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Buddhism - and the religions of the Far East, 1942.

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BUDDHISM -- AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE FAR EAST

The Second Discourse in the Series

By
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At
The Temple

On
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There was a time when the religion of Buddhism was the religion of half of mankind. It is no longer a great religion in India as it was. But it did have some 130 to 140 millions of adherents or disciples in many parts of the Far East - in China, Japan, Burma and elsewhere in the world. It is a religion that never persecuted the people of other religions. It never made converts by the sword. It made its converts by peaceful persuasion.

The founder of this religion of Buddhism was Gantama Siddharta who belongs to a period in human history which is truly amazing. He belongs to that 6th and 7th Century before the Common Era which gave to the world simultaneously a Buddha in India, Zoroaster in Persia, Confucius and Lao-Tsze in China, Solon Herachitus in Greece, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah in Israel.

It was an amazing period, a period of vast spiritual and intellectual ferment throughout the world. The mind of man suddenly opened up to wrestle with the basic problems of human existence. Men sought to understand the universe, tried to solve the riddle of creation, the riddle of the beginning of all things, the riddle of man. These great colossal spiritual thinkers of mankind worked out certain religious concepts and ethical concepts which left their imprint upon all succeeding cultures of man from that time to the very present.

The founder of Buddhism, Gantama Siddharta was born in India during the 6th Century before the Common Era. He was born of the nobility. His father was chieftain or King over the people whom he governed. In his early life Gantama lived the life of an aristocrat and he enjoyed the education, comforts and environment which his position in life warranted. He was raised in a Palace as was Moses, unlike other great religious leaders who came from humbler stock, such as Mohammed who was a camel driver and Jesus who was a carpenter's son. But this has very little to do with ~~man's~~ genius. Genius has a way of overcoming the handicaps both of wealth and poverty.

So up to the age of 29 he led the normal life of a wealthy youth. Then something happened. A sharp break occurred in his life. Suddenly he tried to leave his home, his wife, child, friends, and comforts and set out as a peniless mendicant beggar in search for truth.

This sudden break, like all sudden breaks in all people, is really not sudden -- sudden only on the surface -- deeply stirred for a long time before the spiritual volcano erupted, so to speak.. Evidently years of dissatisfaction of his way of life, of the lot of the people about him preceded this dramatic decision to leave his life, as it were, to turn to an altogether different life from the one he had been leading. He realized that something was leavening inside his soul. He needed isolation to think through, to grope for an answer to the disturbances of his soul, to find that truth and peace which his life questioned.

Legend says that four things finally brought about a break with his past: One -- "that he saw an old man, aged, worn out, wrinkled and gray-bearded, bent and broken, trembling in all his limbs". For the first time Gantama realized that the consummation of all life is in decrepitude and old age, feebleness. Two -- Another day he saw a man "sick of disease -- overcome by hot fever, his body exhausted -- without shelter and help" Then Gantama suddenly realized that sickness, pain and the illnesses of the flesh are common to all men. Three -- Then another day he A man dead was say a man carrying a bier --/one with the stones and felled trees -- just dead. Gantama realized that all human beings must come to death, for death must come to all. These three dreams shook his soul to its very depth, and then at another time he saw a "monk standing on the Road with his beggar's bowl, in monastic frock -- a monk standing by the road begging alms but seemingly very calm, very tranquil -- his visage all aglow with peace and contentment, as if this man who had foresaken all had discovered all, as if this man, uncared for, was really

care-free. These four episodes decided Gantama to renounce his former life and himself to go into homelessness, exile. And in so doing, he followed ~~the~~ the whole Hindu tradition: In the normal life there are three periods - the first, discipleship, the period of learning - when a man follows a great teacher and learns from his the ways of life; the second period - the householder, the man who possesses a home, a family; and the third period - when a man leaves his home, goes through the forest of the world in contemplation and study and isolation to study and to prepare himself for the ultimate condition of the true Brahmin, ~~the~~ the true Hindu man according to the classic Hindu religion - a wanderer from village to village, from town to town, learning from all the lessons bestowed upon him.

For six years Gantama lived in solitude, study and met other seekers after truth. He sought to find satisfaction from all philosophers and teachers. He practiced all the self-mortifications -- fasting, penance, Yogi during the six years. But all in vain.... He found that was not the way to illumination, insight. So he gave up his rigorous discipline and returned to a normal existence. Then according to legend, the pull of great temptation brought him into his former way of life his three sons, Confusion, Gaity and Pride; and his three daughters, Lust, delight, Thirst.

