satthaṃ atthi. *Milindapañhe* ekūnavīsati satthāni uddharitāni ti, “suti sammuti saṅkhyā yoga nīti visesikā gaṇikā gandhabbā tikicchā dhanubbedā purānā itihāsā jotisā māyā ketu mantanā yuddhā chandasā buddhavacanena ekūnavīsati”, tesu ekā ti tikicchā atthi. Evameva Pāli-nīti ganthesu tikicchā ti sippa-rūpeṇa vaṇṇitā atthi. Pāli-tiṭṭhake pi bahuvidhesu ṭhānesu tikicchā visaye Buddhassa vacanaṃ saṃgahitā saṃgopitā saṃṭhāpitā ti. Bhagavā Buddhō ti sabbasetṭho bhesajjagurū. Devānaṃ ca manussānaṃ ca paramo uttamo tikicchako. Sakasāvakanāṃ vividharogādīnaṃ upasamatthaṃ kiñci Bhagavatā Buddhena upadiṭṭhaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ *Vinaya-Mahāvaggassa Bhesajjakhandhake* sannivesitaṃ.

Jambudīpe Āyurvedassa unnayano Bauddha- janānaṃ ekā padhānaṃ bhūmikā atthi. Buddhassa samkāliko Jīvako Komārabhacco eko mahanto tikicchako mahāvejjo ti. So paramavinīto Buddhassa Bhagavato upāsakasāvako ti. Jīvakassa Komārabhacco’ti samaññaṃ ārabba ekaṃ mataṃ evarūpaṃ pi atthi. yadidaṃ pacchā yadā vejjabhūto so kumārānaṃ bhacco,

sevako vā, yadidaṃ dāratatikicchāyaṃ, visesappatto ahu, tadeva tassa komābhacco ti samañña jāta ti. Tikicchā vijjā sikkhitukāmo Jīvako Komārabhacco Takkāsilāyaṃ upāgami. Takkasilaṃ Bhagavato kale tikicchā visaye ekaṃ vikkhyātaṃ ṭhānaṃ āsi. Pāliparamaparāya anusārena Jīvako Komārabhacco anekāni rogāni, seyyāthāpi sīsābādho, bhagandalābādho, antagaṇṭhābādho, paṇḍurogabādho ādinaṃ ārogaṃ samattha āsi. Api ca Jīvako dvikkhatuṃ ābādhikabhūtaṃ Bhagavantaṃ tikicchi taṃ ca ārogamakṣī. Bhagavā Jīvakassa anurodhe pañcahi ābādhehi phutṭho; yathā kuṭṭhaṃ, gaṇḍo, kilāso, soso, apamāro (*Vinayaṭṭakam- Mahāvaggam* 90) na pabbājetabbo adhivāsesi.

Yadā bhāratadesato Buddha-dhammo mahā Mahindassa payāsena Sīhala-Dīpe āgato; tadā pi Bauddha-tikicchāparamparā samācina rūpeṇa vividha-āyurvedaganthānaṃ matāni ārabba chaṭṭhisamkhyaka-paddhatīhi Jambudonivasantena kenaci brahmanvayena yatinā pañcapariveṇādhipena Parakkamabhujassa rajjaṃ kārente 1183 sake gantho’yaṃ viracito. Tathā ca nigamaṇe, “Sāke Parakkamabhuvha-narinda-jambudonipuramhi nivasam gajakūtasamkhe brahmanvayo yatirakāsi bhisakkatantametañca pañcapariveṇanātho”ti (daṭṭhabbo, Kūmāro 2019: ix). Tassa yatissa nāmantu na vuttaṃ. Tena Ariyadāsa-Kumārasinghe-mahodayena Sīhalassa āyurvedācariyena, “Sirilaṅkāyaṃ chaṭṭha-Parakkamabāhu-bhūmipālassa samaye, taṃ rājadhānībhūte Jambudoninagare vihitavāsena brāhmaṇavaṃsavatamsena pañcapariveṇameḷādhipena dasamahātheravarānaṃ sahasāvadhāni-nāmaññatamena sabbatantassa tantena

*Ujjavalo Kumāro ti Kalikattā-Vissavijjālayassa Bauddha-Vijjā Vibhāge Sahācāriyo ca Pamuko ca. Sambhuppasādo Ādako ti Kalikattā-Vissavijjālayassa Bauddha-Vijjā Vibhāge Gavesaākārako.

