Wheel Publication No. 42/43

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Extracts from The Buddhist Review, 1909–1914

Selected and presented by

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Buddhist Publication Society
Kandy • Sri Lanka

The Wheel Publication No. 42/43

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Early Western Buddhists

Buddhism made its first real impact on the Western mind in the early years of the present century. The way had been prepared for it by the Pali and Sanskrit translations of Max Muller, Fausböll, Warren, Rhys-Davids and a number of other oriental scholars. In Europe, some familiarity with the broad outlines of Buddhist thought had been created by Schopenhauer. In England, Sir Edwin Arnold's fine poem, *The Light of Asia*, had given thoughtful readers an insight into the beauty at the heart of the Buddhist ideal. For the first time there was an interest in Eastern philosophy that was more than academic. It came about partly as a reaction against the constricting materialism of nineteenth century scientific views, and partly as a revolt against traditional religious teachings which science had shown to be inadequate (where they were not altogether false).

Many people found an escape from the clash between two equally rigid modes of thought (the religious and the scientific) in the mysteries of theosophy, with its loosely syncretic structure and the liberty it allowed for semi-scientific speculation. At that time the ferment caused by the new scientific ideas was at its height, and the popular construction placed on Darwin's theory of evolution had

not yet sunk down to the level of general acceptance it occupies today. A need was felt for some religious or philosophic view that would reconcile the material and spiritual aspects, a theory that would embody the idea of a progressive evolution, of life straining upwards from the primeval slime towards a glorious and godlike fulfilment. If this concept could find some sanction in the mysterious and romantic religions of the past, so much the better, no matter what contradictions might be involved. Man, as perhaps never before, was becoming conscious of himself as part of the pattern of an evolving cosmos. The prevailing mood was reflected in the theosophical leanings of such dissimilar writers as August Strindberg and Pierre Loti, as well as in several of the English poets. Among the philosophers there were some who, like Mac Taggart of Cambridge, were in the groove of neo-Pythagorean thought to the extent of accepting reincarnation as a law of life.

Everywhere the old shackles were being cast aside. The currents of a fresh movement were making themselves felt not only on the intellectual level but also in aesthetics. It was the era of new experiments in painting, sculpture, music and poetry. The art of the Fauves, the Dadaists and the Cubists competed with the music of the new composers Stravinsky, Bartok and Honegger, as to which could make the most decisive break with tradition in the shortest time. In every sphere the idols of the past were being asked, in not very respectful terms, to show their credentials.

Amidst this upsurge of creativity and intellectual vigour

there was at the same time a growing feeling of political insecurity not so much in respect of the internal structure of society (which in most of the European nations at that time presented a deceptive appearance of stability), but in international relations. The mounting tensions which were to break in the First World War were already making themselves felt, and, as we shall see, the anxiety they caused found an individual expression in the writings of some of the first European Buddhists.

This was the *mise en scène* against which the ideas of Theravada Buddhism were first presented to the West, in the language of the West. It may seem inappropriate to speak of the articles in such periodicals as *The Buddhist Review* as "early" writings on Buddhism by "early" Western Buddhists, but historical perspectives sometimes bear little relation to the actual length of the periods they cover. Since the time when these writings first appeared, close though it is to the present, great and radical changes have taken place in the life and thought of mankind. A considerable amount of history has been telescoped into a brief half-century, and it has brought about a great deal of rethinking on some of the fundamental issues. Many of the most adventurous ideas of those days have become commonplace in our time. What is of interest to us today is the manner in which the early Western Buddhists applied the new ideas to their own situation, the characteristic colouring they gave to Buddhist thought, and the degree to which they had assimilated the principles of their adopted creed.

It is interesting, for example, to note the resistance many of them put up to the romantic theories of theosophical syncretism. Sometimes their interpretation of Buddhism leaned, if anything, rather too heavily on its purely rationalistic side. But they avoided that most seductive of all the conceits that the pseudo-scientific religious eclecticism of the time favoured: the optimistic belief that man's spiritual course is an inevitable upward progression. Those of them who correctly understood the parallel between the law of *kamma* and that of biological evolution grasped the truth that every law, whether physical of psychological, must be capable of working to the detriment, as well as to the advantage, of the beings subject to it. In this they were more realistic than those among their contemporaries who held that once the human state had been attained in the course of evolution there could be no falling back to inferior conditions. Comforting as that "esoteric" theory may be, it is no more in accord with the principles of evolution than it is with the real teaching of the Buddha.

In these early writings there is, in fact, surprisingly little attempt to tamper with the Pali texts and their meaning. The writers seemed happy to accept Buddhism as they found it. It was as well for the continued validity of their ideas that they did so, for (since they wrote) the world has witnessed events which leave little room for supposing that man, collectively, is on the path to perfection by virtue of a law that permits him only to advance. Truth is angular and non-conformist; it does not obey popular fashions.

That there were among the first Western Buddhists some minds which were fearless, and in a sense revolutionary, cannot be doubted by anyone who goes through the pages of the early Buddhist publications. These were people who were not afraid to label themselves with the name of a religion which was still looked upon with distrust by the majority. It is not easy these days (when some knowledge of Buddhism has become part of the equipment of every educated man, and when books on the subject are easily accessible to all) for us to reconstruct the attitude, compounded of ignorance and not a little fear of heathenish superstitions, which was that of the ordinary man towards Buddhism at that time. The present writer well remembers, even so late as the nineteen-twenties, a serial story, "False Gods", published by a London evening newspaper which purported to be based on the Buddhism of Tibet. It was an example of the most lurid and improbable fiction, in which sinister Lamas moved and had their being enshrouded in Gothic-Himalayan mystery, and worked out their evil designs to the peril and distress of respectable upper-class English families. That was the era when the editors of British Sunday newspapers (taking time off from their lucrative task of crime-reporting, varied by frequent orgies of moral indignation), every so often lashed out at the new menace of Buddhism, which, according to their mood, was either a species of black magic or (to quote one of them from memory) an "attractive cult for blasé Londoners in search of a new thrill".

It cannot be denied that there were some questionable personalities vaguely associated in the public mind with the early Buddhist movements, but the dabblers in the occult, make-believe magicians and other picturesque poseurs were not Buddhists in any sense; most of them were not even on the fringe of any genuine Buddhist activities. Had the self-appointed journalistic guardians of public morality taken the trouble to glance at the articles in *The Buddhist Review,* and noted the names of the contributors, they would have found it difficult to sustain their prejudice. Even the most bigoted could not fail to recognize the earnestness, sincerity and intellectual integrity of these pioneer Western Buddhists, to whom the later progress of Buddhism in the West owes so much.

The First Issue Editorial

There is no better way to begin our symposium of extracts from these Western writings than to quote some passages from the editorial, signed J.E.E. (J.E. Ellam) which introduced the first issue of *The Buddhist Review* in 1909. He wrote:

> "The most striking phenomenon of our times, a process which has been going on for more than a decade, is the growing confusion in the Religious Thought of the West. With the weakening of

theological dicta has proceeded an indifference to the higher, more spiritual aspects of life, together with tendencies towards gross superstitions which find their expression in diverse, and most unhealthy forms of heterodoxy. It is not necessary to specify these; indeed, it would be against the Buddhist spirit to do so. The Buddhist method is now, as it has ever been, to refrain from the condemnation of other modes of thought, but simply, gently, yet with emphasis, to set forth its own teachings, and to leave them to plead their own cause at the bar of human reason and experience. In psychology, in the sphere of the mind in the realms of the spiritual, Buddhism moves at ease, confident of its knowledge, confident of its logic, to state clearly, fully and conclusively its solutions of those problems which have vexed the minds of men from time immemorial, solutions which were presented satisfactorily to the acute mind of the Orient two thousand five hundred years ago, and which, finding a mentality, an intellectual standard, in the West only now capable of adequately grasping them, are about to be presented, as we think to the great benefit of this and coming generations. And those who are helping in this great work will, in the future, come to be regarded with the same feeling of gratitude, with the same reverence, which we accord to those who stimulated the Renaissance from the dark ages of Medieval Europe.

There is, thus, no hostility or even rivalry between the Buddhist Movement and the conventional forms of religion in the West. Buddhism is the friend of all, the enemy of none. Animosity, if such there be, can only proceed from one side, but it is certain that it will never be returned in kind. For those who are uneasy in their doubts and questionings, who lack a sure guide to peace of mind, who are bereft of the consolations of Faith in the higher sense, Buddhism has a Message: strong, sure, convincing. For those who are satisfied with any other belief, creed, philosophy (call it what they will), Buddhism has no other feelings save of sympathy, of kindliness, of fellowship united with a desire for helpful co-operation, provided only that their efforts are for the benefit, the well-being, the uplifting of humanity to higher ideals of life, of thought, of action, and of the duties of Common Brotherhood throughout the world."

Buddhism and Ethics

In the same issue, the essentially tolerant and progressive spirit of Buddhism is also stressed by Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys-Davids in the article, "Buddhism and Ethics":

"Here is a doctrine that takes us back as far as the

days of the very beginnings of Hellenic Science. For this doctrine, it is claimed that it might have served, not to check or to ignore the discoveries of Copernicus and Bruno, Galileo and Newton, Darwin and Spencer, but to stimulate and inspire them. Not a guide that they might have adhered to from convention only, or appealed to now and again to reconcile the lay world with their discoveries and conclusions, but an oracle that would have spurred them on in their quest for Truth.

"Well, it is one thing to talk about achievements of modern science and advance of modern thought, and another thing to claim for this age in general that it is imbued with the scientific spirit, or that the views and conduct of the average man or woman are governed thereby. This state of things is but in its infancy. But it is born, and is growing. Hence any movement of thought will have, more and more, to cope with the scientific spirit, and will stand or fall largely by its sanction. And hence all who call themselves Buddhists, or who are interested in spreading a knowledge of Buddhist doctrine or, at least, the spirit of that doctrine, should look into this claim that is made for it. Those, again, whose interest lies in tracing the growth of human ideas, can in no wise feel indifferent to the real extent to which the ancient mind of India anticipated a standpoint slowly and painfully won to by the intellect of Europe.

"The fact that early Buddhism and modern Science express belief in a universal law of Causation in terms so similar leads inevitably to the further inquiry as to how far there is historical evidence that the evolution of this belief among early Buddhists was parallel to the corresponding evolution in Europe. The lack of continuity and of chronological certainty in the literatures of ancient India hinder and complicate such an inquiry. But there does survive a body of Brahmanical literature, an accretion of various dates, known as the Sixty Upanishads of the Veda, in which a form of Pantheism called Ātmanism or Vedantism is set forth, with mainly archaic views on what we term First, Final, and Occasional Cause. And we have the Pali Canon of the Buddhists, coinciding, it is thought, in date with the middle period of these sixty books, and repudiating this Ātmanism, whether macrocosmically or microcosmicaIly conceived.