But Gantama fought his inner spiritual battle within himself to the end. Until one day, by a Tree which came to be known as the Tree of Enlightenment, the truth suddenly dawned upon him. A great illumination, the secret of the Universe was laid bare! And at that moment he became the Buddha. For forty-five years thereafter he became the great teacher and great preacher. He went from town to town, preaching among all casts, among all people, this truth which had come to him -- this new insight which he had discovered.

What was this illumination which became the basis of Buddhism, this great religion of mankind?

Buddhism is summed up in the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha. It is the eight-fold path which he defined for the seekers of his way of life. The Four Noble Truths are these: (1) that life is suffering; (2) that the cause of suffering is desire; (3) that the way to end suffering is to annihilate desire; and (4) the way of annihilating desire is this eight-fold path of which I will speak in a moment.

The first noble truth is that all life is intrinsically, inherently suffering. Not that there is suffering life, but that life itself is suffering. Birth is painful and so is old age, disease, so is death painful, and the union with unpleasant things is painful. Any grief - that is suffering. Nothing in life, according to the Buddha is permanent. Everything is a composite which at the very moment of composition begins to disintegrate. The whole of life is a tragic transition from one stage to another. Thus a man begins to die from the very moment of his birth. That is as much true of the human body as of the human soul, or Ego. To be is to suffer.

And in Buddhist thought and in Hindu thought, being does not end with death. Death is really a transition from one being to another. Life goes through endless cycles of existence. It is what we call the wheel of life and man's position or status in any one of these existences is determined by his deeds in his former existence, that the endless causal nexus, as it were, this endless line of causation from which death is no escape, and this endless process of being is an endless chain of suffering. Yearning, reaching out after things is discontent, dissatisfaction, and therefore suffering.

The first noble truth is that life is suffering, and the second noble truth is that the origin of suffering is desire, or selfishness. - in the larger sense, the satisfaction of all the things which we ourselves want to be satisfied.

To want more — all that is the root and source of human unhappiness. Suffer until you get a thing. When you get it, to suffer more. Gratification only sharpens the appetite. Our very zest for life — here or in the hereafter is the source of our greatest unhappiness.

The second truth is that the will to live is the source of suffering.

The third is that the way to end suffering is to destroy desire — to deny the hunger of life — not actual suicide. As I stated a moment ago, death does not end the life of a human being. It merely thrusts him from one sphere of life into another. Free yourself from the tyranny of self-ego — from the tyranny of the senses, to come to think of yourself merely as a wave on the ocean of existence, as a link in the endless cause ~~of~~ and effect, to practice utter selflessness as far as it is possible for a human being to practice it.

How that is to be done is defined by Buddha in an eight-fold path.

This is the way which leads to the destruction of suffering: right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort in self-training and self-control, right mindfulness and complete meditation on the realities of life.

This eight-fold path is not an end in itself. These things — these eight things are not desirable things in themselves. They are simply the paths which will lead a man to that absolute state of complete tranquility when a man has freed himself from appetite, and lives in a state of Nirvana. In Judaism Nirvana is a state of mind — where man has realized completely the vanity of life is able to transcend both life and death. This, in Buddhism is called salvation. Salvation to the Buddhist is not being safe from the torments of the Hereafter. — salvation is being safe from life itself, complete emancipation from the shackles of existence. That is a rather challenging and inconsistent

There is very little in Buddhism about God. In fact, Buddhism is accused of being Atheist. Buddhism says very little about the human soul and immortality. Buddhism is neither monetheistic nor pantheistic.... Our religion begins with God and reaches its consummation in a personal God who created the world, ruled the world. That you do not find in Buddhism. The Jewish concept is that "God can do all." In spite of that there is much in life that is hard. There is pain and suffering to goad men on to development, self-fulfillment. These are goals which strive to make men strive to greater goals.... Judaism does not want man to ~~renounce~~ deny his essential being. Judaism wants the individual more and more to develop his individuality. It did not deprecate the moral appetites of human beings for life. There are no monks in Judaism.....

Buddhism appealed to hundreds of millions of people -- and seemingly helped them greatly. What is noble and beautiful about Buddhism is not so much metaphysical. What is noble in Buddhism is its exalted and ethical idealism. These paths, if followed could help man to a beautiful way of life. Buddhism preached in a world which was shot through with infamous caste system, the hardening social inequality, in which millions on millions were regarded as untouchables -- in such a world, Buddhism had the courage 6000 years before the Common Era to preach the common brotherhood of man. Buddha refused to recognize the validity of caste -- the fatalism of birth. What made a man a true Brahmin was not birth, but peace. What makes man an outcast? - Deeds -- contemptible deeds. Ritual was not important in Buddhism. What was important was conduct. Buddha denounced the whole system of ascetism and self-mortification. The very root of Hinduism is that a man does not become sound by mortifying the flesh, or by torturing the body, but by clean thinking and clean acting. One does not have to escape to the forest or to the desert to keep himself unpoluted and

uncontaminated, in order to live in a state of sainthood. The meaning of human existence is to be found in self-sacrifice and service, according to Buddha, in the life which teaches charity, patience, tolerance, love, guidance.