Tipiṭakavācissarācariyena paṇḍitasiromaṇiṇā sirimatā Anomadassī-saṃgharājappavarena saṃkalitā Bhesajjamañjūsā samattā” ti viññāpitam (daṭṭhabbo, Kūmāro 2019: x). Aparo pan’āha Vilegodā Dhammakitti Siri Dhammānanda-mahābhāgo tass’eva Bhesajjamañjūsāsannayassa bhūmikāyam, Maṅgalasaṃgharājena katamiccādi ullikhitam (daṭṭhabbo, Kumāra 2019: X). Tena hi assa pamānam na udāhaṭam. Aparena ca Pāli-sāhiccavidunā, Guṇasīla-Piyaratana-Malalasekera-mahāsayena (daṭṭhabbo, Kūmāro 2019: XI) kathanam,

In a Sinhalese medical work, Yoga-ratnākara, compiled about the fourteenth century, a verse in the colophon states that work was arranged on the plan ‘of the Mañjūsā (i.e. Bhesajjamañjūsā), a medical work in Pāli stanzas, composed by Atthadassī Thera about the year A.D. 1267.

“sīhalabhesajjaganthe Yogaratnākare catudasa-īsabīyasatake viracite, nigamanaṭṭha-gāthāyam ullikhitam, so pana gantho bhīyō 1267 īsabīyasatake Anomadassī therena racitassa mañjūsā nāma Pālibhesajjaganthassa nayānusārena viracito” ti.

Sace kathitamidaṃ saccam, ganthakāro Atthadassī Thero, Pañcamūlapariveṇādhīptī ti idaṃ gantham mūla lekhako ca raciyatā ca.

Gantha-vivaraṇam

Ito pubbam Bhesajjamañjūsāganthassa paṭhamādi-aṭṭhārasapaddhatiyo 1997 īsabīyavasse Romanakkhare Siṃhala-desassa paṇḍito Jindāsaliyaratane, Pāli-teksaṭa-sosāitī (PTS), Āksaforḍa (Oxford), itiyatra pakāsita. Tāsam paddhatīnam Āṅgalabhāsāya bhāsāntaram ca pacchā 2002 īsabīyavasse tatheva pakāsito. Tato param Liyaratne mahodayo 2009 īsabīyavasse Pāli-teksaṭa-sosāitī, āksaforḍa, itiyatra ekūnavīsātito-saṭṭhi-pariyanta-paddhatiyo pakāsesi. Idha Bhārataese ayam gantho anupalabdho āsi. Mahāmahopajjhāya

Vimalindakumāramahābhāgena, kāsī-hindu-vissavijjālayassa, Pāli-evaṃ-bauddha-ajjhayana-vibhāga-pamukho, Deva-nāgarī-akkharena paṭhameva muddāpito 2019 īsabīyavasse, ime vivarachiddam pūreti. Ayam Devanāgarī abhisankharaṇam Bhāratassa Dillīyam patitṭhāpitam Buddhīsta-Valrḍa-Praso (Buddhist World Press) nāma atimahaccapūṇam muddṇāyalo pakāsito.

Idam gantham mukhabandhanam (piṭṭhāni IX-XVI) Dīpaka-kumāra-barūā Mahābhāgena, Kalikātā-vissavijjālayassa pūrimācariyena ca pūrma Pāli-vibhāgassa pamukhena ca likhāpitam. Tato param gantha-viññāpanam (introduction) pi Āṅgalabhāsāyam (XVII-XXXVI) ca Hindibhāsāyam (XXXVII-XLVI) ca Vimalindakumārena likhāpitam āgatā. Gantha-viññāpanam ti idaṃ Devanāgarī-lipiyan muddāpitassa ganthassa ekam padhānam bhāgam atthi. Idam bhāgam gavesakānam uggaṇhanāya ati sahayakam atthi. Āṅgalabhāsāya (XVII-XXXVI) ca Hindibhāsāya viññāpane, Bhesajjamañjūsā kālo ca ganthakāro ca (the date and authorship of the Bhesajjamañjūsā), ganthassa visaya-vatthu (subject matter of the text) 18 paddhati-pariyantaṃ, sammā-jīvanacariyāya avadhāraṇā (concept of Good Living), Bhesajjamañjūsāya mahaccam (importance of Bhesajjamañjūsā), ganthassa vijjamāna-abhisankharaṇam ca abhisankharaṇassa paṇṇalekhaṇī (present edition of the text and style of editing), sampaṭicchanam (acknowledgments) ca atthi.