"To what extent Buddhism, as a lay, anti-Brahmanic, anti-sacerdotal movement originated the rejection of Ātmanism, or carried on a wider and older tradition of rejection, it is not possible to say. But the fact that the founders of Buddhism did, in leaving the world for the religious life, take up this Protestant position on the one hand, and on the other make a law of ritual causation their chief doctrine, suggests at all events a profound psychological crisis."

In such passages as these we see Mrs Rhys-Davids at the height of her powers, when she was contributing the best of her scholarship to the Buddhist cause. The profound psychological crisis to which she refers is a recurring condition. Perhaps, indeed, every major change in the human situation is brought about by an insupportable paroxysm of the mind. Progress is the name we give to a collective crisis that has taken the right turn.

Buddhism and Science

In the same issue, the article, "Buddhism and Science", by E.J. Mills, D.Sc., F.R.S., deals with the still-disputed subject of Anattā (Egolessness), in connection with rebirth. It contains the following passage:

> "Now, nothing is more clear than that evolution is an essential constituent of Buddhism. It is necessarily a part of its doctrine of rebirth and heredity. A qualitative result-character alone survives death; and this is reborn with a new set of skandhas, in accordance with the Karma of that instant. [1] There may be but very little distinction between the old 'character' and the new. On the other hand, there may be a very great deal. It is within our power, as Buddha and Huxley both say, to influence our environment and ourselves very greatly. And it is

> clear that the next link in the pedigree may be so different, on occasion, as to be to all intents and purposes a new species. This gets rid of much of the difficulty about time in Darwin's theory. But we must not forget the instruction of the Buddha that the new link may, if we so condition it, be worse than before; there is a "way up" as well as a "way down" as Heracleitus says. The new species may be a new reversion. This is a horrible thing to contemplate; but of its truth there can be no doubt whatever. A modification of this doctrine was adopted (I need not say), and probably from Buddhism —— into the Christian scriptures."

The reference here is of course to the Christian doctrine of eternal damnation: the state of torment or eternal deprivation. But Buddhism teaches that nothing in the sphere of causality can be eternal. While all things are subject to retrogression and degeneration, there is always hope, amounting to certainty, of a future opportunity to recover the lost ground. The eternal damnation threatened by theistic religion, and believed in literally for so many centuries, had by its inherent brutality become so discredited that many people still professing theistic creeds had abandoned it. In deference to the more enlightened and humane view, the pulpits no longer thundered out the horrors and terrors of the life to come. Yet what is the meaning of salvation, if damnation is no longer believed in?

The progressive weakening of religion as a moral influence was bound to follow on the removal of its punitive aspect, for relatively few people, even amongst the most civilized of mankind, are sufficiently advanced to choose the good for its own sake, and in all circumstances, on purely humanistic and ethical grounds. This is so even when (which is rarely the case) they can be positively certain as to what constitutes the right course of action without guidance from religion. Aside from this, there is no discernible justice in a system that offers rewards for doing good, without exacting some kind of retribution for wrong-doing. The early Western Buddhists were quick to see that Buddhism saved the moral order by substituting for eternal punishment a system of automatic causal balance between good and ill, in which the measure of suffering resulting from wrong action is exactly equal to the force of the deed that produced it, neither more nor less.

Transmigration in East and West

This theme is the subject of an article by another scientific writer, Ernest R. Carlos, M.A., B.Sc., who wrote in "Transmigration in East and West":

> "If, as many believe, one single life decides the whole course of the future, why is one life here for a few weeks, and another for seventy or eighty years? For

one thing, there is in the first case less risk of eternal loss. But the question is: 'Does this life matter or does it not?' If it does not, why are we here at all? If it does, then evidently the child who took his departure after three weeks did not reap the full benefit of life, and if life has value, if we are to learn from it, where is the logic in sending into eternal bliss a life which scarcely deserves it? Moreover, if we are to strive for perfection as enjoined by our Teacher, it seems utterly unthinkable that one could arrive at perfection in a single life. Again, it would be unjust for one to have a greater opportunity than another, and if we consider the wide gulf existing between the primitive savage and the enlightened civilised man, we must admit that it would be to the great advantage of the former, were he to return a few more times, instead of shooting off straightway into eternity 'with all his imperfections on his head.' [2]

"The idea first occurred to man partly from the desire for justice, and partly from the deep and overwhelming feeling of pain which the manifest transience of earthly life produces in the human breast. That the idea did arise is not strange. The final law of creation is said to be Love. But the sin and suffering bequeathed to our race, through no apparent fault of ours, makes us regard life as a ceaseless struggle in which the strongest win and the weakest go to the wall. Why are some born rich and

others poor? Why are some endowed with the seeds of intelligence and high mental qualities, while others have minds that the best education can make nothing of? We see royal souls, men in whose faces we may read high sentiments of love and self-sacrifice, whose characters are pictures for admiration, and others whose very countenances are strange, criminal and even inhuman.

"What answer can be given to the criminal, who, in reply to our exhortation to love justice and kindness says, 'How can I help being so? Blame him who has put me in bad surroundings. I was born in a slum, brought up by drunkards, heard little more than curses and filthy language in my youth, and was taught nothing that was noble. Can you wonder that I am wicked? I was not so fortunate as you, who, through no merit of your own, were placed among refined people full of tenderness, giving you everything you wanted, and offering you no daily temptations to steal. I had not your education, why blame me? Blame my environment.' Justice demands that every man should have an equal opportunity, and Reincarnation gives this opportunity. It furnishes the answer to problems which religious dogma cannot deal with, and which material science is not ready to face.

"Hume states that this theory 'is the only system of immortality that philosophy can hearken 'to,' and

many people are startled at the statement that the belief in Immortality demands a belief in Rebirth. What begins in time must necessarily end in time, and it is impossible to conceive of anything eternal in its onward duration, and, at the same time, having a beginning. There can be no 'beginning' to eternity. If the soul was specially created for this body, why should it continue to live when this body dies? Its purpose is fulfilled. The materialists who hold that the 'I' arose with the body, and will end in death, are certainly the more rational. Life eternal must be life for ever, and it is unthinkable that, from an infinite history in the past, the soul enters this world for its first and only physical experience, and then shoots off into an endless spiritual existence.

"The Christian holds to the belief in original sin and future punishment, and it is difficult to conceive how one man can be responsible for a sin in which he had no share. If, however, we are indeed those who, in their first contact with matter did sin, then we can understand how man is born in sin. As to future punishment, it is not difficult to look thereon as a punishment in a future bodily existence, especially as it is now becoming very unfashionable to believe in Hell. Isaac Disraeli says: 'If we accept the belief of a future remuneration beyond this life for suffering, virtue, and retribution of successful crimes, there is no system so simple, so little repugnant to our

understanding, as that of Metempsychosis. The pains and pleasures of this life are, by this system, considered as the recompense or punishment of our actions in another state.'

"To say that Science requires Reincarnation to complete the theory of evolution is to make a very bold statement, yet she could with advantage add this one to her other hypotheses. The struggle for Existence is not a complete explanation of the nature of Man. Professor Huxley once remarked, 'It seems that man, a fragment of the cosmos, has set himself against the law of the cosmos. He advances by self-surrender and not by the survival of the fittest; he develops by self-sacrifice.' If we look upon those whom humanity has always regarded as the blossoms of the race, we find their lives are one long self-sacrifice. But self-sacrifice, charity, love, sympathy, and the surrender of all one has do not conduce to the struggle for existence. Man advances by self-sacrifice; that is the True Law. Such people, however, die out. One who risks his all must eventually perish, and the social virtues and more human attributes tend to kill out their owners, leaving the more selfish and the more brutal to live. Such lives must return doubly reinforced with that spirit of self-surrender which makes for moral growth.

"In heredity it is hard to explain why a good father

should have a wild and immoral son, why a genius is born of mediocre parents, or why there should be but one genius in a family (if character is determined merely by physical forces). Science gives us no definite explanation of this and other matters. Professor Weissmann's theory, that moral and intellectual qualities acquired during life are not transmitted to the offspring, is held by the majority of scientific men. If all the high qualities of a man are not handed down from father to son, through the body, how are we to explain human progress, unless, side by side with the continuity of protoplasm, we have a continuity in the development and unfolding of spirit? It seems strange first to imagine that Nature should end her masterpiece (Man) with total annihilation at death, and even then should not devise some means whereby he can transmit to his offspring the qualities he has acquired. If such qualities were transmitted by the body we should have a material basis for progress; but as they are not, we must presume that the bond of union between the various stages lies in something else. Kant recognized the difficulty when he said:

> 'All the natural qualities of a creature are intended to unfold themselves completely and suitably, and it would take an immeasurably long life for a man to learn how to make a perfect use of all his natural qualities. It would

> take an unending series of generations for the one to hand over its enlightenment to the other, in order that the germ of our species may at last arrive at that degree of development which shall be perfectly adapted to the fulfilment of its design. How it may be with the dwellers on other planets and their nature, we know not. Perhaps in these every individual may attain his appointed design in life. With us it is otherwise, and only the species can hope for it.'

"Kant saw the hopeless nature of the question, and took refuge in the abstract idea of species. He had only to lift the veil and see how a man might make more and more perfect use of all his natural powers sooner than he expected, if each personality added its experience to a reborn 'Intelligent Character.'

"Reincarnation is no doctrine of pessimism. Selfishness is necessary for pessimism and has produced it, but where there is a certainty of progress, of the possibility of perfection, there can be no pessimism. To say with the Buddhist, 'Painful is the wheel of rebirth.' is no more pessimistic than the Christian desire or union with God. Both wish for liberation from the body which confines the Eternal Man. The doctrine rightly understood brightens life, in that we look upon this body as a garment and the

world as a school. Sorrows and troubles are brushed off as only touching the accidental and not the eternal. The heresy of separateness must disappear, and we must look on all as brothers.

"Progress is the Law of Life. 'Man is not man as yet.' And Emerson was right when he said, 'We wake and find ourselves on a stair. There are other stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above, many a one, which go upward and out of sight.'"

"'Upward and out of sight"' is a phrase of deep import for the mind at last awakening to a sense of life's continuity and its unimaginable goal. But was the way of evolution to be exclusively a spiritual and personal one, or did it require a complementary effort along the lines of worldly progress? Was there to be any involvement with the mundane concerns of others in the life we share, for better or worse, on this planet ruled by physical needs? There were those, as there are today, who asked themselves these questions with some perplexity and uneasiness of mind.

