

What Buddhism Is

Three Lectures by Sayagyi U Ba Khin



Electronic Publishers Notice: This work has been republished by Pariyatti as an electronic publication.

Questions or comments regarding this electronic publication can be addressed to: treasures@pariyatti.org

For other Pariyatti Treasures, please visit:
www.pariyatti.org/treasures



PARIYATTI

867 Larmon Road
Onalaska, WA 98570 USA
360.978.4998
www.pariyatti.org

Pariyatti is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the world by:

- Disseminating the words of the Buddha
- Providing sustenance for the seeker's journey
- Providing sustenance for the seeker's journey

This Ebook is based on the booklet issued by The Union Buddha Sāsana Council Press which states: With the kind permission of Thray Sithu U Ba Khin Accountant General, Burma, (Rtd.), (Author), there is no copyright to this booklet, and the contents may be republished without prior permission being obtained.

Preface

The following are a series of lectures given by Thray Sithu U Ba Khin, President of the Vipassanā Association which founded the International Meditation Centre. He was then the Accountant – General of Burma and the lectures were given in the premises of the Methodist Church, Signal Pagoda Pond, Rangoon, at the request of a religious study Group headed by Messrs. Gerald F. Winfield, Information Officer and Roger C. Thorpe, Economic & Finance Officer of the Special Technical and Economic Division of the United States of America—Editor.

Contents

Preface	ii
Lecture No. 1 (September 23, 1951)	1
The Universe	3
Six <i>Deva Lokas</i> (or Celestial Worlds):	4
The Human World	4
The four Lower Worlds (<i>Apaya</i>):	4
The Preparation to Become a Buddha	5
The Great Renunciation	8
The Search for Truth	9
The Attainment of Buddhahood	10
Lecture No. 2 (September 30, 1951)	13
The Teachings of the Buddha	14
The Path Leading to the Extinction of Suffering	19
Lecture No. 3 (October 14, 1951)	26
The Law of Dependent Origination	26
The Law of Cause and Effect	29
Vipassana Courses	37
About Pariyatti	38

Lecture No. 1 (September 23, 1951)

I consider it a great privilege to be in your midst today and to have this opportunity of addressing you on the subject of What Buddhism Is. At the outset, I must be very frank with you. I have not been to a university and I have no knowledge of science except as a man in the street. Nor am I a scholar in the theory of Buddhism with any knowledge of Pāli, the language in which the *Tipiṭakas* (literally, the “Three Baskets” of *Buddha-Dhamma*) are maintained. I may say, however, that I have read in Burmese to some extent the treatises on Buddhism by well-known and learned Buddhist monks. As my approach to Buddhism is more by practical than by theoretical means, I hope to be able to give you something of Buddhism which is not easily available elsewhere. I must admit, however, that for the time being I am just a student of practical Buddhism, an experimentalist trying to learn through Buddhism the truth of the nature of forces. As this has to be done as a householder and within a limited time available in between the multifarious duties of a responsible officer of Government, the progress is rather slow and I do not claim for a moment that what I am going to say is absolutely correct. I may be right or wrong. But when I say a thing, I assure you that it is with a sincerity of purpose, with the best of intentions and with conviction.

The Lord Buddha said in the *Kālāma Sutta*^[1]:

“Do not believe in what you have heard; do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations; do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and spoken by many; do not believe merely because a written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth to which you have become attached from habit; do not believe merely the authority of your teachers and elders. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the

[1] Gradual Sayings, I, pp. 171f. References, unless otherwise specified, are to the publications of the Pāli Text Society.

good and gain of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

Pray do not, therefore, believe me when I come to the philosophical issues until and unless you are convinced of what I say, either as a sequel to proper reasoning or by means of a practical approach.

*To abstain from evil,
To do good,
To purify the mind,
These are the teachings of all the Buddhas.*

– Dhammapada, verse 14

This extract taken from the Dhammapada gives in brief the essence of Buddhism. It sounds simple, but is so difficult to practise. One cannot be a true Buddhist unless one puts the doctrine of the Buddha into practice. The Buddha said^[2]:

“You, to whom the truths I have perceived have been made known by me, make them truly your own, practise them, meditate upon them, spread them abroad: in order that the pure religion may last long and be perpetuated for the good and the gain and the well-being of gods and men.”

Before I take up the teachings of the Buddha, which form the basic foundation of Buddhism, I propose to acquaint you, first of all, with the life story of Gotama Buddha. For this purpose, I feel it is my duty to give you a background of certain Buddhist concepts which may be foreign to most of you. I propose, therefore, to give you a short descriptive explanation of such concepts in Buddhism as the Universe, the World-system, the planes of existence, etc. These will, no doubt, give you some food for thought. I would, however, appeal to you to give a patient hearing and to pass over these matters for the time being, i.e., until we come to the question time for discussion.

[2] See the Buddha's instructions to his first disciples in The Book of the Discipline, IV, p. 28.

The Universe

The Buddhist concept of the Universe may be summed up as follows: There is the *Okāsa Loka* (the Universe of Space) which accommodates *Nāma* and *Rūpa* (Mind and Matter). In this mundane world, it is *Nāma* and *Rūpa* (Mind and Matter) which predominate under the influence of the law of Cause and Effect. Next is the *Saṅkhāra Loka* (the Universe of Mental Forces), creative or created. This is a mental plane arising out of the creative energies of Mind through the medium of bodily actions, words and thoughts. The third and last is the *Satta Loka* (the Universe of Sentient Beings) visible or invisible, beings that are the products of these mental forces; we may rather call these three the “Three-in-One” universe, because each is inseparable from the others. They are, so to speak, interwoven and interpenetrating.

What will interest you most are the *Cakkavālas* or World-systems, each with its thirty-one planes of existence. Each World-system corresponds to the Human World with its solar system and other planes of existence. There are millions and millions of such World-systems; they are simply innumerable. The ten thousand World-systems closest to us are within the *Jāti-khetta* (or the Field of Origin) of a Buddha. In fact, when the renowned Sutta (or discourse), the *Mahā-Samaya* (meaning the “Great Occasion”) was preached by the Buddha in the *Mahāvana* (forest) near the town of Kapilavatthu, not only the Brahmas and *Devas* of our World-system but of all the ten thousand World-systems were present to listen to the teachings of the Buddha^[3].

The Lord Buddha can also send his thought-waves charged with boundless love and compassion to the sentient beings of a billion such World-systems within the *Ānākhetta* (the Field of Influence). The remainder of the World – systems are in the *Visaya-khetta* (infinite space), beyond the reach of the Buddha’s effective thought waves. You can very well imagine from these concepts of Buddhism the size of the Universe as a

[3] This Sutta is found in Dialogues of the Buddha, II, pp. 284-293.

whole. The material insignificance of our World in the *Okāsa Loka* (the Universe of Space) is simply terrifying. The Human World, as a whole, must be just a speck in space.

Now I will give you an idea of the thirty-one planes of existence in our World-system, which, of course, is the same as in any of the other World-systems. Broadly speaking, they are:

- *Arūpa Loka* The Immaterial Worlds of the Brahmas
- *Rūpa Loka* The Fine-material Worlds of the Brahmas
- *Kāma Loka* The Sensuous Worlds of Devas, mankind and lower beings.