Ganthassa mūla-pātho 516 piṭṭhe niṭṭhati. Pariyosānam rupena ‘iti rasāyanapaddhatisaṅgaho saṭṭhi’ ca ‘iti bhesajjamañjūsā samatā’ ti muddāpito atthi. Pacchime ‘nigamana-kathā’ atthi. Tatoparam antimarupena sakatabhāsāyam dve savāstika-vākyam, ‘siddhīstu’ ca ‘subhamastu’ ca muddāpito ti.

Gantha-paricayo

Pālisāhicca-rītikkamena “namo tassa” ādinā ganthārambho, tato maṅgalācaraṇaṃ “abhivādiya sathhāraṃ manorogatikicchakaṃ”ti ādayo gāthā vihitā. Atha aṭṭhārasapadhatīsu sabbarogānaṃ sāmāññena nītabbavisayā vaṇṇitā. Tato ekūnacattālīsa-paddhatīsu vividharogānaṃ tikicchā, tathā antimāsu tīsu paddhatīsu osadhādi-nimmāṇa-kosallaṃ vaṇṇitaṃ. Saṅkhepato imāsaṃ paddhatīnaṃ vivaraṇaṃ pakāsīyate:

Ganthavibhāgā (-Paddhati)	Gathā-saṃkhyā	Vibhāgantogadhā visayā
1. Upaññāsa	43	Ganthassa bhūmikā.
2. Dabbādividhi	101	Bhesajja-dabbādīnaṃ paricayo.
3. Sadācāra	36	Gāthāhi suṭṭhu jīvanacariyā.
4. Āgāmiroganisedha	21	Anāgate kale rogānaṃ anuppādividhi
5. Annavyañjana	178	Dhaññavaggo, kataññavaggo iccādīhi dvāsahi Vaggehi annavyañjanaṃ paricayo.
6. Davadabba	99	Toyavaggo, khīravaggo, ucchuvaggo, madhuvaggo ca telavaggo etehi pañcahi vaggehi davadabbānaṃ vivaraṇaṃ.
7. Savisāhāra	27	Visamakkhitāhara-lakkhaṇādayo
8. Paṭivisa	51	Tesaṃ visānaṃ paṭirodhakavisā
9. Āmabheda	44	Āmānaṃ vā āhārassa aparipāko
10. Gaṇa	140	Vividhadabbānaṃ gaṇavisayo
11. Mahākamma	171	Sneha-seda-vamana-vireka-nassa-khāraggi iti chahi vidhāhi mahākammaṃ pamukha-cikicchāvidhi
12. Cullakamma	146	Dhūma-gaṇḍūsa-muddhatela-ācōṭanāñjana-tappanapuṭapākamma-jalokā ti sata cullakammaṃ appadhāna-cikicchāvidhi
13. Dūtāriṭṭha	17	Bhisakkaṃ ānetuṃ arahati evaṃ ābādhakassa tārisa-rogalakkhaṇa-visayā
14. Gamanāriṭṭha	22	Gamanakāle rogalakkhaṇa-visayā
15. Supināriṭṭha	30	Supinajanita-rogalakkhaṇa-visayā
16. Uppātāriṭṭha	53	Ābādhikassa pakatiyā viruddhācaraṇato lakkhaṇavisayā
17. Rogāriṭṭha	61	Garukarogānaṃ lakkhaṇāni
18. Rogasāmāñña	22	Sabbarogānaṃ sādharmaṇatikicchā
19. Jara	283	Kāraṇehi saha jarānaṃ (Feaver) paricayā
20. Khayaroga	104	Vividhā khayarogā
21. Sarabheda	20	Kaṇṭhasarassa vividhabhedā
22. Aruci	22	Āhāre aruciyo
23. Hadayāmaya	38	Vividhā hadayarogā
24. Pipāsā	26	Pipāsājanitā rogā