Buddhism and Social Problems

An attempt was made to answer these questions by Alexandra David (afterwards Mme Alexandra David-Néel),

in the article “Buddhism and Social Problems”. The article, which here follows in full, was very ably translated by Francis J. Payne, and appeared in the July-September issue of 1910:

> “Among the questions of a practical nature which we have to face is one whose examination forces itself upon us without our being able to put it aside: ‘What attitude are we going to adopt towards the social problems, which are, at this moment, the chief preoccupation of the whole world?’ It is impossible to be unaware of them, and it is also impossible to dismiss them. Unless we are content to remain a small closed circle of scholars and dilettanti, finding a refined pleasure in handling the subtle thought of ancient Buddhism, and seeing therein but an intellectual exercise, we shall come into collision with the outside conditions of social life. Before us will arise men who will be oppressed not only by mental pain, but by the most commonplace material suffering. What shall we do? Shall we answer them that the Doctrine of the Buddha is only made for the wise, that it despises the pain of the flesh, and the tears of those whose horizon does not extend beyond the limits of coarse sensation and earthly longings?
>
> “On the morrow of the day when, for the first time, he has perceived within himself a flickering and pale reflection of the Great Light, stopped at the threshold of the Path, and seeing the enormous intellectual

effort necessary to walk therein, there is not a single disciple who has not repeated the words which the Mahāvagga ascribes to our Master:

'To this people who are given to desire, intent upon desire, delighting in desire, the law of causality and the chain of causation will be a matter difficult to understand; most difficult for them to understand will be also the extinction of all saṅkhāras, the getting rid of all the substrata [of existence], the destruction of desire, the absence of passion, quietude of heart, Nirvana. This doctrine will not be easy to understand to beings that are lost in lust and hatred. Given to lust, surrounded by thick darkness, they will not see what is abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive, and subtle.' (Mv. I. 5.)

"Where the Master hesitated, [3] the disciple may well have a touch of despair.

"That moment was a decisive one in the history of Buddhist preaching. To live it again individually is one of the most difficult tests that we have to overcome.

"One question which confronts us is very distinct and very grave: Shall we imitate the Pharisee of whom the Gospel speaks, and, congratulating ourselves in a proud thanksgiving on the superior quality of our brain, attempt to realize an egotistic salvation, turning our eyes away from the miserable

mob of mediocre intelligences? Or rather, sincerely grieved and compassionate at the misery of our brothers, but seeing therein no remedy, shall we remain inactive before their suffering? Finally, choosing a third solution, shall we approach suffering, even that which seems to us paltry, even that which appears low or deserved, the puerile suffering of childish minds, that of coarse beings, of the wicked, and strive to conquer them all?

"Two motives will prompt our answer: Can we bring efficacious help to the multitudes who seek social emancipation and material well-being? And, ought we to give it to them?

"Let us consider the first point.

"Amongst the most usual objections urged against Buddhism is this: It is a philosophy for instructed minds. It looks with haughtiness above life, it teaches its vanity and, more than its vanity, the non-reality of its existence. Its language is not within reach of that majority of beings who feel strongly the impression of their personality, who see nothing but that personality, who dream only of it, and who aim only at its material needs and suffer cruelly in all their feelings.

"The most thoughtful writers, those who have shown the greatest sympathy for Buddhism, have recognized that nothing in the Buddha's teaching,

such as the texts handed down to us, can present him to us as a leader of the masses. That is understood. Although we have to consider that the disdain shown by our Master and the early Buddhists for the distinctions of caste (the foundation of Hindu society and much more tyrannical in their effects than the present distinctions between capitalists and workers) marks their aāpostleship with a truly revolutionary character, we shall not try to misrepresent the personality of the Buddha by making him a stirrer of crowds, an apostle of social claims. We have no need of such subterfuges. Neither shall we seek to disavow the saying: 'The doctrine is directed to the intelligent man, not to the fool.' Whoever he may be that pronounced it, we recognise it as quite truly in accord with the Buddhist spirit.

"Deliverance, under whatever particular aspect we regard it (spiritual, moral or social deliverance; deliverance of the individual or of nations), is not a gift but an acquisition: a bitter and laborious acquisition of the intellect. Now what doctrine is better able than Buddhism to guide man towards intelligence?

"If we have hesitated, a thoughtful examination of Buddhist teaching will give confidence. We are better armed than anyone to approach the victims of our modern communities. We have something better than sentimental manifestations of piety or the

problematic compensations of Paradise to offer them, for we possess the sovereign formula of social emancipation and material deliverance purely earthly, as well as that which opens before us the unfathomable horizons of Nirvana.

"When the Buddha proclaimed that *the cause of suffering is ignorance,* he uttered an eternal truth, a truth infallible on every plane of existence. His voice tells us the way. We may agree that our philosophic discussions, and even the fundamental questions of impersonality and the impermanence of the formations, cannot be presented at the first onset to popular audiences, but there is a gospel which we can offer them, and it is this: Suffering can be destroyed; it can be destroyed by us; it can only be destroyed by ourselves; our ignorance alone creates it.

"These are not vain declamations. There is nothing more scientific in spirit than this modern credo; nothing which is more capable of a practical result.

"Sociologists may discuss learnedly the processes of the formation of our contemporary communities, they may point out the causes which have produced the terrible inequality of conditions among the individuals who belong to them, or find fault with the growth of capital or its relations with labour. There is one plain fact above all these considerations:

the ignorance of the masses alone has permitted their subjection.

"The wretched masses, in turn a pitiful herd of beasts of burden or unchained brutes, pass through the horrors of sanguinary revolts. They stretch their arms towards the gods who never yet have taken pity on them, towards men who betray their confidence, towards vague ideals of Justice and Liberty. And all in vain, because the irresistible Law of things pursues its course: he who is deceived, he who sees beings and things falsely, shall expiate, by suffering, the unskilfulness of his error.

"Let us teach the people to think, to reason, to become by their mental development the authors of their own deliverance. Let us put into their hearts, not childish enthusiasms and inauspicious venerations, but the worship of Knowledge, the liberator and purifier. Such is the way to intervene in the social problems of our time which Buddhist teaching suggests to us. That teaching places in men's hands a lever capable of transforming the base of society:

> Believe only in that which you yourselves have recognised as true and reasonable. Believe nothing on the authority of another. Fulfil only the acts which you have analysed and which have appeared to you conformable

to reason, to your welfare and that of others. Be ye a light unto yourselves.

"These lessons are in our old books. Can we not see their enormous import? What a profound difference there is between a society based on such principles and ours, in which arbitrary regulations, antiquated laws inadequate for our present needs, credulity, superstition and erroneous notions of all kinds predominate. So, without resolving to dogmatise on special questions of authority, property, labour, and so many other things, we can, whilst preaching the liberation of thought and the supremacy of reason in accordance with the Buddhist spirit, prepare men to find for themselves in all these problems normal and healthy solutions according to the surroundings and the various degrees of evolution of those who will work them out and will contribute most powerfully to their well-being and the continuance of their mental progress.

"To destroy ignorance does not exclusively mean to soar with already superior minds into the subtlest regions of the Dharma. Alas! Are not most of us still lisping its first lessons? To destroy ignorance, even in the religious sense in which we wish to consider it here, may be to teach an ignorant one to read, to deliver a popular scientific lecture before an unlearned audience, to stimulate humble brains to

reflection and reasoning.

"Need we insist further? We think it superfluous. We have seen that if Buddhism does not furnish us with definite social formulae, it has a thoroughly clear-sighted conception of evolution, and of the necessary changes that its progress demands in human relations and institutions. And more. Buddhism possesses, in the highest degree, the consciousness of the necessity of free individual development. Individuals' dreams of happiness are fitted to their mentality; their mentality depends upon the nature of the elements which enter into the perpetually moving and changing aggregate-forming which is called personality; and the meeting and union of these elements is determined by the great law of Karma. From this conception Buddhism concludes that we do not have the power of organising the details of the happiness or welfare of men whose mentality differs from our own. But it aims still higher and sees more widely in us, permitting us to show to all the sure way by which each one will be able to accomplish his dreams of happiness, and the criterion which serves to test the materials which he proposes to use to build it up with, in order that, believing he builds the place of his rest, he will not make for himself a new Gehenna.

"It might be useful to deal with this first point; we hesitate to touch on the second. Ought we to render

aid to those who suffer, when the cause of their suffering is altogether material and their dreams of happiness hover solely in the circle of earthly longings? Our sisters and brothers will pardon us for daring to put such a question. Has a single one of them ever experienced the slightest doubt on the subject? It is not a ceremony, a profession of faith, which hallows us and makes us true Buddhists, but simply the opening, in our hearts, of overflowing and universal compassion, which through the centuries permits us to commune with him who was above all and above everything (the Great Compassionate One).

"Is that classic meditation which consists of embracing in succession each quarter of the world, then the whole world, in an intense feeling of love (with the ardent desire of using oneself for the good of the beings which compose it) a simple amusement? Is that a fantastic recreation? Do we not rather see the indication of the definite goal towards which this rapture tends, namely, to throw ourselves as untiring combatants into the struggle against suffering?

"Christians have the legend of the Saviour who gave his life for the deliverance of humanity. We have others which open before us more widely the vast expanse of charity. Who, then, can forget this story? The land is wasted with drought and famine. In the

forest which the terrible Indian sun has burnt up, the Buddha is walking. He is in one of his many existences which preceded his deliverance. He is yet but a pilgrim on the path which leads to Bodhi. On the other side of a thicket a tigress dying with hunger lies amidst her expiring young ones. Too weak to attack the man who is passing, she turns her eyes towards the prey which is escaping from her. A supreme longing lights them up; a memory of the joyful frolics in the cool nights, a vision of murmuring springs, the maternal instinct in despair and a passionate attachment to existence, all these flash at the same time in her look. The Buddha [4] stops, contemplates the miserable creature for a moment, weighs his deed, and then, quite calmly, turns from the path to this lowly animal pain, and delivers up his body for food. The very exaggeration of this symbolical act is a lesson to us. Who would dare to unfeelingly pass by human anguish asking for bread and the little joys of earth, and afterwards call himself a follower of a doctrine which pushed its dream of compassion so far?

"And if we tried, in spite of all things, to avoid the imperious duty of removing suffering from our unfortunate brothers, pretending that our mission consists solely in the preaching of complete Deliverance and not in lightening the burden of social miseries, should we not immediately be

stopped by the indissoluble union in man of the mental and the physical element? Do we not know that any boundary betwixt the two is purely arbitrary? Does not experience prove to us the impossibility of directing, towards the summits of Buddhist doctrine, the thoughts of those men whom industrialism reduces to the state of living tools, whom it leaves at the gate of the factory or the mine, enfeebled, brutalised, incapable of the smallest cerebral effort? Should we not prove that our apostleship was illusory and hypocritical if we contented ourselves with repeating in their ears, which fatigue has rendered deaf, the words of deliverance? Is not our mission to prepare for them by our efforts a more human life in which their mentality can progressively evolve, until they are permitted to conquer by themselves that which no saviour can bring as a gift: Redeeming Intelligence. 'Go ye now, and wander for the gain of the many, out of compassion for the world.' Thus has our Master spoken; let us not discuss the meaning of this command, but GO even as he has bidden us."