The *Arūpa Loka* is composed of four Brahma Worlds of immaterial state, i.e., without *Rūpa* or Matter. The *Rūpa Loka* is composed of sixteen Brahma Worlds of fine-material state. The *Kāma Loka* is composed of:

Six *Deva Lokas* (or Celestial Worlds):

1. *Catumahārājika* (the World of the Four Guardian Kings)
2. *Tāvatiṃsā* (the World of the Thirty-three)
3. *Yāmā*
4. *Tusitā*
5. *Nimmānarati* (those who enjoy their own creations)
6. *Paranimmīta-vasavattī* (those who enjoy others' creations)

The Human World

The four Lower Worlds (*Apaya*):

1. *Niraya* (Hell)
2. *Tiracchana* (Animal World)
3. *Peta* (Ghost World)
4. *Asurā* (Demon World)

These planes of existence are pure or impure, cool or hot, luminous or dark, light or heavy, pleasant or wretched — ac-

ording to the character of the mental forces generated by the Mind through the volition (*Cetanā*) associated with a series of actions, words and thoughts. For example, take the case of a religious man who suffuses the whole universe of beings with boundless love and compassion. He must be generating such mental forces as are pure, cooling, luminous, light and pleasant, forces which normally settle down in the Brahma Worlds. Let us now take the reverse case of a man who is dissatisfied or angry. As the saying goes, “The face reflects the mind.” The impurity, heat, darkness, heaviness and wretchedness of his mind are immediately reflected in the person — visible even to the naked eye. This is due, I may say, to the generation of the evil mental forces of *Dosa* (anger) which go down to the lower worlds of existence. This is also the case for the mental forces arising out of *Lobha* (greed) or *Moha* (delusion). In the case of meritorious deeds such as devotion, morality and charity, which have at their base attachment to future well-being, the mental forces generated are such as will normally be located in the sensuous planes of *Devas* (celestial beings) and of Mankind. These, ladies and gentlemen, are some of the concepts in Buddhism relevant to the life story of Gotama Buddha.

The Preparation to Become a Buddha

Gotama Buddha is the fourth of the five Buddhas^[4] to rise in the World – cycle which is known as a *Bhadda Kappa* (an auspicious world-cycle). His predecessors were the Buddhas Kakusanda, Konāgamana and Kassapa. There were also innumerable Buddhas who arose in earlier world-cycles and who preached the very same *Dhamma* that gives deliverance from suffering and death to all matured beings. Buddhas are all compassionate, glorious and enlightened. A hermit by the name of Sumedhā was inspired by Buddha Dīpaṅkara — so much so, that he took the vow to make all the necessary preparations to become a Buddha in the course of time.

[4] For more details concerning past Buddhas, the ascetic Sumedhā’s vow to become a Buddha, and Buddha Gotama’s life, see *The Clarifier of the Sweet Meaning* (the commentary on *The Chronicle of Buddhas*).

Buddha Dīpaṅkara gave him his blessings and prophesied that he would become a Buddha by the name of Gotama after a lapse of four incalculable periods^[5] of world-cycles plus one hundred thousand world-cycles (*Kappas*). From then onwards, existence after existence, the *Bodhisatta* (future Buddha) conserved mental energies of the highest order through the practice of the ten *Pāramitās* (or *Pāramīs*, Virtues leading toward Perfection):

1. *Dana Pāramī* – Virtue in Alms-giving (or generosity)
2. *Sīla Pāramī* – Morality
3. *Nekkhamma Pāramī* – Renunciation
4. *Paññā Pāramī* – Wisdom
5. *Vīriya Pāramī* – Great effort (or perseverance)
6. *Khanti Pāramī* – Forbearance (or patience)
7. *Saccā Pāramī* – Truthfulness
8. *Adhiṭṭhāna Pāramī* – Determination
9. *Mettā Pāramī* – All-embracing Love
10. *Upekkhā Pāramī* – Equanimity

It is, therefore, a most arduous task to become a Buddha. Utmost strength of will-power is necessary even to think of it. The Bodhisatta's preparatory period came to an end with the life of King Vessantarā^[6] who excelled any living being in Alms-giving. He gave away his kingdom, his wife and his children and all his worldly possessions, for the consummation of his solemn vow taken before the Buddha Dīpaṅkara. The next existence was in the *Tusitā* (celestial plane) as the glorious Deva Setaketu, until he got his release from that plane of existence and took conception in the womb of Māyā Devī, the queen of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu, a place near modern Nepal. When time was drawing near for her confinement, the queen expressed her desire to go to the place

[5] An “incalculable” (*asankheyya*) is equal to a number equivalent to a “1” followed by 140 ciphers.

[6] See Jataka Stories, no 547.

of her own parents for the event. King Suddhodana accordingly sent her there with a befitting retinue and guards. On the way, a halt was made at the Lumbīni Grove. She descended from her palanquin and enjoyed the cool breeze and fragrance of Sal flowers. While holding out her right hand to a branch of a nearby Sal tree for a flower, all of a sudden and unexpectedly, she gave birth to a son who was to become the All-Enlightened Buddha. Simultaneously, the natural order of things in the cosmos was revolutionized in many respects and thirty-two wonderful phenomena were vivified. All material worlds were shaken from their foundation up. There were unusual illuminations in the solar system. All the beings of the material planes could see each other. The deaf and dumb were cured. Celestial music was heard everywhere, and so on.

At that moment, Kāladevala, the hermit teacher of King Suddhodana, was discoursing with the celestial beings of the Tāvātimsā Deva world. He was a hermit of fame who had mastered the eight attainments (*Samapattis*) which gave him super-normal powers. Learning of the birth of a son to the king in the midst of the rejoicing in all the *Rūpa* and *Kāma* worlds, he hurried back to the palace and desired the baby to be brought before him for his blessings. As the king was about to place the baby before his teacher for the occasion, a marvel took place. The baby rose into the air and rested his tiny feet on the head of Kāladevala who at once understood that the baby was no other than the Embryonic Buddha. He smiled at this knowledge, but cried almost immediately thereafter, because he foresaw that he would not live to hear his teachings, and that after his death, he would be in the *Arūpa Brahma Loka* (the Immaterial Planes of the Brahmas) whence he would have no relationship with any of the material planes. He regretted bitterly that he would miss the Buddha and his teachings.

On the fifth day, the child was named Siddhattha in the presence of renowned astrologer-palmists who agreed that the child had all the characteristics of a Buddha-to-be. His mother, the queen, however, died a week after her confine-

ment, and the child was taken care of by his maternal aunt, Pajāpati-Gotami. Siddhattha spent his early years in ease, luxury and culture. He was acclaimed to be a prodigy in both intellect and strength. The king spared no pains to make the course of his life smooth. Three separate palaces were built to suit the three seasons (hot, cold, and rainy) with all the necessities that would make the prince sink in sensuality. That was because the king, out of paternal affection, desired his son to remain in worldly life as a king rather than become an Enlightened Buddha. King Suddhodana was ever watchful that his son should be in an environment that would give him no chance for higher philosophical ideas. In order to make sure that the thoughts of the prince would never turn in this direction, he ordered that nobody serving him or in his association was ever to speak a single word about such things as old age, sickness or death. They were to act as if there were no unpleasant things in this world. Servants and attendants who showed the least sign of growing old, weak or sickly were replaced. On the other hand, there was dancing, music and enjoyable parties right through, to keep him under a complete shade of sensuality.