Ganthavibhāgā (-Paddhati)	Gathā- saṃkhyā	Vibhāgantogadhā visayā
25. Chaddi	37	Chaddi vā vividhā vamanarogā (vomiting)
26. Kasana	86	Kāsabhedā (cough)
27. Sasana	44	Sasanajanitā rogā (dyspnoea)
28. Hikkā	42	Hikkābhedā (Hiccup)
29. Atisāra	85	Atisārarogā (Diarrhoea)
30. Gahaṇī	66	Gahaṇiyā (Duodenum) rogā
31. Dunnāma	157	Dunnāmarogā (Piles)
32. Bhagandara	31	Bhaganadararogā (Anal Fistula)
33. Meha	101	Pameho ca sasosa-pilotika (Diabetes with Pustules)
34. Muttaghāta	76	Muttajanitā rogā
35. Upadaṃsa	11	Guyhaṅgarogā (Genital affliction)
36. Mukkharoga	33	Mukkhaveḍḍhanarogā (Scrotal enlargement)
37. Rattapitta	73	Rattapittarogā (Visceral haemorrhage)
38. Gumba	96	Gumbasūlaṃ (Painful abdominal tumour)
39. Udāvatta	57	Vātanito rogaviseso
40. Udara	112	Ambukummena sa udararogā (abdominal enlargement)
41. Kālīma	62	Paṇḍusaṃyutto kālīmarogo (Anemic Juandice)
42. Gopha	47	Gopharogo (Swelling)
43. Vidrabhi	41	Vidrabihirogo (Abscess)
44. Visappa	42	Visapparogo (Erysipelas)
45. Kuṭṭha	125	Kuṭṭharogo (Leprosy)
46. Kimi	26	Kimijanitā rogā (Warm diseases)
47. Vāavyādhi	157	Vājanitarogā
48. Vātonita	69	Vātena ca soṇitena jātā rogā
49. Cakkhuroga	111	Cakkhurogā
50. Sotaroga	20	Sotarogā
51. Nāsāroga	12	Nāsāroga
52. Mukharoga	64	Mukharogā
53. Sīrorogā	49	Sīrorogā
54. Sīpada-galagaṇīya- mālābbuda	36	Sīpadādirogā (Elephantiasis)
55. Masūrikādi- khuddaroga	73	Masūrikādirogā (Viola and etc.)
56. Vaṇabhagga	40	Vaṇānaṃ (Ulcers) ca bhaggānaṃ aṭṭhīnaṃ (fractures) cīcchā

Ganthavibhāgā (-Paddhati)	Gathā- saṃkhyā	Vibhāgantogadhā visayā
57. Apasmāra	45	Yakkhabhūtādīhi jātā rogā
58. Visa	116	Rājila-vicchika-mūsika-lūta-alakkā- iccādīnaṃ visānaṃ cikicchā
59. Kappanta	192	Kadalī, gaḷoci, tintiṇi, ajjunaṃ iccādīnaṃ rasānaṃ (tonic) vivaraṇāni
60. Rasāyana	128	Vividharasānaṃ payogavidhi

Paccavekkhakā Matayojanā

Ayaṃ gantho gāthānibaddho, bhiyyo anuṭṭhubhe pathyāvattādīhi chandehi racito, tathā ca ṭhānesu aññāni'pi chandāni dissante. Yathā Pathyāvattaṃ (1.9), Navipulā (1.11), katthaci chappādayuttā gāthā (1. 18, 20, 22-24), katthaci Tuṭṭhabho (21.159-62), Indavajirā (6.60), Mālinī (10.103), Saddūlavikīlitaṃ (11.24), Ariyā (10.23-47) iccādīni. Yadipi lipikārapamādena bhiyyo vutti na rakkhitā. Imasmiṃ ganthe vividha-āyurveda-ganthā ullikhitā, yathā Hadayāmayapaddhatiyaṃ Āssinasamhitā (23.13-16), Kharanāda (23.17), Vararuca (23.18-19), Hārīto (23.20), Mahākassapīyo (23.21-22), Amatamālā (23.23) iccādayo.

Araddhaganthassa ante Ācariyo Vimalendukumāro cha sūciyo sannidhāpesi. Tesu, Sāmaññasūciyaṃ, vividha-bhesajja-pādapānaṃ sūcī, Vanaspatisūciyaṃ

ullikhitavanspati sūcī, Pasusūciyaṃ ullikhitapasūnaṃ sūcī, Rogasūciyaṃ rogānaṃ sūcī, Bhesajjavivaraṇasūciyaṃ ettha vaṇṇitānaṃ bhesajjānaṃ sūcī ca Paṭhama-gāthā-pādasūciyaṃ sabbagāthānaṃ paṭhamapādā vaṇṇamālānusārena sajjitā. Sāmaññasūcī ca vanaspatisūcī ādī sūci kevalaṃ aṭṭhārāsa-paddhatiyo pariyantaṃ kata. Sace samaggasaṭṭhi-paddhatīnaṃ uddiṭṭhavisaye saṃgayahanti tadā ati suṭṭho hoti.