Since the time when Mme Alexandra David-Néel wrote these words, industrial conditions in the West have substantially improved. In general, there is more abundant leisure, and education is more readily available to those who desire it. The problem in some countries now is rather that large numbers of people

have more leisure than they are capable of using beneficially for themselves, despite the opportunities for cultural advancement that have been offered to them. Yet her words are still true for countless numbers of the under-privileged all over the world, and so they still have meaning for us today (perhaps a more urgent message than when she wrote them). Buddhists, particularly in those parts of the world where they are in control of the material resources, should never allow to fade from their minds the occasion when the Buddha declined to preach the Dhamma to a hungry man until that man had been fed; it contains a lesson that is too often overlooked.

It should be remarked that, in the story of the Bodhisatta cited by Mme Alexandra David-Néel above, if turning "from the path to this lowly animal pain" is intended to mean turning away from the path to Bodhi in order to assuage a purely physical need of someone else, the interpretation is not quite correct. The act of self-renunciation was performed to *advance* the Bodhisatta on the way to Supreme Buddhahood; for, unlike the Arahat, the aspirant to the highest office of all (that of the World Teacher) has to practice such sacrifices of the self (if not literally in this way, at least in ways no less rigorous and difficult, through many successive lives). This constitutes the Pāramitā by which he acquires the powers of one who is fitted to turn the Wheel of the

Law. As the *gātha* explains:

> "This body of flesh I wear
> Just for the world's welfare."

Seen in this light, it was not merely to provide a passing alleviation of suffering that the ultimate sacrifice was made, but in order to gain the insight, and the extraordinary power of teaching, which would bring to a total end the suffering of innumerable beings in a later time. That power, bought at so heavy a price, is the goal that ennobles an act which might appear somewhat extravagant if considered as the sacrifice of a human life merely to afford a temporary relief to the pain of a wild beast.

It must be understood as part of an arduous process of self-transcendence, the final object of which is the perfection of mind and of faculties found only in a Supreme Buddha. Whether the Jātaka is taken literally or symbolically, the truth it teaches is this: the necessity of complete renunciation of the illusory concept of selfhood, and the inflexible resolution of a Bodhisatta.

The Value of Buddhism to the Western Mind

The question of where Buddhism stands in relation to the mundane concerns of day to day life was also dealt with by Victor E. Kroemer in the article, "The Value of Buddhism to the Western Mind" (1912), from which the following is an extract:

> "We have to live in the Western world, and adjust our lives according to its civilization. But there is nothingz to prevent our meditating on the principles of Buddhism, or the glorious philosophy that the Buddha propounded. And the effect on the individual of an understanding of this philosophy, and of meditation on its principles, is to give one a poise, a stability, an insight into causes and effects, into the meaning of all that happens in the world, that can come from no other source. It keeps the mind calm and collected in all circumstances, makes the body the instrument of the self, trains the mind to think only those thoughts that are good and pure and beautiful. And it has this advantage over all else that is taught in the West (especially at the present time when all kinds of freak cults are being followed and sought after): its principles are based on eternal verities, they have stood the test of time for 2,500 years, and they are as fresh and practical today as they ever were (and are likely to be so until a new Buddha arises to restate them in the course of ages).
>
> "What is the use of seeking solutions for problems in directions that only intensify the causes by

destroying the effects, when in philosophic Buddhism we have a clear statement of all the causes which produce all the troubles and sorrows of existence? The cause of sorrow is desire, the cessation of sorrow is attained by conquering love of self and lust of life. Apply this to any Western problem, and there is the antidote. People will continue to have sorrow as long as their minds are centered in the causes that produce sorrow, and will be released from sorrow when the causes of the cessation of sorrow are found and practiced. True, sorrow in the larger sense is an outcome of manifested existence, and here again the antidote to sorrow lies in the cessation of birth and death, the overcoming of the desire for manifested existence.

"So to the Western Mind, Buddhism shows the purpose of all existence, the object of our life here, and the goal to which all is tending. It goes behind the veil of illusion into the reality beyond, and teaches fundamental and basic principles derived from the Buddha's enlightenment and insight into the working of the scheme of things. And in Buddhism, in whatever form it ultimately comes to the West, lies the solution of all the social problems, all the unrest, that exist in the Western World. The blending of the East and West will give to the West philosophy, and to the East self-government and economic progress, and in the unity of both of these

lies the salvation of the world. That is our firm conviction and our best belief. We pay our reverence to the Teacher who gave us this great light so many years ago, and trust that his principles and philosophy will evermore increase in the West."

The Concept of Personal Evolution

The strong appeal made by the Buddhist concept of personal evolution is apparent from the frequency with which it appears in the writings of the early European Buddhists. The following is an excerpt from an article by Hodgson Smith: "The Life and Teachings of the Lord Buddha" (1910):

> "In looking at the world around and within, the Buddha saw a gradual process of evolution. He did not shut His eyes to what had before so saddened Him: the struggle for existence, the incessant warfare which goes on between plant and plant, and animal and animal for the means of subsistence. But with His illuminated vision He saw, as the result of this struggle, evolving life, which needed a succession of higher and higher forms for its expression. He lived at a time when superstition was rife, when men thought that their conditions and character depended upon the gods, who could be persuaded to help or

hinder as they were worshipped and sacrificed to by their followers. In the Tevijja Sutta we find a very curious account of the practices of some of the religious teachers (Brahmans) of the day, and if these were performed by them, what must have been the state of the mass of the people!

"These teachers got a living by divination from marks on the body; by auguries; by the interpretation of dreams and omens; by divinations from the manner in which cloth and other things have been bitten by rats; by sacrifices to the god of fire; by offerings of food and of liquids ejected from the mouth; by bloody sacrifices; by teaching spells for preserving the body, for determining lucky sites; for protecting fields; for luck in war; for protection against ghosts, goblins, and so forth; by guessing the length of life; by pretended knowledge of the language of beasts; by foretelling future events; by predicting earthquakes; by pretending that the eclipse of the moon or of the sun will have such and such effect; the rising of the sun, moon, or planets, cloudy or clear, will have such and such an effect; by teaching spells to procure prosperity, or to cause adversity to others; to remove sterility; to produce dumbness, locked-jaw, deformity, or deafness. All these the Buddha stigmatised as low arts and lying practices, and turned the attention to the great law of cause and effect.

"All that is, is the result of antecedent causes. This is recognised by us now in the material world, but the Buddha proclaimed it as operative not only in the material but in the emotional, mental and moral worlds. This great law of cause and effect is a just law, bringing to each one of us, neither more nor less than we ourselves have earned. For to the Buddhist as to the Hindu, this law of cause and effect is not limited to the present life or to the life beyond the grave, but continues through all our cycles of lives; is, indeed, a universal law. It is true it is operative here and now. As we think, so we tend to become, thought being the most important factor in the building of character. While desire brings us to the place where it may obtain satisfaction, action has a gradual but sure effect upon our circumstances. We know this by reflection upon our own life and observation of the lives of others.

"We can see, in our own case, how the nature of our thoughts during our present life has gradually built up our character, a character as varied as our thoughts and feelings; and our desires have brought us opportunities, first in one direction and then in another; our acts, being the outer expression of our thoughts and desires, have more or less modified our circumstances. Of course there is no real separation between thought, feeling and action, but only a predominance now of one and now of the other; the

whole man thinks and feels and acts. What we recognise in ourselves we also observe in others, and there is every reason to think that birth and death are but incidents in the working of this law of cause and effect.

"Thus the Buddha taught that each life was the result of all lives before it along one particular individual line. I have had one line of past lives, you have had another; therefore our present characters differ because our past has been different, and we are each the result of the whole of our past. As my physical body is the result of one series of ancestors, and your physical body is the result of another series, so my character is the result of one series of lives, and your character is the result of another series. The doctrine of reincarnation of *character* is the complement of the evolution of the body. "Each life the outcome of our former living is." Just as we now are, so we have made ourselves by our past thoughts, desires and acts. We are our own architects and our own builders, and, if the building is not to our liking, we can set to work to alter and improve.

"Here we all are, then, according to the teaching of the Buddha, revolving upon this wheel of birth, decay, death, life elsewhere, and then re-birth in other surroundings, but very generally the old attachments under new forms. Gradually the character evolves. It slowly acquires aptitudes and

faculties, and at last learns to discriminate why it is bound on the Wheel of Change. The Buddha saw that it was Desire that brought the man back time after time to the round of earth-life, and He proclaimed to all who would listen a way to cast off the fetters binding the man. The great cause of human misery the Buddha saw to be 'Ignorance', and, in order to dispel this ignorance and lead men to become wise, He taught the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eight-Stepped Path."

Why look back?

The reaction against a materialistic outlook which saw in religion nothing more than the reflection of man's uncertainty and fear in the face of natural powers that he had not yet succeeded in understanding or controlling to his own satisfaction, is brought out in a thoughtful article by Jeno Lenard on "Buddhism in Modern Western Thought" (1912). By bringing Buddhism into comparison with the theistic creeds to which this form of explanation more suitably applies, the writer shows both an essential difference and an organic development in the religious consciousness, both of which mark Buddhism off from what may be termed the religions of compensatory myth. His conclusions may be summed up in the following extracts.

"One of the outstanding characteristics of the present day is the renaissance of religious thought and feeling. The so-called positive religions (Christianity with its two hundred and forty sects; Judaism and Mohammedanism; the various scientific religions, such as Haeckel's Monism, Professor James' Pragmatism and Ostwald's Energetism; and finally that unique religion which stands in solitary grandeur in a class by itself: Buddhism) are showing renewed force and activity. Philosophy is studied, Ethical Societies and Free Thought organisations flourish, and on all sides we see this mighty forest of the human intellect budding forth with the vigour of awakened spring.

"The primary objects of interest are the abstract questions which lie at the very roots of morality and ethics. In those sections of the community where the first consideration of existence, the economic, is more or less satisfactorily settled (but even where the question of one's daily bread absorbs the bulk of thought and reflection), the questions 'Why?', 'Whence?' and 'Whither?' still arouse considerable interest. Undeterred by the blatant flamboyancy of materialistic energy, religion (that is to say, the problems of morality and ethics and metaphysics) maintains its even course.

"In religion, as in every other sphere of human inquiry, growth and development follow the great

law of evolution, and we find ourselves confronted with an ever-increasing stream of differentiations. Indeed, this progress has reached such a pitch that it is almost impossible to secure even such a general view of the field of speculative philosophy as could be taken as a fair representation of its outlines and general tendencies. Of course all persons of culture and education may examine such systems as they care to, and pick and choose according to their disposition and fancy; but we desire to bring 'these varying units into groups of species, and scientifically to compare their merits one with the other'. Which, then, is the standpoint from which we can gain a clear and impartial view?