The Great Renunciation

As days, months and years passed, however, the monotony of the sensual surroundings gradually lost their hold over the mind of Prince Siddhatta. The mental energies of virtue conserved in all his earlier innumerable lives for the great goal of Buddhahood were automatically aroused. At times, when the world of sensuality lost control over his mind, his inner self worked its way up and raised his mind to a state of purity and tranquillity with the strength of *Samādhi* (concentration) such as had raised his baby form into space and onto the head of Kāladevala. The war of nerves began. An escape from sensuality and passion was his first consideration. He wanted to know what existed outside the walls of the palace, for he had not gone out even once. He wished to see Nature as it is and not as man has made it. Accordingly, he decided to see the Royal Park, outside the palace walls. On the way to the park,

in spite of the precautions taken by the king to get the roads clear of unpleasant sights, he saw an old man bent with age on the very first visit. Next he saw a sick person in the agony of a fatal malady. Thereafter he met with a human corpse. On the last trip he came across a monk. All these predisposed his mind to serious thinking. His mental attitude was changed. His mind became clear of impurities and tuned up with the forces of his own virtues conserved in the *Saṅkhāra Loka* (the plane of mental forces). By then his mind had become freed from hindrances, was tranquil, pure and strong. It all happened on the night when a son was born to his wife, a new fetter to bind him down. He was, however, immune to anything which would tend to upset the equilibrium of his mind. The virtues of determination worked their way for a strong resolve and he made up his mind to seek the way of escape from birth, old age, suffering and death. It was midnight when the solemn determination was made. He asked his attendant Channa to keep his stallion Khanthaka ready. After a parting look at his wife and the newly born babe, Prince Siddhattha broke away from all the ties of family and of the world and made the Great Renunciation. He rode across the town to the river Anoma, which he crossed, never to return until his mission had been achieved.

The Search for Truth

After this Great Renunciation, Prince Siddhattha went around in search of possible teachers in the garb of a wandering ascetic with a begging bowl in his hand. He placed himself under the spiritual guidance of two renowned Brahman teachers, Āḷara and Uddaka. Āḷara laid stress on the belief in the *atman* (soul) and taught that the soul attained perfect release when freed from material limitations. This did not satisfy the prince. He next went to Uddaka who emphasized too much the effect of *Kamma* (volitional actions) and the transmigration of the soul. Both could not get out of the conception of “soul” and the prince ascetic felt that there was something else to learn. He, therefore, left both of them to work out the way to emancipation on his own. By that time, of course, he

had learned the eight attainments (*Samapattis*) and had become an adept in the exercise of all the supernormal powers including the ability to read events of many world – cycles to come and a similar period of the past. These were all in the mundane field and they did not much concern the prince ascetic, whose ambition had been an escape from this mundane field of birth, suffering and death.

He was joined later by five ascetics, one of whom, Koṇḍañña by name, was the astrologer-palmist who definitely foretold on the fifth day after his birth that he would surely become a Buddha. These ascetics served him well throughout the six years during which he was engaged in fastings and meditation, subjecting himself to various forms of rigorous austerities and discipline till he was reduced to almost a skeleton. In fact, one day, he fell down in a swoon through exhaustion. When he survived this condition, he changed his method, followed a middle course and found the way to his Enlightenment was clearer.

The Attainment of Buddhahood

It was on the eve of the full-moon day of Vesakha^[7] just 2540 years ago [i.e., from 1951] that Prince Siddhattha, a wandering ascetic, sat cross – legged beneath a Bodhi tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā in the Forest of Uruvelā (near present day Buddhagaya) — with the strongest of determinations — not to rise from that posture on any account until he gained the Truth and Enlightenment, Buddhahood — even if the attempt might mean the loss of his very life.

The great event was approaching. The prince ascetic mustered up all his strength of mind to secure that one-pointedness of mind which is so essential for the discovery of Truth. The balancing of the mind, the prince found on this occasion, was not so easy as hitherto. There was not only the combination of the mental forces of the Lower Planes with those of the Higher Planes all around him, but also interferences strong

[7] Or Wesak, the full-moon day of the month of Kason in the Burmese calendar.

enough to upset, off and on, the equilibrium of his mind. The resistance of the impenetrable masses of forces against the radiation of the light normally secured by him was unusual, perhaps because it was a final bid for Buddhahood, and Māra, the supreme controller of evil forces, was behind the scenes. The prince, however, worked his way through slowly but surely, backed up by the mental forces of virtues which must inevitably come back to him at the right moment. He made a vow and called upon all the Brahmas and Devas who had witnessed the fulfilment of his ten great Perfections to join hands with him in the struggle for supremacy. This done, the association with the transcendently pure mental forces of the Brahmas and Devas had salutary effect. The thick masses of forces, which seemed impenetrable for a time, broke away and with steady improvement in the control over the mind, they were wiped out once and for all. All the hindrances having been overcome, the prince was able to raise his power of concentration and put the mind to a state of complete purity, tranquillity and equanimity. Gradually, the consciousness of true insight possessed him. The solution to the vital problems which confronted him made its appearance in his consciousness as an inspiration. By introspective meditation on the realities of nature in his own self, it came vividly to him that there is no substantiality, as there seems to be, in the human body and that it is nothing but the sum total of innumerable millions of *Kalāpas*, each about the size of 1/46,656th part of a particle of dust raised by the wheel of a chariot in summer. On further investigation, he realized that this *Kalāpa* also is matter in constant change or flux. So also with the mind, which is a representation of the mental forces (creative) going out and the mental forces (created) coming into the system of an individual continually and throughout eternity.

The Buddha then proclaimed that the Eye of Wisdom (*Paññā-cakkhu*) arose when he overcame all false perception of substantiality within his own self. He saw by means of the lens of *Samādhi* (concentration) the *Kalāpas* on which he next applied the law of *Anicca* (impermanence) and reduced

them to nonentity or behaviour, doing away with what we, in Buddhism, call *Paññatti* (concept) and coming to a state of *Paramattha*, understanding the nature of forces or, in other words, Ultimate reality.

Accordingly, he came to a realization of the perpetual change of mind and matter in himself (*Anicca*) and as a sequel thereto the Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha*). It was then that the ego-centralism in him broke down into the void and he got over to a stage beyond Suffering (*Dukkha Nirodha*) with no more traces of Atta, or attachment to self, left behind. Mind-and – matter were to him but empty phenomena which roll on forever, within the range of the Law of Cause and Effect and the Law of Dependent Origination. The Truth was realized. The inherent qualities of an Embryonic Buddha then developed and complete Enlightenment came to him by the dawn of Vesakha. Verily, Prince Siddhattha attained *Sammā-Sambodhi* (Supreme Enlightenment) and became the Buddha, the Awakened One, the Enlightened One — the All – Knowing One. He was awake in a way compared with which all others were asleep and dreaming. He was enlightened in a way compared with which all other men were stumbling and groping in the dark. He knew with a knowledge compared with which all that other men knew was but a kind of ignorance.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have taken so much of your time today. I thank you all for your patient listening. I must also thank the clergy of the church for their kind permission given to me for this address.

Lecture No. 2 (September 30, 1951)

Last Sunday I gave you a brief outline — a very brief one too — of the life of our Lord Buddha, up to the moment of his attainment of Buddhahood. I am going to tell you today what his teachings are. Buddhist teachings are preserved in what we call the *Tipiṭakas*, consisting of the *Suttas* (Discourses), the *Vinaya* (the rules of discipline for *Saṅghas*, or monks and nuns) and the *Abhidhamma* (the philosophical Teachings). We have the *Tipiṭakas* in Pāli in several volumes which will require an intelligent Pāli scholar some months just to read through. I propose, therefore, to confine myself today only to essentials, that is to say, the fundamental Truths of Buddhism.