Ete ganthassa ajjhayane ca sodhakammaṇi savisesā sahāyakā. Yadipi Romakakkhare ca Sīhalādīsu akkharesu gantho'yaṃ muddāpito, tathāpi ettāvātā kuṭṭrā'pi Bhāratīyakkharesu nā'yaṃ muddāpito. Tena Devanāgarakkhare muddāpanato Bhāratīya-vijjānurāgīsu visesato Pālibhāsāya tathā Buddhasāsane Āyurvedassa payogasamiddhatāvisaye sammāvadhānaṃ ca tasmīṃ sodhakiccāni anena sādhayissate. Evametaṃ amhe āsiṃsāma.

BOOK REVIEW

**Kumar Bimalendra, *Bhesajjamañjusā*, Delhi: Buddhist World Press.
2019. Xxxvii + 601 pp. ISBN 978-9-3808-5291-1. Rs. 3000.**

Animesh Prakash*

Ancient wisdom whether it was Greek, Indian, or even a sub-continental, they nourished us in multi-dimensional ways. Their philological and other contributions have been the inspiration for the seekers, who wish to comprehend their knowledge and presents an application for the ample benefit of many. There were many awakened people, out of compassion, who wrote their knowledge down for the advancement of the upcoming generations. Learned people, for many centuries, have been trying to discern that huge corpus of texts in their respective discipline. Such a text is the *Bhesajjamañjusā* (BhM), which was written in 13th century CE in Srilanka, the only medical treatise written in Pāli verses. Scholars and learners have been suggesting the possible name of the author of this text. However, the author is yet unknown, as it seems.

Professor Bimalendra Kumar's present work, consisting sixty chapters, is the first Devanāgarī edition of the BhM based on Jinadasa Liyanaratne's Roman edition of the text. Moreover, an English translation of the same text—in two volumes with a title *The Casket of Medicine*, has been published from the Pali Text Society (PTS), London. This book is also available in Burmese and Thai script, as it was transmitted from Sri Lanka to Southeast countries. The last part of this book makes this edition so efficient, which consist of six categories of indices— general index (Chs. 1-22), index of flora (Chs. 1-18), index of fauna

(Chs. 1-18), index of disease (Chs. 1-18), index of medicine (Chs. 1-18), and an index for the first *pada* of the verses in an alphabetical order (Chs. 1-18).

This edition is forwarded by Professor Dipak Kumar Barua, A well-known former Professor of Pāli at University of Calcutta. He lucidly discusses the text and critically analyses the possible author of BhM. He also shows the literary Buddhist-style of the texts: firstly paying homage to the Buddha, the teacher and talks about *Nibbāna*. At the end, he briefly mentions the topics, which are discussed in all the sixty chapter along with number of verses.

On the other hand, Professor Kumar, in the introductory part of the book, elaborates about the date and authorship of the treatise (xvii-xx); a more detailed content of first eighteen chapters (xx-xxvi); the concept of good living (xxvi-xxx), which is nothing but a sort of diagnosis or a way to remove the root of all diseases; importance of BhM (xxx-xxxiii) and the methodology he used for the BhM (xxxiii-xxxiv). The editor, for the sake of Hindi/non-Hindi learner, gives bilingual introduction. The 18-page introduction in English along with 10-page introduction in Hindi provides a better understanding and ideas to the learner about the BhM. There are some scribal errors or typographical errors in this edition, which usually happens in the first edition. Hope those errors will be corrected in the second edition.

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BhM may be divided into two major parts—from chapter 1 to 18 and chapter 19 to 60—which informs about the fundamentals of traditional medicines in the former and the latter part comprises of aetiology and therapy. If we minutely comprehend the structure of these two major parts, we get to know that this is the complete system of medicine i.e., it describes all essential facets of medicine viz. general principle, pathology, diagnosis, anatomy, sensorial prognosis, and therapeutics.