"Truth is the test by which all science (empirical or otherwise) stands or falls, and should constitute a platform which will give us a firm and solid standing.

"We will take empirical, experimental, scientific truth as being the nearest approach to absolute verity which human insight, thought and knowledge can attain; and will see how far these various religions harmonise with what we know, from research and experience, to hold good as truth.

"Religions are born almost daily before our eyes in the laboratories of German, English, American, and French Universities and Scientific Institutions; in the

centres of intellectual culture; in the studies of independent and more or less officially persecuted savants like Ostwald, Haekel, Mach and Bergson; and in the minds of the toilers with their new religion of human solidarity: the Gospel of Socialism.

"The connection between Buddhism as a living modern system of thought and Agnosticism, Free Thought and Modern Science has often been discussed, both in Buddhist circles and in this Review. Nothing gives stronger impetus to the study of Buddhist Modernism than the ever-spreading knowledge that there is a connection between Buddhism and all these spheres of intellectual energy, and that by this connection each and all gain mutual support.

"Isolated individual efforts to clear away the must of centuries are strong in themselves, but lack that forceful solidarity which only a religion can give. Buddhism is a religion which fulfils the requirements of the innocent heart of the child, the critical intelligence of the man, the sweet charm of the maiden, and the mature serenity of the matron. There is only one religion which makes this universal appeal, which is the hallmark of philosophic genius, and that religion is the system of Gotama the Buddha.

"'Why look back twenty-six centuries?' is a question

that is often asked. Why should we not look forward to the genius of our own day? The answer is simply because we have no such living universal religious genius. For the same reason we go back to Euripides, Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Goethe for the greatest tragedy; to Homer for the perfection of epic poetry; to Euclid, Aristotle, Plato, Dante, Schiller, and Beethoven for the greatest achievements in their respective spheres. It is conservatism in the best sense of the word, and is wholly in accordance with what we consider best in our own day: the Middle Path.

"There are more Buddhists than we dream of. It matters not whether those who lead a noble life of refined ethics really call themselves followers of the Buddha, whether they belong to any Buddhist society, whether they have ever even heard the name of the Buddha (who never asserted that whosoever believes in him shall enjoy eternal bliss, and whosoever has unfortunately never heard of him shall be for ever lost). Buddhism has no need of monks or pagodas, or of compulsory teaching, so long as day by day the leading ideas of Buddhism gain ground simply by reason of their own merits.

"Evolution and Periodicity are the lights of Science and of Buddhism. The idea of doing good is gradually becoming divorced from belief in a special retribution after death in Heaven and Hell. The

world is beginning to do good for its own sake. The law of absolute causality is spreading far and wide, and the idea of an omnipotent being, god, trinity, or power, distributing eternal bliss or punishment, is fading away from an intellectual world.

"Like a wave of Idealism breaking against the sordidness of Materialism, new prophets preach the law of selfless love (of *maitri*, not *kāma*) [5] of looking up and away from the heart's desire for material and transient things (anicca) to the nobler, happier life of selflessness (*anattā*), and the cardinal truth of human life, the life of Suffering (*dukkha*).

"We know how to classify, how to name and judge these things, because we are humble pupils of our teacher; what he taught was not transient dogma but absolute verity, and it has passed down to us through fifty generations. The light has been blurred at times by priest and peasant; the dust of centuries lies thick on many of its tenets. But with our intellect we may clear away the dross from the pure gold, which shines as brightly now as it once gleamed forth beneath the Bo tree. Let all of us who enjoy its splendour be thankful for our privilege; let us wander forth and preach the Good Law wherever there are ears to hear; let our aim be to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness, the Kingdom of the Good Law."

Peace or war?

It has already been mentioned that the increasing possibility of a European war formed part of the background against which these articles were written. By 1912 the probability had become so strong that it could not be ignored by any writer who claimed to speak for his generation and its problems. So we find *The Buddhist Review* in that year featuring an essay by Marr Murray on "The Basis of Peace". The extracts that follow show how the writer interpreted the situation in the light of his Buddhist convictions.

> "For our present purpose we will take two things as granted: first, that War with all its attendant horrors is bad, cruel and debasing, and therefore, undesirable; and second, that Peace with its joys, being the opposite of War, is most excellent and desirable. Assuming this much, we propose to search out some method by means of which War may be utterly annihilated, and its place taken by perpetual Peace with its infinite vista of progress.
>
> "It is obvious that some method is necessary. The human mind is so constituted, that it is affected by no innovation that is not persistently presented in some systematic and coherent manner. Every age has had its thinkers to weave their dreams of peace into visions of Republics, Utopias and Arcadias. But none of these disjointed efforts has borne fruit, for the

simple reason that the soil has not been prepared for their reception. Mankind is a garden, and its finest blooms cannot come until the whole has been carefully cultivated in the right way. That is the object of our search: the right method of cultivation for the delicate blossom of Peace.

"In the history of the human race, how have the truly great, lasting changes (as distinct from the merely temporary) been effected? Let us take one or two of the outstanding landmarks and examine them. The art of Greece, the standard of aesthetics for all time, could have arisen in no other age and amongst no other people. It is the result of blending a religion, laden with the fragrance of the beauty of Nature, with a democracy full of keen intellectuality. The rise of Christianity was based upon the yearning for liberty and happiness of a democracy crushed beneath the tawdry load of a decadent and bestial materialism. The growth of Science, the wresting from Nature of her secret wonders, is founded upon the innate curiosity and thirst for truth of a people who had outgrown their gods and were making new ones. These three far-reaching changes were democratic in the fullest sense of the word. They depended in no wise upon the whims of princes or the wisdom of legislatures; their foundation was the temperament of the people. That same foundation will, and must, serve for the coming of World Peace,

the most sublime of all the dreams that have ever enriched the brain of man.

"What is War but the direct result of the sensual glorification of the ego? Victory, lordship, empire, and the rest of them prove upon examination to be composed of nothing but the gross lust of the great 'I am,' decked out with the flimsiest of tinsels. And like all lusts, they serve but to pile misery upon misery. World Peace must therefore arise from the subjugation of the ego, from the higher thinking and higher doing of humanity; in other words, an advance in morality must be the forerunner of Peace. Morality is no exception to the law of rhythms. It does not sweep onward at a level speed, but has its alternate phases of progress, stagnation, decadence, and renewed progress. It is like a climber towards the light: it climbs up a space, then, proud of its accomplishment, it relaxes its efforts, it makes no progress and finally slips down a little. A new effort is made, and with a burst of energy the lost ground is regained and the advance continues.

"The method which we seek, then, is the stimulus which will urge morality to make the necessary leap forward. We have to find that system of blended ideas which will induce an ethical enthusiasm in mankind and permanently elevate its temperament. In other words, we have to find the right religion.

"All religions, no matter how absurd and foolish they may appear, whether we believe in them or disbelieve in them, have one fundamental excellence. That excellence may be, and often has been, obscured in a greater or lesser degree by excrescences. Nevertheless it is there at the very roots. This excellence is comprised in the two words 'Be Good,' which is the one fundamental message which every religion seeks to instill into the heart of humanity. According to the broad methods by which religions seek to teach this simple lesson they may be divided into two classes. There are first of all those in which the theistic conception of the cosmos is predominant. They wander away from the present life, the regulation of which is their raison d'etre; and dabble in the supernatural, in the origin of the universe and in the prospects of some life on the other aide of the grave. The second class is devoted wholly to the problems of this present life. Their whole energy is devoted to the alleviation of actual existence and not frittered away on vain and visionary theories. As regards the creation of the universe and what follows death, this second class of religions maintains the purely agnostic view. It says frankly that we do not know, cannot know, and, moreover, that there would be no gain if we did know. The first class of religions, the theistic, comprises every religion from the Animism of the savage to the Christianity of the

European, except one. Buddhism forms the second class, and stands alone, unique in the history of ideas.

"Let us examine the first class of religions, and ascertain how much they can be expected to do towards preparing humanity for the establishment of World Peace. We know that they mean well, they intend to make men good. The point is how far can and do they fulfill their intentions, if at all? We must observe, however, that national morality is but the reflection of the morality of the individuals composing the nation, and it is useless to expect a cessation of war, that is to say, national strife, unless individuals cease first of all to strive amongst themselves. The individual ego must be thoroughly subdued before we can hope to check the national ego.

"Keeping this in mind, we will examine the first class, the ideas current throughout by far the greater portion of the globe. All theistic concepts deal with the supernatural; at the best, they are but guesses at the unknowable. Suppose yourself placed in a garden surrounded by a very high and unclimbable wall, so that you could never hope to see anything of the world beyond. You might spend the whole of your life (and more) in making guesses, each different from the preceding one, as to the exact constitution of the surrounding country which you can never hope to see, and so can never prove which guess was right

and which wrong. It is not necessary to dwell here upon the idiotic waste of time such a procedure would entail, except to notice the infinite number of guesses that are possible, and the hopelessness of verifying any one of them. That hopelessness is increased a thousandfold when, instead of guessing at concrete possibilities (such as the landscape hidden by a garden wall), we seek to make guesses at what lies on either side of life, at the unthinkable, the infinite, the absolute, and the eternal. Here, then, we have a fundamental disadvantage inherent in any theistic concept. It is capable of infinite variations, all equally plausible. Somebody has only to make a fresh guess, to satisfy a few people that he is right, and a new sect comes into existence. Another person makes a slightly different guess, a new sect arises, and so the process goes on, entailing an ever-increasing number of sects and creeds, each sure of its own supreme excellence, full of ecstatic enthusiasm, anxious to convert all and sundry, and profoundly jealous of its rivals. What more fruitful source of strife could be desired?

"True, the fundamental excellence underlies all these variations, but how can that excellence be realized when ideas are presented in such a wrangling mob? To carry weight with humanity at large they must be presented with consistent homogeneity, otherwise they are received with suspicion and lose the greater

part, if not all, of their force.

"And then, as regards morality, it tells mankind to be good, but what reason does it give for being so, in preference to submitting to the gaudy allurements of evil? It simply says, 'Be good and you will go to heaven; be wicked and you will go to hell.' Now this may be a potent form of argument with a child, when heaven is the near prospect of a jujube and hell the equally imminent prospect of punishment, but it can hardly be said to be an argument likely to have any lasting results with men and women. Even with the child it has no lasting effect, as the first opportunity for mischief proves. These are the things which really count in a religion, and although we admit that current systems mean well and have the highest motives, they have not, unfortunately, the strength, to fulfill their proposals. Theism is in the same position as a man who might say, when remonstrated with for supplying a wheel barrow instead of a motor-car, 'I really meant it for a motor-car.' We want a religion that will permanently raise the standard of mankind. If it cannot do that we have no use for it.

"From an examination of the inherent characteristics of the theistic system of urging man to be good, we therefore find that, instead of teaching with any success the simplest ethical virtue (love of one another), it ought, if our examination has been

correct, actually attain the opposite effect of perpetuating strife. Actual observation will prove how far we have been correct in our deductions.