Before Lord Buddha took upon himself the task of spreading his *Dhamma* (Teachings), he remained in silent meditation for a continuous period of 49 days, that is, seven days under the Bodhi tree and seven days each in six other spots nearby, enjoying at times the peace of Supreme *Nibbāna* and at others going deeper in investigation into the most delicate problems of *Paramattha-Dhamma* (Ultimate Realities). On his complete mastery of the law of *Paṭṭhāna* (the Law of Relations), in which the infinite modes of relations between thought moments are also dealt with, there emerged from his body brilliant rays of six colours, which eventually settled down as a halo of six-coloured rays around his head. He passed through this seven-times-seven – days' meditation without food. It is beyond us all to be without food for 49 days. The fact remains that he was throughout the period on a mental plane as distinct from a physical plane, in which mankind normally is. It is not material food that maintains the fine-material existence and life-continuum of beings in the Fine-material Worlds of the Brahmas, but the *Jhānic Pīti*, which in itself is a nutriment. So also was the case with the Buddha, whose existence during this long period was on a mental rather than physical plane. Our experiments in this line of research have firmly convinced us that for a man of such high intellectual and mental development as the Buddha, this is a possibility.

It was the dawn of the 50th day of his Buddhahood when he arose from this long spell of meditation. Not that he was tired or exhausted, but, as he was no longer in the mental plane, he felt a longing for food. At that time, two traders of a foreign land were travelling in several carts loaded with merchandise through the Uruvelā forest. A Deva of the forest who had been their relative in one of their previous existences advised them to take the opportunity of paying homage to the All-Enlightened Buddha who had just arisen from his meditation. They accordingly went to the place where the Buddha was seated, illumined by the halo of six-coloured rays. They could not resist their feelings. They lay prostrate in worship and adoration before the Buddha and later offered preserved rice cakes with honey for the first meal of the Buddha. They were accepted as his lay disciples. On their request that they might be given some tokens for their worship, the Buddha presented them with eight strands of hair from his head. You will be surprised to know that these two traders were Tapassu and Bhallika from Ukkala^[8], which today is known as Rangoon, where you are at this moment. And the renowned Shwedagon, which you all probably have visited, is the Pagoda in which were enshrined all the eight hair-relics of the Buddha under the personal direction of the then ruler of Ukkala, 2540 years ago. It has been preserved and renovated till now by successive Buddhist kings and devout laymen. Unfortunately, however, these two traders of Ukkala, who had the privilege of becoming the first lay disciples of the Buddha, were disciples only by faith, without a taste of the *Buddha-Dhamma* in actual practice, which alone would give them deliverance from suffering and death. Faith is, no doubt, a preliminary requisite, but it is the practice of the Teachings which really counts. The Buddha therefore said, “The Path must be trod by each individual; Buddhas do but point the Way.”^[9]

The Teachings of the Buddha

[8] In Burma, usually spelled Okkala.

[9] See *Dhammapada*, verse 276.

Buddhism is not a religion according to the dictionary meaning^[10] of the word religion because it has no centre in god, as is the case in all other religions. Strictly speaking, Buddhism is a system of philosophy co-ordinated with a code of morality, physical and mental. The goal in view is the extinction of suffering and death.

The Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha in his first sermon, known as the *Dhamma-cakka-pavattana Sutta* (the Discourse to set in motion the Wheel of *Dhamma*) form the basis on which is founded this system of philosophy. In fact, the first three of the Four Noble Truths expound the philosophy of the Buddha, while the fourth (the Eightfold Noble Path which is a code of morality-cum-philosophy) serves as a means to the end. This first sermon was given to the five ascetics led by Koṇḍañña, who were his early companions in search of the Truth. Koṇḍañña was the first disciple of the Buddha in practice to become an Arahat (a Noble One who has gone beyond the limitations of all fetters).

Now we come to the Four Noble Truths. They are:

1. *Dukkha Saccā* – The Truth of Suffering
2. *Samudaya Saccā* – The Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. *Nirodha Saccā* – The Truth of the Extinction of Suffering
4. *Magga Saccā* – The Truth of the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering

To come to a complete understanding of the fundamental

[10] The Oxford English Dictionary gives among its definitions of religion: “Action or conduct indicating a belief in, reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power; the exercise or practice of rites or observances implying this. ... Recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence, and worship ...” The transferred usage given is closer to the way the word may be correctly applied to Buddhism: “Devotion to some principle ...” But even so, it is important to exclude any idea of a creative and controlling god or principle behind the existence of the universe. Buddhism only recognizes that the functioning of mind and matter can be understood as it follows the fixed law of cause and effect. The *Dhamma* in its highest sense is this Truth, which is rediscovered by each Buddha and taught by him.

concepts in the philosophy of the Buddha, emphasis is laid on the need for the realisation of the Truth of Suffering. To bring home this point, Lord Buddha tackled the problem from two different angles.

Firstly, by a process of reasoning. He made his disciples feel that life is a struggle, life is suffering; birth is suffering; old age is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. The influence of sensuality is, however, so strong in mankind that people are normally apt to forget this themselves, to forget the price they have to pay. Just think for a moment how life exists in the pre-natal period; how from the moment of birth the child has to struggle for existence; what preparations he has to make to face life; how, as a man, he has to struggle till he breathes his last. You can very well imagine what life is. Life is indeed suffering. The more one is attached to self, the greater is the suffering. In fact, the pains and sufferings a man has to undergo are suppressed in favour of momentary sensual pleasures which are but occasional spotlights in the darkness. Were it not for the *Moha* (delusion) which keeps him away from the Truth, he would surely have worked out his way to emancipation from the rounds of life, suffering and death.

Secondly, the Buddha made it known to his disciples that the human body is composed of *Kalāpas* (subatomic units), each dying out simultaneously as it comes into being. Each *Kalāpa* is a mass formed of the following nature elements:

1. *Pathavi* – Extension (literally, earth)
2. *Āpo* – Cohesion (lit., water)
3. *Tejo* – Radiation (lit., heat and cold)
4. *Vāyo* – Motion (lit., air)
5. *Vaṇṇa* – Colour
6. *Gandha* – Smell
7. *Rasa* – Taste
8. *Ojā* – Nutritive essence

The first four are called *Mahā-Bhūtas*, i.e., essential material qualities which are predominant in a *Kalāpa*. The other four are merely subsidiaries which are dependent upon and born out of the former. A *Kalāpa* is the minutest particle noticeable in the physical plane. It is only when the eight nature elements (which have merely the characteristic of behaviour) are together that the entity of a *Kalāpa* is formed. In other words, the coexistence of these eight nature elements of behaviour makes a mass which, in Buddhism, is known as a *Kalāpa*. These *Kalāpas*, according to the Buddha, are in a state of perpetual change or flux. They are nothing but a stream of energies, just like the light of a candle or an electric bulb. The body, as we call it, is not an entity as it seems to be, but a continuum of matter with the coexisting life-force.

To a casual observer, a piece of iron is motionless. The scientist knows that it is composed of electrons, etc., all in a state of perpetual change or flux. If it is so with a piece of iron, what will be the case for a living organism, say a human being? The changes that are taking place inside the human body must be more violent. Does man feel the rocking vibrations within himself? Does the scientist who knows that all is in a state of change or flux ever feel that his own body is but energy and vibration? What will be the repercussion on the mental attitude of the man who introspectively sees that his own body is mere energy and vibration? To quench thirst one may just easily drink a glass of water from a village well. Supposing his eyes are as powerful as microscopes, he would surely hesitate to drink the very same water in which he must see the magnified microbes. So also, when one comes to a realization of the perpetual change within oneself (i.e., *Anicca* or Impermanence), one must necessarily come to the understanding as a sequel thereto of the Truth of Suffering as the consequence of the sharp sense of feeling of the radiation, vibration and friction of the subatomic units within. Indeed, life is suffering, both within and without, to all appearances and in ultimate reality.