Above all, Buddha taught men the great lesson of serenity -- a lesson which we in these turbulent days of ours might well look upon -- serenity, tranquility -- not to allow life to take hold of you in such a way that your soul becomes restless, agitated....



10/ How 2 Right speech, conduct, etc - are helps to ^{sermon 594} attain enlightenment - ~~the~~ Nirvana - "extinction" - mental liberation
having seen the vanity of life - are transcended both life & death.
- Not a place - Paradise, but a State; Tranquility.

11/ Ten chains - first break. ① Delusion of Self ② Doubt ③ Belief in efficacy of ritual ceremony ④ Sensuality ⑤ Ill will ⑥ Love of life ⑦ Desire for a Future life ⑧ Pride ⑨ Self-righteousness ⑩ Ignorance

12/ Free Will - Self-working - to escape the Chain of Causation - revolving wheel of life - This is Salvation - not to be saved from Sin, or torment, or suffering - but from being from transient / life itself. - Not then death - because death is no End - endless series of Transmigration.
- Only by denying himself / life - love for regeneration - purges all the inclinations / life.

13/ ~~Lead to monasticism, the way to escape~~

14/ Very little about God - a theism - ^{Neither Monotheism - nor Pantheism} Divine Revelation - Soul
No Personal God - as in Torah - Central. ^{Not strictly a Rel}
- Good God - Is 1 & 216 - 216 is perfect ^{Religious - ethics} Metaph
- There is Evil in life - but life itself is not Evil!
- Hunger for life! - not for life -
- Self-fulfillment - not self accumulation!

1) B = 1400 > 1/2, Maunkia. - No longer a great d. in India - born - 135 M.
Never persecuted - never won converts by sword - peaceful success & progress

2) Founder - Siddharta Gautama who later on when Truth came to him - became known
The Buddha - "the Enlightened One" - belongs to a truly marvellous period
B.C. (B.E.) - 2 or 3000 in Persia, Empires and Lao-Tze in China
Solon, Heracles in Greece - Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Daniel in Israel
Intellectual and sp. ferment - many ^{ancient} ~~man~~ works with basic problems
of human existence - nature & object, the Universe - Riddle, Creation
& Human Destiny. Left their imprint upon all succeeding cultures

3) Siddharta Gautama ^{B.C.} ~~B.E.~~. Benares - from among the nobility. - Father a chieftain
or king among his people. - Enjoyed comforts and advantages, little birth.
crosses - virtues poor - a carpenter son. Mohammed - a camel driver.
wealth & poverty - no hindrance to truth - Great Man charmed both.

4) Up to age 29 - normal path - aristocratic circles. - Something happened!
A sharp break occurs in his life. - Decides to leave Home, his
wife and child, his friends and comforts, and set out as wanderer
heggar in search of truth.

Break - undoubtedly the result of many years of study & disenchantment
the alibi him did not satisfy him - Leaving nothing here.
He needed isolation, solitude - to find out.

Legend - 4 things - ① "an old man, aged, worn out, wrinkled and
gray-haired, bent & broken, trembling in all his limbs" - consummation
of life in decrepitude and death ② "Man sick of a disease - one come
by hot fever - his body exhausted - without shelter and help" - sickness common
to all. ③ "Dead man carried on a bier" - one with the stones & filled there
all bodies must come to. ④ "Man standing on Road" - a calm another

in spite of his begging bowl & mouth full - changed - peace
for all - has discovered all - "unbound - for & i. can - free"

- Renounces world - goes into homelessness - following the Hindu
tradition - life of a Brahmin 3 steps ① Student or Disciple
② Householder ③ Passed in forest - contemplation & study
feed on roots & fruits - practices severe austerities
Last stage - complete ascetic - wanders over the face of the earth

5. 6 yrs. - recluses - studies - meets other sufferers - ^{all accredited Teachers} Suffering
practiced ^{fasting - penance - yoga} self-mortification Not the way! In vain!
"blowing air into knots" - gave up his rigorous discipline.
- normal existence - Great Temperatures heat him - Pull of his
former life - Mara - 3 sons = Confusion, Doubt, Pride
3 daughters = lust, Delight, Thirst = The Bodhi Tree
Fought his 8 yr. battle to End! Until one day - Piphal Tree
Truth suddenly dawned on him! - Great Illumination!
Secrets of Universe laid bare! He had found the way!
Became The Buddha - the Enlightened One.
45 years - Teacher - Preacher - ^{hermit - penance} wandering - ^{deserts} former wanderer
sharing with them his New Insight - receiving
alms & bestowing blessings -

6. What was Illumination - 4 Noble Truths - 8 fold Path
4 = Problem 8 = Solution

① Life was Suffering (Dukkha) ② Origin of suffering is Desire (Tanha)
③ Cessation of suffering (Nirvana) ④ Path (8 fold) by which Desire is destroyed.