"Before we will subscribe to the pessimistic view that humanity is incapable of any approach to perfection in this life, we will see if we cannot find a really successful religion, something that will not only tell men to be good, but will make all men good and *keep* them good. What are the characteristics of such a religion? Obviously it will have none of the defects we have already found in the current ideas of the Western world. It will be non-theistic, that is to say, will belong to the second class of religions. It will require neither priests nor ritual. It will deal wholly with this present life on this very earth. Its heaven will be the ground which all men tread. It will offer something now instead of problematical visions. And, finally, it will make a simple, dignified appeal direct to the common sense of every man on the face of the earth.

"There is only one religion which fulfils these conditions, and that religion is Buddhism. It is what may be called a pure and unadulterated religion. It deals only with positive facts and not with hypotheses, and the result is that Buddhism alone of all religions welcomes all progress and all true knowledge. Whereas the ideal of the opinions current in the West is necessarily an unquestioning faith

based upon comparative ignorance, no advance of knowledge can mar the truth or undermine the authority of Buddhism. It says to mankind: 'You are unhappy; the reason of your unhappiness lies in the base desires of your heart. Be purged of those desires, and you will be happy beyond your brightest dreams. Your actual present life will be a heaven or a hell; the choice rests with you alone. Nothing can save you from the hell that follows on the heels of base doing and base thinking; nothing can take from you the heaven which is the immediate result of right doing and right thinking. The simple Eightfold Path is the one road to bliss, and every man may walk upon it without the need of any guiding hand.' Peace must be founded on the temperament of mankind. A system is necessary to raise that temperament, and, of all the systems which have arisen, Buddhism with its Noble Eightfold Path alone holds out any hope to the world."

In their stand against war the Western Buddhists linked hands with the rationalist and humanitarian, but they had their own reasons for the position they took. They realised that the final price of non-violence in a violent world is sacrifice. Where others were prone to shirk the logical conclusion of the pacifist path, they were fully aware of it and accepted it. But to accept it is a decision that can be made only by each individual for himself. To one who has fully

attuned his mind to the Teaching of the Buddha, the final objective of the Unconditioned and Deathless state must always take a more important place than considerations of personal survival in a world dominated by delusion and pain. But at the same time, no one has a right to impose this view on others who are not ready to embrace it, nor should he condemn them if they (in his view, shortsightedly) prefer to fight for their existence and the survival of those they love. The anguish of choice is with us all the time, and each man must face and decide the issues for himself.

Buddhist Attitude to Death

In the same year as the preceding article (1912), we find the Buddhist attitude to death expressed in an article by Joseph Bryce. "An Opponent of Buddhism" is a refutation of Saint-Hilare, and most of the essay is beside our present purpose. But the following extracts are of interest in this connection:

> "Those terrible fears to which the thought of annihilation often gives rise, in the minds of those whose faith has been nurtured upon the hope which the soul-theory is said to afford, are wholly unknown to the Buddhist. 'There is this remarkable fact in Buddhism,' says the author of '*The Soul of a People*',

'that nowhere is any fear expressed of death itself, nowhere any apprehension of what may happen to the dead'. Buddhism is a creed of life and conduct. Its followers have always been happily free from that morbid, unhealthy tendency which broods over the fate of the hypothetical 'soul'. Whatever the natural change we call death may signify, it argues a misconception of the psychology of Buddhism to give it the materialistic interpretation which the term 'annihilation' implies. If the notion of a Universal Spirit into which the human soul is absorbed be absent from Buddhism, it nevertheless recognises the existence and continuance of the life of humanity, which is not a theory, but a truth which any cultured mind may apprehend. As all that constitutes our real selves, our thoughts and ideas, our emotions and aspirations, have their roots in the thought-life of humanity in the past, in like manner will our lives become re-incarnate in the life of humanity in the future. Even Christian philosophy regards it as a noble thing for a person to sacrifice his personal interests to the well-being of his fellow creatures: to lose, as it were, the sense of self, and become identified with the larger life of the whole human race. It, too, regards the passions and desires as inimical to high spiritual attainments, but the end and object of all its sacrifice and striving is individual reward in another life. That sharp distinction,

however, between life and death which the soul-theory has created is nowhere to be found in Buddhism. Nirvana, the peace which follows the entire subjection of evil desires, the absolute control and mastery of our thoughts and actions, can be attained here and now. That peace, which the troubles of this transient life are unable to disturb and the whispering voice of evil allurement cannot touch, is an ideal that in the life of the Buddha we find translated into actual experience. Nirvana is not attained either by crucifixion of the flesh or retirement from the world, but by the direction of our energies into right channels, and the absorption of our individual desires and our life's activities into the higher life and larger demands of the human race (in the realisation of the oneness of life). But this identification with the life and higher aspirations of humanity knows no severance, no cessation.

"Since the days of Saint-Hilaire, when men were accustomed to speak with confident dogmatism upon such subjects as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, a great change has taken place in the general intellectual attitude towards such assumptions. And if we examine the trend of mental and social efforts today, the modern spirit which is leavening religious thought, we shall find our human activities and ideals are being weaned from the hope of a 'life beyond the grave', and are being directed to

the present betterment and elevation of mankind. We see the best and noblest spirits of our time, without the hope of that future reward which was held to be a necessary inducement to a godly life, labouring unselfishly for a higher ideal, content with the satisfaction which a virtuous and intellectually active life always brings.

"Criticism of the Buddhist view of life and the Universe has spent itself against an impregnable rock. Modern thought (by a somewhat slow process, truly, but not the less surely) and the humanitarian activities of our age, are gradually gravitating towards the rational position adopted by the Buddha long ago. The whole structure of the supernatural, which has stood as a barrier to intellectual and moral progress, is crumbling away before the certainties of scientific knowledge. But the glories of Buddhism lie in the marvellous unity of its conceptions. The conclusions of physical science, of psychological investigation, and the attainments of moral truth, are all combined into one complete system in the philosophy of Gautama, and applied in a practical way to the business of life, in a manner that is unequalled in the history of any other faith. Upon this comprehensive nature of its fundamental doctrines and ideals rests the claim of Buddhism to meet the needs and aspirations of man, and its doctrine of universal brotherhood knits into a living

whole the hopes, feelings and sentiments of our common humanity."

By September 1914 the distant mutterings of war had burst out over Europe into the crash of drums and the thunder of heavy artillery. Overnight, the world had been plunged into a black frenzy of hate, a shrieking chaos in which all but a few voices of reason and temperance were drowned. For the Western Buddhists, who had turned to the Teaching of compassion and restraint out of a compelling sense of its necessity, the war was a critical test of the values they had chosen.

As individuals they reacted in different ways, for the issues to be decided were not so clear cut as those of the conflict that was to follow twenty-five years later. Some refused to fight in a war that they felt could have been averted by curbing the activities of a few international financiers and armaments manufactures. Others accepted the situation in which as laymen they found themselves, and went to war with the rest. As it was in England, so it had been in Germany, where there was also a promising Buddhist movement, inspired by the writings of Paul Dahlke and led by Karl Seidenstucker. From the year 1905 the latter had been editor of a German Buddhist magazine which was the first of its kind in the West.

The new era, which was to grow into our present nuclear nightmare, had arrived at puberty and was being initiated into manhood with the traditional rites of savage humanity.

Or, like a nice, civilized English boy at his first kill in the hunting field, it was having its face tastefully blooded.

In the midst of this idiotic carnival of destruction, this most preposterous beginning to a century of progress, the tiny "I" was carefully guarded. In a street of South London, one of the first to take the Yellow Robe, the Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteya, was fighting quite a battle of his own, a personal war against poverty and increasing sickness. By day he worked on inventions which he hoped would bring much-needed money for the movement, and in the evenings lectured on the Dhamma (when his health permitted) to a small group of earnest students. It must have been one of these, C.R.J., who wrote in *The Buddhist Review* of September that year the article that follows, entitled "The Fruits of Meditation".

The Fruits of Meditation

> "Recollectedness as regards duties is dependent on memory and on goodwill. The principal meditation for strengthening the memory is that which is concerned with remembering backward in sequential order the events of one life or of many other lives, and in a paper dealing with meditations rather than their fruits a consideration of the process of this meditation would be of great interest.

"Recollectedness considered with regard to environment implies heedfulness of the particular dangers to be encountered at any time.

"Probably one of the hardest forms of recollectedness that a Buddhist has to acquire is the continual remembrance that there never can be any justification for ill will in its various degrees, from annoyance to anger and hatred. The New Testament command to forgive one's brother seventy times seven may perhaps have appeared a counsel of perfection, but the forgiveness of an injury, when one has had time to cool down, is as nothing compared to never receiving an injury. Yet this is what Buddhism requires. It teaches that a man's troubles spring through himself, not from an external enemy. If this be realised, a host of words coined to express a sense of grievance against another vanish from our vocabulary. As Maurice Maeterlinck puts it in 'Wisdom and Destiny':

> Around the upright man there is drawn a wide circle of peace, within which the arrows of evil soon cease to fall; nor have his fellows the power to inflict moral suffering upon him. For indeed if our tears can flow because of our enemies' malice, it is only because we ourselves would fain make our enemies weep. If the shafts of envy can wound and draw blood, it is only because we ourselves have

shafts that we wish to throw. If treachery can wring a groan from us, we must be disloyal ourselves.

"It is in the power of every man who follows the teaching to turn any injury, abuse or deception that others may practise against him into a means of helpfulness, even as the fiery ashes which Māra rained down on the Buddha fell round him only as flowers. Over and over again do we meet with this perfect Recollectedness in the history of the Buddha. A Brahman reviles him as an outcast. Instead of answering with harsh abuse, the Buddha asks the Brahman if he knows what constitutes an outcast. Having by his own magnanimity disarmed the Brahman's ill will, the Master proceeds to enlighten him as to who are really outcasts by their own deeds. Thus the occasion that appeared so unpromising bestows a follower.

"So also, when as Bodhisattva, he is reclining weak and ill in a cemetery and is there tormented by a troop of badly disposed children, far from causing anger, the incident merely serves to strengthen his fortitude.

"The Recollectedness, which causes every event that comes charged with some burning sting to leave instead its store of honey, is equally powerful in subduing the occasions for covetousness and sloth.

Being born in princely circumstances, with everything favourable to a life of voluptuous self-indulgence, this does but sharpen his sympathy with the wretched, the old, the suffering, that is, the same unselfish heedfulness that marked the outset.