Medicine (*bhesajja*) is regarded as one of the four necessities of life along with cloth (*cīvara*), food (*piṇḍapāta*), and lodge (*senāsana*). Having renounced from the homely life, Siddhartha realizes the importance of a good health in attaining the supreme bliss, the *Nibbāna*. The Bhesajjakkhandhaka of the *Mahāvagga*, Vinaya piṭaka briefly mentions about the medicine, diseases, their remedies, and surgery. However, Pāli canon speaks of five types of medicines, which are prescribed to have a good health—*imāni kho pañca bhesajjāni, seyyathidaṃ—sappi, navanītaṃ, telaṃ, madhu, phāṇitaṃ*. This treatise is based on the Buddhist teachings, which emphasizes the removal of the root of diseases by right livelihood with morality and good health.

Early Pāli canon speaks of two diseases: physical (*kāyiko*) and mental (*cetasiko*)—*Dveme bhikkhave rogā. Katame dve? Kāyiko ca rogo cetasiko ca rogo.* (AN 4.157) BhM also mentions the similar concept. I quote: *dvibādhā manokāya* (1.18). Moreover, Nd (I.10, 13-14) classifies physical illness along with their causes. Those eight categories are as follows: *pittasamuṭṭhāna, semhasamuṭṭhāna, vātasamuṭṭhāna, sannipāīkā, utupariṇāmaja, visamaparihāraja, opakkamika, and kammavipākaja*. BhM consists all essential facets of modern medicine along with a description how to be free from any disease. It says a well-behaving person, who is sagacious, does not incline to sensual passion,

does charity, sees everyone with one-eye without any differentiation, truthful, keeps patience, and seeks good company will always be free from any diseases. *Niccaṃ hitāhāravihārasevī samkikkhakārī visayesvasatto, dātā samo saccaparo khamāvā garūpasevī ca bhavatyā arogā.* (4.20)

Let us see some verses, which justifies various factors of modern medicines.

In the very first chapter, the definition of two types of illnesses are given. For the general principle of diseases, it is said that mental illnesses are born of three unwholesome roots, the basis of all unwholesome act whether it is bodily, mental or vocal. They are attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). However, bodily illnesses are related to fever, leprosy etc.

Dvidhābādhā manokāya-vasenetesu mānasā, Lobhadosādayī tesam tikicchā āgamoditā, Sarīrā jarakuṭṭhādi tesam ettha bhisajjitam. (1.18)

It is very logical and interesting Buddhist theory that one should develop opposite state of mind if one feels any unwholesome or negative factor in oneself. The same is applied for the removal of diseases in the same chapter. It says, not to worry about the negative factors but development of wholesome factor or the opposite to unwholesome in mandatory. Therefore, diligence or mindfulness is the basis of right dhamma. *Dhammapada* also says *appamādo amataṃ padaṃ.* (v.21) One can dwell with happiness and good health through 10 wholesome deeds.

Rogassa Cāciriṭṭhāna devānaṃ anukūlatā, Kriyā ca dasapuññānaṃ sukhssiddhinibandhanaṃ. (1.101)

Pathology (*rogalakkhaṇavijjā*) is the branch of medicine, which investigate the clues to medicine and finds the nature, characteristics,

origin, and talks about the process to diagnose of diseases. BhM suggest that a physician should be skilled in recognizing the nature of diseases with their cause, and he should be capable to see the auspicious and inauspicious sign of breathing. Indigestion is the beginning of all diseases, they are fourfold.

Pabhavo sabbarogānaṃ ajiṇṇaṃ aggisādanaṃ, Āmbambilassathambha-lakkhaṇaṃ catubbidhaṃ. (9.1)
Ñeyyaṃ subāsubhaṃ vāṃ-dakkhiṇassitavdūtato, Pavesā niggamā ca ṭṭa-ghānanissitavāyuno. (13.2)
Vātā pittā kaphā taṇhā sannipātā rasakkhayā, Chaṭṭi siyopasaggā ca vātapittāni kāraṇaṃ. (24.1)

The right treatment depends upon an accurate diagnosis (*roganirupana*). Although, we follow right livelihood, do good, we can overcome diseases. Besides, there are some diseases, in which we need to have medicine, our nature becomes incapable in curing. Therefore, without a proper diagnosis treatment of disease is impossible. Correct diagnosis means that the underlying cause of the unfavorable symptoms and the pathology produced by it are clearly known. We can find diagnosis and treatment in the following verses:

Two types of poison:

Thāvaram jagamañceti viṣaṃ dvividhmuccate, Paṭhamammūlapattādi aparaṃ sappādi sambhavaṃ. (58.1)

For better eyesight:

Tīphalā ayarajo yaṭṭhi sappi kuddakasamyuta, dinante silitā vassā sabba nettagadāpahā. (46.15)

Treatment of poisons:

Nīlikarañjabāijānaṃ kakkamajjena pāyaye. vinassati viṣaṃ sabbaṃ bhānunā ava mahā tamo. (58.72)
kadalīkāravallinaṃ kandaṃ lājāsamanvitaṃ, lūte limpe viṣaṃ sabbaṃ viṣappañca vināsaye. (58.92)

Anatomy (*sarīravicchedavijjā*) The study of human anatomy is very important from a practical or temporal point of view. A physician has to study the anatomy in many ways, such as relation to form, position, shape and other creations.

Rasāsūkā ca sampuṭṭhā siyā sopho visappa vā, Bhusumā lohitābhāso bhūyas pīṭtalakkhaṇo. (42.18)
Pīṭetvā dhamanī vuddhiṃ karoti phalakosajaṃ, Dosāssamedamuttantavasāvuddhī tu sattadhā. (36.1)

Based on the sensory response, prediction is also made.

Sahasā jāyate yassa vikāro sabbalakkhaṇo, Nivattate vā sahasā sahasā so vinassati. (16.53)
Bhatti sīlaṃ satī cāgo balaṃ buddhi ahetukaṃ, Chaḷetāni nivattanti chammāsaṃ taṃ jīvitaṃ. (16.51)

In this way, we can see that BhM speaks of all facets of medicine and discusses all diseases caused by *pitta*, *semha*, *vāta*, *sannipātikā*, *utu*, *visa*, *opakkam*, and *kammavipāka*. All credit goes to Sri Lanka, where this important text was preserved. Although, we do not know the tradition or the system of medical study in Theravāda Buddhism in India but through this book we have an opportunity to analyze each word of this treatise; compare with other available medical texts written in Sanskrit.

BhM is less studied by scholars and we do not find any work in Hindi. Professor Kumar has sown the seed in Devanāgarī script, the only edition in Indian languages, which must sprout in a form of Hindi translation in coming future. It is my great pleasure to introduce this text through this review. The better understanding of this treatise, surely, make us free from diseases.

May all be happy and healthy!

BOOK REVIEW

De Silva Lily, Pāli Primer, Vipassana Research Institute, Dhammagiri,
Igatpuri, Reprint version, 2012, Price: Rs. 95.00, ISBN: 978-81-7414-014-X.

Sharmistha Chakraborty*

‘Pāli Primer’ written by Lily de Silva is an ideal book for the students of the Pali language.

The book contains thirty two lessons with an exercise after each lesson with its key at the end of the book. The book starts from the Declensions of masculine nouns ending in – *a* in Lesson 1 and the all other declensional formations from nominative singular to vocative plural have been dealt in other preliminary chapters up to the eighth. Consequently the gerund, infinitive and participles are dealt in next three chapters. The conjugation of verbs along with tenses and moods and the participles of present and future bases are also discussed in elaborative manner. The other chapters are mostly based on the declensions of feminine nouns ending with *ā*, *ī* and *ū*; and neuter nouns with *a*, *i*, *u*. In other chapters other declensions of adjectives as well as pronouns are given with ample examples. The book is ended with some appendices with the list of Pali verbs, Pali vocabulary and Glossary.

The subject matters have been arranged with linguistic pattern. In formation of sentences the primary necessity is to know about the subject as well as the verb. So the author, keeping this view in mind, has formulated it for the Pali learners. Any language starts with the alphabet. So the Pali alphabets, both vowels and consonants, are given in tabular form. Being one of the Middle Indo- Aryan languages, Pali has great affinity with Prakrit. In each lesson the author has given a list of vocabulary. The exercises based on translation from Pali to English and English to Pali are the main feature of the book. The beauty of the Pali grammar of Kaccāyana and Moggalāna is that these are written in the Pali language. The traditional approach of these grammars has been transformed into linguistic method. And in this aspect Pāli Primer is an excellent piece of work.

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