(3)

7) To exist is to suffer. Nothing is permanent. A thing is a composite
of swiftly changing elements - begins to disintegrate the moment
it is comprehended. - To die from moment of birth - I am I
and, a Ego as a body. Dissolution and disintegration are
the normal facts of life - ~~any attempt to defeat - being, pain,~~
~~- any attempt to preserve Ego - to hold me together - is to~~
~~defy the law of dissolution - to incur pain & suffering!~~
To be is to suffer!

(c) Being to Harder - not only in this life - Chains -
a cycle of re-births - wherein a man's status, character
etc. was determined by his deeds in previous existences
by Karma - no escape - Wheel - Causal Nexus

8). What is cause, suffering - Denial - Selfishness!
"Pain" = to suffer. - Suffer until you get it. - When you
get - you want something else - or more -
Satisfactions lead to increased afflictions. - "a morning
glow of discontent" - Our very zest for life - this life or
the hereafter - is never, greater happiness!
The will to live is the cause, suffering!

9). How to end suffering! Deny desire! Deny the hunger of Self
life (nirvana). Free Yourself from tyranny of Ego ^{Self} _{Painfully}
Reverses - Wave in ocean - just a bubble in endless
chain of cause & effect - Remember that! Practice (with
Selflessness to end selfishness - not, suffering

15/ Taught men - high ethical ideals - as way of behavior

- ① Brother hood - Caste - ^{social inequalities}
- ② Service - self-sacrifice
Charity - Patience - Tolerance - For truth - Love - Kindness.
- ③ Serenity.
- ④ Great Humanity.

①6 Not ritual ^{but conduct}. It
- attracts ^{practitioners} ~~practitioners~~
^{worshippers} ~~worshippers~~ ^{of Hinduism}
For truth - Love - Kindness.

16/ In course of time - pristine overland - superstition - etc - superstitions

① 'Deeds, not birth, makes a man a Brahman: deeds not birth make him an outcast'



the end of a long career he carried on his ministry of service and illumination.

Now, what was this illumination? What was this great truth which had come to Gautama, and which swept through the esthetic world like a fire? What were the doctrines of the Buddha? His doctrines are summed up in what are known as the Four Noble Truths. Let me give you what purports to be his own words. The Buddha is now speaking to a group of disciples--recluses like himself. *Vinaya P.*

"Now this, O recluses," says the Buddha, "is ~~the cause of~~ the Noble Truth concerning suffering. Birth is painful, and so is old age; disease is painful, and so is death; union with the unpleasant is painful; painful also is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that, too, is painful. ~~In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment (that is, man who is made up of various~~ *clinging to existence* ~~component parts), they, too, are painful.~~" This is the first of the Four Noble Truths.

"Now this, O recluses, is the Noble Truth concerning the origin of suffering. Verily, it originates in that craving thirst which causes the renewal of becomings that is accompanied by sensual delights and seeks satisfaction, now here, now there--that is to say, the craving for a future life, or the craving for success in the present life, the lust of the flesh, the lust of life,--these are the origin of suffering." That is the second of the Four Noble Truths. This is the third:

"Now this, O recluses, is the Noble Truth concerning the destruction of suffering. Verily, it is the destruction in which no craving remains ~~ever~~ of this very thirst; the laying aside of, the getting rid of, the being free from, the harboring no longer of this thirst." ~~Now the last of the Four Noble Truths.~~

"And this, O recluses, is the Noble Truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of the suffering. Verily, it is the noble eight-fold path, that is to say, right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort in self-training and self-control, right mindfulness and right rapture in deep meditation on the realities of life."

Let me elaborate a bit on these Four Noble Truths. The first of these four simply means this: that to exist is to suffer. Everything in life, according to the Buddha, changes. Nothing is permanent. Neither things nor men nor gods. Everything is mutable and transitory. A thing is a composite of swiftly changing elements; a thing begins to disintegrate the moment it is compounded--just as a human being begins to die the moment he is born. There is no exception to this law of impermanence of life. It is as true of man's soul as it is of his body; it is as true of the gods as it is of inorganic matter; everything which exists is an aggregate of swiftly changing parts; everything that exists is subject to dissolution; dissolution and disintegration are therefore the normal facts of life, and any