When I say, Life is suffering, as the Buddha taught, please be

so good as not to run away with the idea that, if that is so, life is miserable, life is not worth living, and that the Buddhist concept of suffering is a terrible concept which will give you no chance of a reasonably happy life. What is happiness? For all that science has achieved in the field of materialism, are the peoples of the world happy? They may find sensual pleasure off and on, but in their heart of hearts they are not happy concerning what has happened, what is happening and what may happen next. Why? This is because, while man has mastery over matter, he is still lacking in mastery over his mind.

Pleasure born of sensuality is nothing compared with the *Pīti* (or rapture) born of the inner peace of mind which can be secured through a process of Buddhist meditation. Sense pleasures are preceded and followed by troubles and pains, as in the case of a rustic who finds pleasure in cautiously scratching the itches over his body, whereas *Pīti* is free from such troubles and pains either before or after. It will be difficult for you, looking from a sensuous field, to appreciate what that *Pīti* is like. But I know you can enjoy it and have a taste of it for comparative evaluation. There is therefore nothing to the supposition that Buddhism teaches something that will make you feel miserable with the nightmare of suffering. But please take it from me that it will give you an escape from the normal conditions of life, a lotus as it were in a pond of crystal water immune from its fiery surroundings. It will give you that Peace Within which will satisfy you that you are getting not only beyond the day-to-day troubles of life, but slowly and surely beyond the limitation of life, suffering and death.

What then is the Origin of Suffering? The origin of it, the Buddha said, is *Taṇhā* or Craving. Once the seed of desire is sown, it grows into greed and multiplies into craving or lust, either for power or for material gains. The man in whom this seed is sown becomes a slave to these cravings and he is automatically driven to strenuous labours of mind and body to keep pace with them till the end comes. The final result must surely be the accumulation of the evil mental forces generated by his own actions, words and thoughts which are motivated by

Lobha (desire) and *Dosa* (anger) inherent in him. Philosophically again, it is the mental forces of actions (*Saṅkhāra*) which react in the course of time on the person originating them, and which are responsible for this stream of mind and matter, the origin of suffering within.

The Path Leading to the Extinction of Suffering

What then is the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering? The Path is none other than the Noble Eightfold Path taught by the Buddha in his first sermon. This Eightfold Path is divided into three main stages, namely, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*.

Sīla (The Precepts)

1. Right Speech
2. Right Action
3. Right Livelihood

Samādhi (Tranquility of Mind)

4. Right Exertion
5. Right Attentiveness
6. Right Concentration

Paññā (Wisdom, Insight)

7. Right Aspiration
8. Right Understanding

Sīla. The three characteristic aspects of *Sīla* are:

- *Sammā-vācā*: Right Speech
- *Sammā-kammanta*: Right Action
- *Sammā-ājīvā*: Right Livelihood

By Right Speech is meant: Speech which must be true, beneficial and neither foul nor malicious.

By Right Action is meant: The fundamentals of morality, which are opposed to killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and

drunkenness.

By Right Livelihood is meant: A way of living by trades other than those which increase the suffering of all beings — such as slave trading, the manufacture of weapons and traffic in intoxicating drugs.

These represent generally the Code of Morality as initially pronounced by the Buddha in his very first sermon. Later, however, he amplified it and introduced separate codes for the monks and lay disciples.

I need not worry you with what has been prescribed for monks. I will just let you know what the code of morality, or the precepts, for a Buddhist lay disciple is. This is called *Pañca Śīla*, or the Five Precepts, which are:

1. *Pāṇātipātā*: Abstaining from killing any sentient being. (Life is the most precious thing for all beings and in prescribing this precept the Buddha's compassion extends to all beings.)
2. *Adinnādāna*: Abstaining from taking what is not given. (This serves as a check against improper desires for possessions.)
3. *Kāmesu-micchācāra*: Abstaining from sexual misconduct. (Sexual desire is latent in man. This is irresistible to almost all. Unlawful sexual indulgence is therefore something which the Buddha prohibited.)
4. *Musāvāda*: Abstaining from telling lies. (This precept is included to fulfil by way of speech the essence of Truth.)
5. *Surāmeraya*: Abstaining from intoxication. (Intoxication causes a man to lose his steadfastness of mind and the reasoning power so essential for the realization of Truth.)

The *Pañca Śīla* therefore is intended to control actions and words and to serve as a foundation for *Samādhi* (equanimity of mind).

Samādhi. Ladies and gentlemen, we now come to the mental aspect of Buddhism, which I am sure will greatly interest you. In the second stage of the Eightfold Noble Path (*Samādhi*) are included:

- *Sammā-vāyāmā*: – Right Exertion
- *Sammā-sati*: – Right Attentiveness
- *Sammā-samādhi*: – Right Concentration

Right Exertion is, of course, a prerequisite for Right Attentiveness. Unless one makes a determined effort to narrow down the range of thoughts of one's wavering and unsteady mind, one cannot expect to secure that attentiveness of mind which in turn helps one to bring the mind by Right Concentration to a state of One-pointedness and Tranquility (or *Samādhi*). It is here that the mind becomes freed from hindrances — pure and tranquil, illumined within and without. The mind in such a state becomes powerful and bright. Outside, it is represented by light which is just a mental reflex, with the light varying in degrees from that of a star to that of the sun. To be plain, this light which is reflected before the mind's eye in complete darkness is a manifestation of the purity, tranquillity and serenity of the mind.

The Hindus work for it. To go from light into the void and to come back to light is truly Brahmanic. The New Testament, in Matthew, speaks of “a body full of light.” We hear also of Roman Catholic priests meditating regularly for this very miraculous light. The Koran, too, gives prominence to the “Manifestation of Divine Light.”

This mental reflex of light denotes the purity of mind within, and the purity of mind forms the essence of a religious life, whether one be Buddhist, Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Indeed, Purity of Mind is the greatest common denominator of all religions. Love, which alone is a means for the unity of mankind, must be supreme, and it cannot be so unless the mind is transcendently pure. A balanced mind is necessary to

balance the unbalanced minds of others. “As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back.”^[11]

So said the Buddha. Exercise of the mind is just as necessary as exercise of the physical body. Why not, then, give exercise to the mind and make it pure and strong so that you may enjoy the Jhānic Peace Within?

When Inner Peace begins to permeate the mind, you will surely progress in the knowledge of Truth.

Believe it or not, it is our experience that under a proper guide, this Inner Peace and Purity of Mind with light can be secured by one and all irrespective of their religion or creed, provided they have sincerity of purpose and are prepared to submit to the guide for the period of trial.

When by continued practice one has complete mastery over one’s mind, one can enter into Jhānic states (absorption states) and gradually develop oneself to acquire the attainments (*Samāpattis*) which will give one supernormal powers like those exercised by Kāladevala, the hermit teacher of King Suddhodana. This, of course, must be tried with very strict morality and away from human habitations, but it is rather dangerous for those who still have traces of passion in them. Anyway, such a practice, which gives supernormal powers in this mundane field, was not encouraged by the Buddha, whose sole object of developing *Samādhi* was to have the purity and strength of mind essential for the realization of Truth.