"There are some who say, 'The key-note of Buddhism is renunciation.' This is only the case if renunciation is based on enlightenment. Throughout the Jātakas there are numerous instances of great renunciations: the giving up of wealth, of favourite steeds, of wife and children, even of life itself (and this to people who were not worthy to receive such gifts). But all this, though of very great moral value, could not, by itself, bring out purification. Consequently, the renunciations that the Buddha had made in the past were not taken as a precedent after he had attained enlightenment. Thus, when his cousin Devadatta, ambitious for leadership, asked the Buddha to resign in his favour, the request was declined. There are some whose destiny leads them to carry out the principle of renunciation, even though their deed can ripen into no visible fruit (for example, by giving time, money and effort to the first stranger). Such sacrifices have value in rooting out the false, illusory self, but they yet fall far short of that offering, which at enlightenment, is made, not to any individual, or even to any cause, but to all the world.

"Taking the seven elements of Enlightenment in the

order here given, and starting with Energy, the question arises: 'How may this be developed?' Thera Ānanda Metteya makes use of the simile of a complicated engine in which energy generated in the boiler may be made to perform a great amount of work. On the other hand, owing to the defective adjustment of the parts, it may largely be dissipated and wasted by friction at various points. In the same way, human energy may be lost through a number of leakages or *āsavas*. Through these *āsavas* the energy that should be giving value to a particular action or state of mind is being lost on vain desire, on keeping in existence something evil, on spreading error, and on mental degradation. For the energy supporting the whole evil of the world, whether vice, intemperance, organised fraud, or apparently detached crimes and weaknesses, is energy leaking from the right channels. As in an irrigation system continuous leakages at a few points make wide fields less fruitful, so the *āsavas* of an individual reduce the energy for righteousness of a wide circle.

"The second element is recollectedness. This term is used to cover a very wide ground in the Buddhist system. It occurs as one branch in the Noble Eight-Fold Path as Right recollectedness. Far more must be understood by it than self-possession or presence of mind. Self-possession is included, as well as presence of mind, but it further includes a consciousness that

is far greater than that expressed in these. The cultivation of this quality is considered so important that it is enjoined in the disciple during his whole waking hours until he has arrived at attainment.

"It includes recollectedness of body, of states of consciousness, of duties, and of environment. As regards the body, it is to be attained by keeping watch over such processes as breathing and walking, considering them merely as physiological processes involving certain muscles working in obedience to various ideas but in no wise governed by or containing a soul. Physically it includes an awareness of every action performed, and the causes and stimuli that have rendered possible such an action.

"The central truth of the Message of the Buddha is the doctrine of the possibility of deliverance from all sorrow. It is this which appeals to the minds of Eastern and Western people alike: the giving and the finding of happiness (the cause for satisfaction and peace) in every event that chances upon us and in every detail of our environment. This indeed is the *summum bonum* of this optimistic religion: happiness and the beyond of happiness (infinite, unspeakable peace). In the Mahāmaṅgala Sutta this idea is followed out through many stanzas. Satisfaction is found in ordinary and everyday occurrences, intercourse with friends and opportunities for helping kindred. This satisfaction is no different in

kind from that offered by some apparently more exalted external destiny that provides an opportunity of doing good from a prominent position, or discovering some transcendental truth.

"An example of this occurs in the following stanza:

> To support father and mother;
> To cherish wife and child;
> To follow a peaceful calling;
> This is the greatest blessing.
>
> Unselfishness provides the reward in the household life,
> And bestows it in the homeless one:
> Self-restraint and purity;
> The knowledge of the Noble Truths;
> The realization of Nirvana;
> This is the greatest blessing.

"But this acceptance of life never comes as the result of apathy or indolence. Nor is it the result of resignation to the will of some higher power. It has to be gained by earnestness, built up by untiring energy. Says the Lotus of the Good Law:

> "'The wise man is indefatigable; not even the thought of fatigue will arise in him. He has no listlessness and so displays to the assembly the strength of charity."'

"… The satisfaction and the enlightenment that Buddhism offers is built up of seven elements: energy, recollectedness, penetration, lofty enthusiasm, tranquillity, concentration and even-mindedness. By the acquisition of these elements or factors it is possible, the doctrine affirms, to suppress in life all the varying causes that give rise to sorrows (whether great or small) and to amass such a store of good, of wisdom, as to be utterly beyond the reach of evil destiny. Nor is this an incredible teaching when one considers what it is that furnishes an evil destiny with its opportunities for injury. When we examine the nature of the things and events that have caused us trouble, have they not been almost invariably the fruit of faults we have harboured, idle cravings, sloth, a hasty or unforgiving temper? But if the trouble is beyond these causes, does it not often spring from a refusal to acknowledge natural laws as being inevitable in their working? Nor is the necessity for exercising all the elements of enlightenment any the less when the deed a man is engaged in performing is one to which he would ascribe a Buddhist motive.

There are some who say, "The key-note of Buddhism is renunciation." This is only the case if renunciation is based on enlightenment. Throughout the Jātakas there are very numerous instances of great renunciations; of the giving up of wealth, of favourite steeds, of wife and children, even of life itself——and

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leakages or *āsavas*. Through these *āsavas* the energy that should be giving value to a particular action or state of mind is being lost on vain desire, on keeping in existence something evil, on spreading error, on mental degradation. For the energy supporting the whole evil of the world, whether vice, intemperance, organised fraud, or apparently detached crimes and weaknesses, is energy leaking from the right channels. As in an irrigation system continuous leakages at a few points make wide fields less fruitful, so the *āsavas* of an individual reduce the energy for righteousness of a wide circle.

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The recollectedness which causes every event that comes charged with some burning sting to leave instead its store of honey is equally powerful in subduing the occasions for covetousness and sloth. Being born in princely circumstances, with everything favourable to a life of voluptuous self-indulgence, this does but sharpen his sympathy with the wretched, the old, the suffering. The same unselfish heedfulness that marked the outset of his mission accompanied it to the end. When a few hours before the Great Teacher's death Subaddha comes to him with a question and Ānanda would save his Master, already exhausted, from the exertion of an interview, the Buddha asks that Subaddha shall be brought in and then quickly removes his perplexity.

"Next to recollectedness comes the kindred quality penetration. As regards any phenomenon, penetration is an insight into its transitory nature, and into the immediate and remote causes of its

existence. As regards persons, penetration signifies an insight into the mental state of the person at a particular time, together with a recognition of his general character. Every man carries his entire past about with him and invites each chance acquaintance to study it. One possessing insight perceives in their actual condition mind that is given to craving, or to hatred, or to delusion, as well as one that is permanently free. Likewise, he sees clearly the nature of his own mental states and actions, and the more insight he acquires, the less readily will he find himself able to dignify his faults. For many a man would find it hard to indulge in malice or enmity were he not to find a means of persuading himself that for the moment it was needful in the interests of virtue.

"The legend of Kisagotamī and the gold illustrates the nature of insight. In this parable a merchant, because he does not use his wealth rightly, sees it transformed into ashes, and is told that the ashes will remain until some one recognises its true nature. He exposes these ashes for sale in his stall in the bazaar, but only excites the ridicule of the passers-by. Then Kisagotamī passes by and she recognises that the seeming ashes are actually gold.

"The merchant in this fable had this advantage: that he knew the ashes had been gold and might be gold again; and so he kept a wary eye on it. How greater

the tragedy of him who only realises what is life's veritable gold (wisdom, pity and love) when he sees it gathered by another! It is true that it only needs someone with more penetration to see in the ashes of a human life possibilities of the finest gold. Was it not thus that the robber Aṅgulimāla was saved by the Buddha, and that not in the sense of salvation from punishment, but made wise, compassionate, loving, by meeting a being of infinite insight who was able to look upon him without fear and without loathing.

"Penetration plays an important part in the overcoming of covetousness and of morbid ambition since it is the act of looking beyond externals. Among the disciples of the Buddha there doubtless many who, like him, renounced not only the state of prosperity and felicity which they already enjoyed, but also prospects of a career brilliant with stole and majesty. But such renunciations are not necessarily "sacrifices" in the common use of the word. The fortunate individual may have perceived that a life of peace, serenity and greater usefulness, undisturbed by cares or remorse, is a destiny that may well be chosen in preference to one of pomp and circumstance. Here, as in all things, it is the inside of the cup only that matters.

"Penetration is necessary also to perceive the eternal, the sameness, of men, things and events, beneath their apparent variety. 'Let us look upon all things as

having the nature of space, as permanently equal to space, without essence, without substantiality.'

"The word '"'penetration" is here intended also to indicate a perfectly ripened insight into, or understanding of, the doctrine in its bearing on life. No truth ever can be fully grasped by the reason alone. And no moral truth can ever be fully expressed in words.

"The next element of enlightenment is rendered 'Lofty Enthusiasm' by the translator of the Majjhima Nikāya. Elsewhere, a translator has rendered the Pali '*pīti*' by the term 'pleasurable interest,' which helps us to understand more fully what meaning is intended. It is not so much an exceptional devotion to some worthy cause as an entire attitude of mind, a buoyancy which is able to enter into everything that destiny offers with zest and vigour.

"Solitude has always been productive of enthusiasm when enjoyed by great men. Most founders of religions have been described as conceiving their various systems in forest or desert. The enthusiasm of Buddhism, however, has nothing in common with the fanaticism which has sometimes accompanied religions nurtured in the desert (being saved by its empathy and reasonableness).

"As in olden days, so now, solitude and meditation are still the only reliable sources of fresh interest and

enthusiasm. Communion with nature does not create boredom and ennui, but relieves them.

“Tranquillity or serenity is the next factor of enlightenment to be considered; and in considering it, there is borne home to us the deepening conviction that these elements of enlightenment are truly fruits (ends in themselves), even more than they are means to ends (not mere ways of getting free from sorrow, but the actual freedom itself). Especially is this apparent of tranquillity, which to us Westerners suggests nothing of the effort or accomplishment associated with some of the other factors, for example, energy. Yet Tranquillity is not, in Buddhist thought, associated with sloth. Some prejudiced travellers in Buddhist countries have seen monks seated in meditation and have seized the occasion to attribute to them laziness. But this meditation is useful, profitable. The feverish West groans for the lack of it. Without the slightest verbal inaccuracy it can be asserted that time is infinitely more profitably employed in meditation than in a hundred forms of activity directed to non-utilitarian ends (including the making of scientific instruments of warfare and battleships), which activity will cease when right meditation has shown the superiority of tranquillity. For it must be remembered that a state of tranquillity is also a state of safety provided it is tranquillity in the Buddhist sense of the word.

“Bhaddiya, a prince among the Sakyans, although he was strongly attracted to a life of ambition and glory, yet for the sake of his friend Anuruddha renounced the layman’s life and became a disciple of the Buddha. While living in retirement in the forest he was heard by one of the other Bhikkhus to give utterance over and over again to the ecstatic exclamation, ‘O happiness! O happiness!’