We have in Buddhism forty methods of concentration, of which the most outstanding is *Ānāpāna*, that is, concentration on the incoming and outgoing breath, the method followed by all the Buddhas.

Paññā. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now take up the philosophical aspect of Buddhism in the third stage of the Noble

[11] Dhammapada, verse 33.

Eightfold Path, *Paññā* or Insight. The two characteristic aspects of *Paññā* are:

- *Sammā-saṅkappa*: – Right Aspiration (or Right Thought)
- *Sammā-diṭṭhi*: – Right Understanding

Right Understanding of the Truth is the aim and object of Buddhism, and Right Aspiration (or Right Thought) is the analytical study of mind and matter, both within and without, in order to come to a realization of Truth.

You have heard of *Nāma* and *Rūpa* (mind and matter) so many times. I owe you a further explanation.

Nāma is so called because of its tendency to incline towards an object of sense. *Rūpa* is so called because of its impermanence due to perpetual change. The nearest terms in English to *Nāma* and *Rūpa* therefore are mind and matter. I say “nearest” because the meaning is not exact.

Nāma, strictly speaking, is the term applied to the following:

- Consciousness – (*Viññāna*)
- Feeling – (*Vedanā*)
- Perception – (*Saññā*)
- Volitional Energies (or Mental Forces) – (*Saṅkhāra*).
- These, together with *Rūpa* in the material state, make what we call the Pañca-kkhandha or Five Aggregates. It is in these five aggregates that the Buddha has summed up all the mental and physical phenomena of existence, which in reality is a continuum of mind and matter coexisting, but which to a layman is his personality or ego.

In *Sammā-saṅkappa* (Right Aspiration), the disciple, who by then has developed the powerful lens of *Samādhi*, focuses his attention into his own self and by introspective meditation

makes an analytical study of the nature, first of *Rūpa* (Matter) and then of *Nāma* (mind and the mental properties). He feels — and at times he also sees — the *Kalāpas* in their true state. He begins to realize that both *Rūpa* and *Nāma* are in constant change — impermanent and fleeting. As his power of concentration increases, the nature of the forces in him becomes more and more vivid. He can no longer get out of the impression that the *Pañca-kkhandha*, or Five Aggregates, are suffering, within the law of Cause and Effect. He is now convinced that, in reality, all is suffering within and without and there is no such thing as an ego. He longs for a state beyond suffering. So eventually going beyond the bounds of suffering, he moves from the mundane to the supramundane state and enters the stream of *Sotāpanna*, the first of the four stages of the Ariyas (Noble Ones). Then he becomes free from (i) ego, (ii) doubts and (iii) attachment to rules and rituals. The second stage is *Sakadāgāmi* (Once-Returner), on coming to which sensuous craving and ill – will become attenuated. He ceases to have any passion or anger when he attains the third stage of *Anāgāmi* (Non-Returner). Arahathship is the final goal. Each of the Ariyas can feel what is like, even as a man, as often as he may choose by going into the fruition stage of *Sotāpanna*, etc., which gives him the Nibbānic Peace Within.

This Peace Within, which is identified with *Nibbāna*, has no parallel because it is supramundane. Compared to this, the Jhānic Peace Within, which I mentioned earlier in dealing with *Samādhi*, is negligible because while the Nibbānic Peace Within takes one beyond the limits of the thirty-one planes of existence, the Jhānic Peace Within will still keep one within these planes — that is to say, in the fine-material world of the Brahmas.

Ladies and gentlemen, just a word more. What I have said includes only some of the fundamental aspects of Buddhism. With the time at my disposal, I hope I have given you my best:

- To come to a state of Purity of Mind with a light

before you;

- To go into a Jhānic state at will;
- To experience for yourselves Nibbānic Peace Within.

These are all within your reach.

Why not, then, try for the first two at least, which are within the confines of your own religion? I am prepared to give you any help that you may require.

May I again express my gratitude to you all for your patient listening. My thanks are also due to the clergy of the church for their kind permission.

Lecture No. 3 (October 14, 1951)

My talks on “What Buddhism Is” will not be complete without a reference, though in brief, to the Law of *Paṭicca-samuppāda* (the Law of Dependent Origination) and the Law of *Paṭṭhāna* (the Law of Relations, or Cause and Effect).

The Law of Dependent Origination

It will be recalled that in summing up my first lecture, I mentioned how Prince Siddhattha, the wandering ascetic, realised the truth and became a Buddha. Lest you forget, I will repeat that portion again.

Verily, Prince Siddhattha attained Sammā-sambhodhi and became the Buddha, the Awakened One, the Enlightened One, the All-knowing One. He was awake in a way compared with which all others were asleep and dreaming. He was enlightened in a way compared with which all other men were stumbling and groping in the dark. He knew with a knowledge compared with which all that other men knew was but a kind of ignorance.

All religions, no doubt, claim to show the way to Truth. In Buddhism, for so long as one has not realized the truth (i.e., the Four Noble Truths), one is in ignorance. It is this ignorance (*Avijjā*) that is responsible for the generation of mental forces (*Saṅkhāra*) which regulate the life continuum (or consciousness) (*Viññāna*) in all sentient beings. Just as the life continuum is established in a new existence, mind and matter (*Nāma* and *Rūpa*) appear automatically and correlatively. These, in turn, are developed into a vehicle or body with sense centres (*Salāyatana*). These sense centres give rise to contact (*Phassa*) and contact of these sense centres with sense objects gives rise to sense impressions (*Vedanā*) which have the effect of arousing desire (*Taṇhā*) followed closely by attachment or clinging to desire (*Upādāna*). It is this attachment, or clinging to desire, which is the cause of becoming (*Bhāva*) or of existence with the attendant birth (*Jāti*), old

age, illness, death, anxiety, agony, pains, etc. (*Jarā-maraṇaṃ*, etc.), all of which denote suffering. In this way the Buddha traced the origin of suffering to ignorance.

So the Buddha said:^[12]

Ignorance is the origin of mental forces; Mental forces, the origin of the life continuum; The life continuum, the origin of mind and matter; Mind and matter, the origin of the sense centres; The sense centres, the origin of contact; Contact, the origin of impression; Impression, the origin of desire; Desire, the origin of attachment; Attachment, the origin of becoming (existence); Becoming (existence), the origin of birth; Birth, the origin of old age, illness, death, anxiety, agony, pains, etc. (which are all suffering).

This chain of origination is called the Law of Dependent Origination and the root cause of all these is therefore *Avijjā*, ignorance — that is, ignorance of the Truth. It is true that superficially desire is the origin of suffering. This is so simple. When you want a thing, desire is aroused. You have to work for it or you suffer for it. But this is not enough. The Buddha said, “The five aggregates, which are nothing but mind and matter, also are suffering.” The Truth of suffering in Buddhism is complete only when one realizes by seeing mind and matter as they really are (both within and without) and not as they seem to be.

The Truth of Suffering is therefore something which must be experienced before it can be understood. For example, we all know from science that everything that exists is nothing but vibration caused by the whirling movement of infinite numbers of sub-atomic particles, but how many of us can persuade ourselves to believe that our own bodies are subject to the same Law? Why not then try to feel things as they really are in so far as they relate to yourself? One must be above physical conditions for this purpose. One must develop mental energy powerful enough to see things in their true state. With

[12] See *Kindred Sayings*, II, pp. 23f.

developed mental power, one can see through and through; one can see more than what one can see with the help of the latest scientific instruments. If that be so, why should one not see what exactly is happening in one's own self — the atoms, the electrons and what not, all changing fast and yet never ending. It is, of course, by no means easy.