“Some of the bhikkhus who heard him reported the circumstance to the Buddha and suggested that Bhaddiya was recalling the past happiness that he had relinquished, and was discontented. The Buddha thereupon sent for Bhaddiya and inquired why he had so often uttered the expression, ‘O happiness’. The bhikkhu replied:

> Formerly, Lord, when I was a prince, I had a guard both in my private apartments, outside my palace, in the town and in the country. Yet though, Lord, I was thus so protected, I was fearful, anxious, guarded, distrustful, and alarmed. But now, Lord, even when in the forest, at the foot of a tree, I am without fear or anxiety, trustful and not alarmed. I dwell at ease, subdued, secure, with mind as peaceful as an antelope’s. It was when calling this to mind that I cried, “’O happiness!’”

“The Buddha then uttered this stanza:

'The man who harbours no harsh thoughts
within him;
Who cares not whether things are thus or thus;
His state of joy, freedom from grief or care,
The very gods obtain not to behold!'

Cullavagga 7.1.20
(Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 20)

"Concentration, the word usually adopted for the next element, may not convey to those unacquainted with Buddhist terms much meaning. This element of enlightenment is concerned with acquiring a steadiness and fixity of the mind, just as a calf is bound to a post to prevent its wandering. The Concentration of the mind is carried through various stages; and for its attainment certain meditations have been prescribed. Though the importance of Concentration has been firmly focused on Buddhism, its attainment is not confined to those who follow this Dhamma; it is common to all the higher religions. The inward illumination which is obtained as a recognisable concomitant of Concentration is mentioned several times by Professor James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. It has been described also as a 'diffused glow'; as a feeling of intense peace and satisfaction; and as an intense realisation of harmony with the universe, in which all sense of separateness is for the time lost.

"Last in this series of the elements of enlightenment is Even-Mindedness. The principal difference between this and tranquillity appears to me to be that whereas tranquillity is a state of mind considered in its aspect of freedom from desire, aversion and fear, Even-Mindedness is the description of that mind considered as utterly detached from all views, utterly uninterested in all the illusions and shadow plays of existence. In the Aṭṭhakavagga 13.11 (*Sacred Books of the East, X*), this aspect of enlightenment is described thusly:

> 18. The Muni, having done away with ties here in the world, is no partisan in the disputes that have arisen; is appeased among the unappeased; is indifferent, not embracing learning while others acquire it.
>
> 19. Having abandoned his former passions, not contracting new ones, not wandering according to his wishes, being no he is delivered from views, being wise, and he does not cling to the world, neither does he blame himself.'"

Lafcadio Hearn expresses this equanimity and what it may mean to a man of the twentieth century in his essay "Within the Circle (*Gleanings in Buddha Fields*)". He describes his torturing experience of realising

something of the mystery of past births. Then he sees the knowledge of Anattā, the emptiness of existence, which he expresses thusly:

> "Sky, sun and sea; the peaks, the plains; all splendours and forms and colours, are specters. The feelings and the thoughts and the acts of men, whether deemed high or low, noble or ignoble, all things imagined or done for any save the eternal purpose, are but dreams born of dreams, and begetting hollowness. To the clear of sight, all feelings of self, joy and pain, hope and regret, are alike shadows. Form and the names of form are alike nothingness. Knowledge only is real. And unto whomsoever gains it, the universe becomes a ghost.
>
> "Such understanding is not yours. Still to your eyes the shadow seems substance, darkness light, and voidness beauty. And therefore to see your former births could give you only pain.
>
> "It is on such a detachment, born of meditation and solitude, that even-mindedness depends.
>
> "Thus, enlightenment, that is, a Buddha, is not a gift from some Deity, is not some divine anointing; it is the fruit of meditation and

action purified by meditation. The light of wisdom that each is slowly and painfully gathering is not different in kind from that great radiance which dwells in the Master's life and Dhamma. It is by this Inward Light that his followers must walk, seeking no external guide, no external saviour, whether man or God.

"Therefore the Buddha gives us this message:

Be ye lamps unto yourselves.
Be ye refuges unto yourselves.
Look not to any other refuge.
The Dhamma is your lamp.
The Dhamma is your refuge.
Look not to any other refuge."

Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

———

The seven factors of enlightenment (*satta bojjhaṅga*), mentioned above in "Fruits of Meditation", are more accurately rendered as 1. mindfulness, 2. keen investigation of the dhamma (mental and physical phenomena), 3. energy, 4. rapture or happiness, 5. calm, 6. concentration, and 7. equanimity. The order in which they are placed is of great importance, since each factor grows out of the one preceding it.

The enumeration of the factors constituting *satipaṭṭhāna* (recollectedness) is also at fault. The four foundations of mindfulness are: 1. body, 2. feelings, 3. state of mind (or consciousness), and 4. mind-objects.

In *āsatipaṭṭhāna*, mindfulness is the pre-requisite for the investigation of the dhammas, or phenomena of mind and body. In the Noble Eightfold Path, it is really this mindfulness which is meant by the term sammā sati (right mindfulness); it is the practice of satipaṭṭhāna as a means to enlightenment. Its meaning of bare attention to the physical and mental phenomena, which is what gives to Satipaṭṭhāna its distinctive quality, is not fully brought out in the term "Recollectedness." The author has chosen to give it a more ethical connotation than it bears in the strictest sense. Whilst *sati* in the sense of *satipaṭṭhāna* is the real psychological basis for the realisation of impersonality (through making possible the investigation and analysis of the *dhammas*), and so produces ethically wholesome states of mind and conduct, it should not be identified with these. It stands to them in relation of the seed to plants. Yet so fully integrated is the Buddhist system of mind-development that sīla, or moral restraint, has to be cultivated before is attempted. It may be more accordingly said that the real flowering of moral conduct comes when the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna has been developed. The negative qualities of morality then find their consummation in true virtue. The condition in which morality is a restraint is no longer necessary, because there is no remaining bias towards the unwholesome in thought,

word or deed. Satipaṭṭhāna, therefore, is an instrument by which to purge one of self-delusion, and it is in this sense that it be understood as a factor of Enlightenment.

It should also be noted that the author does not give sufficient distinction to the state of mind denoted by concentration (*samādhi*). It is something more than a "diffused glow." That description more aptly ""applies to rapture (*pīti)*, not concentration. Concentration, in the words of Piyadassi Thera (*The Seven Factors of Enlightenment* "The **Wheel No. 1**), is "the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to an unflickering lamp in a windless place." It is a *fixing* of the chronically unsteady, wavering consciousness. Buddhist mental training recognises two degrees of concentration: a lower form, which is a fastening of the mental processes on a single, morally wholesome idea; and a higher concentration associated with the jhānic states. It is the latter that is meant when Samādhi is considered as an objective of Buddhist meditation. It is an intensified, supernormal degree of the lower form of concentration, one which excludes all the distractions of sense and of spontaneous mental imagery alike.

At the time the article was written, exact information regarding the technicalities of Buddhist mind-training was not easy to come by, but the writer gives a good general outline of what is to be expected from it. In the midst of war, thoughts such as these created centres of calm and dispassion in the storm of violence that raged all around. It is by such retentions of sanity in the midst of madness that

civilization is saved, again and again, in the recurring crises of history. The quiet voice that speaks out of man's higher consciousness may temporarily be drowned, but it speaks on and its message outlives the storm.

Among these early Western Buddhists a few names stand out, not only by reason of their devotion to the cause and their grasp of the Buddhist truths, but also by virtue of the literary skill which enabled them to give a vivid expression to the knowledge they had won. Some of them, like Bhikkhu ĪīSīlacāra, were true poets; others, like Edward Greenly, J.E. Ellam and the Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteyya, were gifted beyond the average in literary expression. To them and to others of their kind we owe a deep debt of gratitude: it was they who opened the eyes of their generation to an ancient wisdom long lost to the Western world. Many of them could not be represented in this short selection; their articles are too closely integrated to allow the necessary excisions to be made without damaging their form and content. But their work remains, and will remain long after the law of impermanence has claimed their memory, a lasting memorial to minds free and untrammeled by the prejudices and conventions of the period they lived in.

Like Wind Along the Waste

It is fitting that this all too brief and inadequate glance back at the beginnings of Buddhism in the West should conclude with a few passages from the writings of one who was among the most dedicated and active in their ranks, the late Francis J. Payne. The extracts that follow are from the close of an article by him, "Like Wind Along the Waste", that appeared in *The Buddhist Review* in the year 1909:

> "The human 'self' is illusive, and it requires all the persuasive eloquence of a Buddha to destroy the illusion. Man is fleeting, and, when once he grasps and lives this fact, the path of peace lies broad open before him. One state of consciousness gives place, in unerring sequence, to another. The sequence binds them together. The law of cause and effect is master. Throughout this varying scene we perceive its action, and whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap. The meaning of each deed and word is magnified a thousand-fold in the light of this law. When the desire for evil is translated into action, no power above or below, within or without, can trammel up the consequence. The contemplation of this awful truth must give us pause. The evil man will not escape unpunished, the good will not go unrewarded. For punishment and reward are not dealt out at the hands of some changeful being, but are woven into the very texture of Nature.
>
> "Why, then, be good, noble, just, and generous? Is it to please some great and omnipotent being, or,

lacking faith therein, are men to 'Do good because it is good to do good'? The mind in the latter case recoils at the folly of the reasoning. Man begins to ask, 'Why not eat, drink, and be merry?' Right conduct has no foundation, for the West has ceased to believe. But the Good Law is offered. Follow the Middle Path, says the Master. All existence is pointed with sorrow. Our happy moments come like brilliant lightning flashes to illuminate the sombre grey of life; but the grey is always there. Today we are joyous. As the Angel of Desire flies by we grasp his wings and bid him stay. Wife and family, parents and material goods, are given to the heart's desire. But amid the merry peals of joy, the rippling laughter and the shouts of triumph and pride, the low-tolling bell sounds, warning men that a change must come.

"To many it has come, and all who rejoice in the present must give thought to broken hearts and grief-stricken fellow mortals. The bond of brotherhood links men one to another, and to all that breathes and suffers. None durst grasp his cloak about him, and live the selfish life. The realisation of the fleeting nature of all things is a logical, true and compelling basis for right conduct. The contemplation of sorrow led the Master to a plan to conquer sorrow, that out of sorrow might proceed happiness. He that considers his brother must adopt the faith of love. The world satiated by desire, thirsting for peace, asks

for the way, and Buddhism shows the way. No demand for credulity is there. The Universe has a meaning. From life to life the weary road is trod. Each good act makes the next easy, progress is hastened, and the goal draws near. The last word in the riddle of human fate is not pessimism, but liberty, well-doing and hope."

Notes

1. Death-proximate Kamma, the last thought-moment that precedes rebirth consciousness. (Ed.)
2. One may question the advantages of civilization without weakening the argument. (Ed.)
3. Doubting whether it would be possible to make others understand the Dhamma. (Ed.)
4. Read Bodhisattva. (Ed.)
5. *Kāma*, that is, desire for pleasure; not *kamma*, deeds, character. (Ed.)

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