Here is an extract from a diary of one of my disciples which will give you an idea of what Suffering Within is:

21/8/51. As soon as I began to meditate I felt as if someone were boring a hole through my head and I felt the sensation of crawling ants all over my head. I wanted to scratch, but my Guru forbade me from doing it. Within an hour I saw the sparkling radium of blue light tinged with violet colour entering inside my body gradually. When I lay in my room continuously for three hours I became almost senseless and I felt a terrible shock in my body. I was about to be frightened but my Guru encouraged me to proceed on. I felt my whole body heated up and I also felt the induction of the electronic needle at every part of my body.

22/8/51. Today also I lay down meditating for nearly three hours. I had the sensation that my whole body was in flames and I also saw sparkles of blue and violet rays of light moving from top to bottom aimlessly. Then my Guru told me that the changing in the body is Anicca (impermanence) and the pain and suffering following it is Dukkha and that one must get to a state beyond Dukkha or Suffering.

23/8/51. My Guru asked me to concentrate on my breast without the radiation of light and added that we are reaching the stage of philosophy of our body. I did accordingly and came to the conclusion that our body is full of Sufferings.

In reality, this Suffering Within is a sequel to the keen sense of feeling of the vibration, radiation and friction of the atomic units experienced through a process of introspective meditation called Vipassana with the aid of the powerful lens of *Samādhi*. Not knowing this Truth is indeed ignorance. Know-

ing this Truth in its Ultimate Reality means destruction of the root cause of suffering, that is, ignorance with all the links in the chain of causation ending with what we call “life” with its characteristics of old age, illness, anxiety, agony, pains, etc.

So much for the Law of Dependent Origination and the root cause of suffering.

The Law of Cause and Effect

Let us now turn our attention to the Causal Law of Relations as expounded by the Buddha in the Law of *Paṭṭhāna* in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. This is the Law in the course of the analytical study of which six coloured rays emerged from the person of the Buddha during his non-stop meditation for 49 days soon after the attainment of Buddhahood. We have five volumes of about 500 pages each of Pāli text on this very delicate subject. I will just give here only an idea of the Law. There are 24 types of Relations on which the fundamental principles of Cause and Effect in Buddhism are based. They are:

1. Condition – *Hetu*
2. Object – *Ārammana*
3. Dominance – *Adhipati*
4. Contiguity – *Anantara*
5. Immediate Contiguity – *Samanantara*
6. Coexistence – *Sahajāta*
7. Reciprocity – *Aññāmañña*
8. Dependence – *Nissaya*
9. Sufficing Condition – *Upanissaya*
10. Antecedence – *Purejāta*
11. Consequence – *Pacchājāta*
12. Succession – *Āsevana*
13. Action – *Kamma*
14. Effect – *Vipāka*

15. Support – *Āhara*
16. Control – *Indriya*
17. Ecstasy – *Jhāna*
18. Means – *Magga*
19. Association – *Sampayutta*
20. Dissociation – *Vippayutta*
21. Presence – *Atthi*
22. Absence – *Natthi*
23. Abeyance – *Vigata*
24. Continuance – *Avigata*

I will explain to you now about the co-relation of *Hetu* (condition) and *Kamma* (action) and the effect produced by their causes, as I understand them.

Hetu is the condition of the mind at one conscious moment of each *Kamma* (action) whether physical, vocal or mental. Each *Kamma* therefore produces a condition of mind which is either moral, immoral or neutral. This is what in Buddhism we call *Kusalā Dhammā*, *Akusalā Dhammā* and *Abyākātā Dhammā*. These *Dhammas* are mere forces — i.e., mental forces — which collectively create the Universe of Mental Forces as explained in my first lecture.

Moral (*Kusalā*) Forces are positive forces generated from *Kammās* (actions, words and thoughts) motivated by such good deeds as alms-giving, welfare work, devotion, purification of mind, etc.

Immoral (*Akusalā*) Forces are negative forces generated from *Kammās* (actions, words, and thoughts) motivated by desire, greed, lust, anger, hatred, dissatisfaction, delusion, etc.

Neutral (*Abyākātā*) Forces are neither moral nor immoral. This is the case, for example, of an Arahāt who has got rid of all traces of ignorance (*Avijjā*). In the case of an Arahāt, contact (*Phassa*) of sense objects with the sense centres produces

no reaction to sense impressions (*Vedanā*) whatsoever, just as no impression is possible on flowing water which is ever changing. To him, the whole framework of the body is but an ever-changing mass and any impression thereon automatically breaks away with the mass.

Let us now adjust the moral and immoral forces generated by conditioned actions with the planes of existence. For this purpose, I will classify the planes of existence roughly as follows:

1. *Arūpa-* and *Rūpa-Brahma* Planes. These are beyond the range of sensuality. Supreme Love, Supreme Compassion, Supreme Joy at others' success or greatness and Supreme Equanimity of Mind are the four qualities of mind which generate transcendently pure, brilliant and extremely pleasing, cool, and light mental forces which find their location in the highest of the planes of existence. This is the reason that in these planes matter is superfine and there is nothing but radiance, and the vehicles or bodies of the Brahmas cannot be identified with matter but with radiation or light.
2. The Sensuous Planes which are composed of:
 - i. the Planes of Celestial Beings
 - ii. the Human World
 - iii. the Planes of the Lower Forms of Existence

The Planes of Celestial Beings All good or meritorious deeds, words or thoughts which have a taint of desire for future well-being create moral mental forces which are very pure, luminous, pleasant and light. These find their location in the higher planes of celestial beings where matter is fine, luminous, pleasant and light. These celestial beings therefore have astral bodies varying in fineness, luminosity and colour according to the planes to which they belong. Ordinarily they live in heavenly bliss till their own moral mental forces are consumed, when they revert to the lower planes of existence.

I will now pass on to (iii) the Planes of the Lower Forms of

Existence. I will come to our Human World last.

The Planes of the Lower Forms of Existence All malicious, evil, demeritorious actions, words and thoughts create mental forces which by nature are impure, dark, fiery, heavy and hard. The most impure, dark, fiery, heavy and hard mental forces should therefore find their place in Hell, the lowest of the four planes of existence. The matter in all these planes must, therefore, be hard, crude, unpleasant and hot. The human world is just above the concentration of these forces, which are meant for consumption by those beings destined for these lower forms of existence. These beings, with the exception of those in the animal world, are invisible to the ordinary human eye but visible to those only who have developed the higher powers of *Samādhi* and secured the Divine Eye. Here, suffering, both physical and mental, predominates. This is just the reverse of what happens in the planes of celestial beings.

The Human World Now I come to the human world. This is a half-way house between heaven and hell. We experience pleasure and pain mixed together, in degrees as determined by our own past *Kamma*. From here, we can, by developing our mental attitude, draw in our own mental forces that are in the higher planes. It is also from here that we can go down to the depths of depravity and tune up with the forces of the Lower Order. There is no such constancy as in other planes of existence. One may be a saint today but one can be a rogue thereafter. One may be rich today but one may soon become poor. The vicissitudes of life here are very conspicuous. There is no man who is stable, no family which is stable, no community which is stable, no nation which is stable. All are subject to the Law of *Kamma*.

As this *Kamma* comes out of Mind, which is ever-changing, the effects of *Kamma* must necessarily also be changing.

It is the condition of the evil mental forces submerged in the Earth just under our feet which gives rise to the Law of Gravitation. For as long as man has inherent impurities in

him which, *prima facie*, exist, he is subject to this gravitational pull and if he dies with the mental attitude tuned up with mental forces of a plane of lower existence at the last moment of his life, at the moment of death, the next existence is automatically in that plane, in order to clear, in a manner of speaking, his debit account of mental forces there. On the other hand, if at the moment of death his mental attitude is associated with forces in the human world, the next existence can be in the human world again. If, however, his mental attitude at the last moment of death is associated with the reminiscence of his good deeds, etc., the next existence will normally be in the celestial world, in order to enjoy the credit balance of his own mental forces there. One goes to the Brahma world if, at the moment of death, one's mind is not sensual, but is pure and tranquil. This is how *Kamma* plays its role in Buddhism, with mathematical precision.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are the essential teachings of the Buddha. The way in which these teachings will affect the individual depends on how one takes it. The same applies to the family, the community or people in general. We have Buddhists in Faith and Buddhists in Practice. Yet there is another class of Buddhists who are just labelled Buddhists by Birth. Only Buddhists in actual practice can secure the change in mental attitude and outlook. Let them only observe the five precepts. They are the followers of the teachings of the Buddha. If this were followed by all the Buddhists in Burma, there would be no internecine strife such as we have here in Burma. But there is another disturbing factor: bodily requirements. One must have the bare necessities of life. Life is more precious to a person than anything else. The tendency, therefore, is for one to break laws of discipline, whether religious or governmental, for his self-preservation and for others depending on him.

What is most essential is the generation of pure and good mental forces to combat the evil mental forces which dominate mankind. This is by no means easy. One cannot rise to a level of pure mental attitude without the help of a Teacher.

If we want effective power to combat these forces, we must work for it Dhammically, i.e., according to the *Dhamma*. Modern science has given us for what it is worth the atomic bomb, the most wonderful and at the same time the most dreadful product of man's intelligence. Is man using his intelligence in the right way? Is he creating good or bad mental forces, according to the spirit of Buddhism? It is our will that decides how and upon what subject we shall use intelligence. Instead of using intelligence only for the conquest of atomic energy in matter without, why not use it also for the conquest of atomic energy within. This will give us the Peace Within and will enable us to share it with all others. We will then radiate such powerful and purified mental forces as will successfully counteract the evil forces which are all around us. Just as the light of a single candle has the power to dispel darkness in a room, so also the light developed in one man can help dispel darkness in several others.

To imagine that "good" can be done by means of an "evil" is an illusion, a nightmare. The case in point is that of Korea. For all the loss of lives on both sides, now over a million, are we nearer to or further away from Peace? These are the lessons which we have learnt. A change of the mental attitude of mankind through religion alone is the solution. What is necessary at the moment is mastery over mind and not only mastery over matter.

In Buddhism we differentiate *Loka Dhātu* from *Dhamma Dhātu*. By *Dhātu* is meant the nature elements or forces. *Loka Dhātu* is therefore matter (with its nature elements) within the range of the physical plane. *Dhamma Dhātu*, however, comprises mind, mental properties and some aspects of the nature elements which are not in the physical but in the mental plane. Modern science deals with what we call *Loka Dhātu*. It is just a base for *Dhamma Dhātu* in the mental plane. A step further and we come to the mental plane; not with the knowledge of modern science but with the knowledge of *Buddha-Dhamma* in practice.

At least Mr H.A. Overstreet, author of *The Mature Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton) is optimistic about what is in store for mature minds. He said:

The characteristic knowledge of our century is psychological. Even the most dramatic advances in physics and chemistry are chiefly the application of known methods of research. But the attitude toward human nature and human experience that has come in our time is new. This attitude could not have come earlier. Before it came, there had to be long preparation. Physiology had to be a developed science; for the psychological person is also physiological. His mind, among other things, is a matter of brain tissue, of nerves, of glands, or organs of touch, smell and sight. It was not until about seventy years ago that physiology was sufficiently developed to make psycho-physical research possible, as in the laboratories of the distinguished German psychologist, William Wundt. But before physiology there had to be a developed science of biology. Since brain, nerves, glands and the rest all depend upon processes, the science of the living cell had to have its maturing before a competent physiology could emerge. But before biology there had to be chemistry; and before chemistry, physics; and before physics, mathematics. So the long preparation goes back into the centuries. There is, in short, a time clock of science. Each science has to wait until its hour strikes. Today, at least, the time clock of science strikes the hour of psychology, and a new enlightenment begins. To be sure, the interests explored by this latest of the sciences are themselves old; but the accuracy of research is new. There is, in brief, a kind of iron logic that is in control. Each science has to wait for its peculiar accuracy until its predecessor has supplied the data and tools out of which its accuracy can be made. The time clock of science has struck a new hour: a new insight begins to be at our service.

May I say that it is the *Buddha-Dhamma* which should be studied by one and all for a new insight into the realities of human nature. In Buddhism we have the cure for all the mental ills that affect mankind. It is the evil forces of the mind

(past and present) that are responsible for the present state of affairs all over the world. By inspiring a strong sense of Buddhism in the minds of the people during the most critical days of Burma some two years ago, we have been able to get over the crisis.

Nowadays, there is dissatisfaction almost everywhere. Dissatisfaction creates ill-feeling. Ill-feeling creates hatred. Hatred creates enmity. Enmity creates war. War creates enemies. Enemies create war. War creates enemies and so on. It is now becoming a vicious circle. Why? Certainly because there is lack of proper control over the mind.

What is man? Man is after all mental forces personified. What is matter? Matter is nothing but mental forces materialized, a result of the reaction of moral (positive) and immoral (negative) forces. The Buddha said, “*Cittena niyyati loko*,” “The World is mind-made.”^[13]

Mind, therefore, predominates over everything. Let us then study the mind and its peculiar characteristics and solve the problem that is now facing the world.

There is a great field for practical research in Buddhism. Buddhists in Burma will always welcome whoever is anxious to have the benefit of their experience.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have made an attempt to give you the best of what I know about Buddhism. I shall be glad to give any interested person such further explanation on any point that he may wish to discuss. I am grateful to you for your kind attendance and the interest taken in my lectures. May I again thank the clergy of the church for the permission so kindly given for this series of lectures on their premises.

Peace to all beings.

[13] Kindred Sayings, I, p 55; Gradual Sayings, II, p. 185.

Vipassana Courses

Courses of Vipassana meditation, as taught by S.N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, are held regularly at permanent centers and at rented sites in many countries throughout the world. Information, schedules and application forms are all available from the website

www.dhamma.org.

About Pariyatti

Pariyatti is dedicated to providing affordable access to authentic teachings of the Buddha about the *Dhamma* theory (*pariyatti*) and practice (*paṭipatti*) of Vipassana meditation. A 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization since 2002, Pariyatti is sustained by contributions from individuals who appreciate and want to share the incalculable value of the *Dhamma* teachings. We invite you to visit www.pariyatti.org to learn about our programs, services, and ways to support publishing and other undertakings.

Pariyatti Publishing Imprints

Vipassana Research Publications (focus on Vipassana as taught by S.N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin)

BPS Pariyatti Editions (selected titles from the Buddhist Publication Society, co-published by Pariyatti in the Americas)

Pariyatti Digital Editions (audio and video titles, including discourses)

Pariyatti Press (classic titles returned to print and inspirational writing by contemporary authors)

Pariyatti enriches the world by

- disseminating the words of the Buddha,
- providing sustenance for the seeker's journey,
- illuminating the meditator's path.