

created all superstition and thereby destroyed the growth of *Samma Ditthi*.

50. Of these arguments against belief in the existence of God some were practical but the majority of them theological. The Blessed Lord knew that they were not fatal to the belief in the existence of God.

51. It must not, however, be supposed that he had no argument which was fatal. There was one which he advanced which is beyond doubt fatal to belief in God. This is contained in his doctrine of *Patit Samutpad* which is described as the doctrine of Dependent Origination.

52. According to this doctrine, the question whether God exists or does not exist is not the main question. Nor is the question whether God created the universe the real question. The real question is how did the creator create the world. The justification for the belief in God is a conclusion which follows from our answer to the question how was the world created.

53. The important question is: Did God create something out of nothing or did he create something out of something?

54. It is impossible to believe that something could have been created out of nothing.

55. If the so-called God has created something out of something, then that something out of which something new was created has been in existence before he created anything. God cannot therefore be called the Creator of that something which has existed before him.

56. If something has been created by somebody out of something before God created anything then God cannot be said to be the Creator or the first Cause.

57. Such was his last but incontrovertible argument against belief in the existence of God.

58. Being false in premises, belief in God as the creator of the universe is Not—Dhamma. It is only belief in falsehood.





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§ 3. *Dhamma Based on Union with Brahma is a False Dhamma*

1. When the Buddha was preaching his religion there was current a doctrine called Vedantism.

2. The tenets of this doctrine are few and simple.

3. Behind the universe there is omnipresent a common principle of life called *Brahma* or *Brahman*.

4. This Brahma is a reality.

5. The Atman or the individual soul is the same as Brahma.

6. Man's liberation lies in making Atman to be one with Brahma. This is the second principle.

7. This unity with Brahma the Atman can achieve by realising that it is the same as Brahman.

8. And the way to make the Atman realize that it is the same as Brahman is to give up Sansara.

9. This doctrine is called *Vedantism*.

10. The Buddha had no respect for the doctrine. He regarded it as based on false premises and producing nothing of value and, therefore, not worth having.

11. This he made clear in his discussion with two Brahmins, Bharadvaj and Vasettha.

12. The Buddha argued that there must be proof before one can accept a thing to be a reality.

13. There are two modes of proof, perception and inference.

14. The Buddha asked, "Has anybody perceived Brahma ; have you seen Brahma ; have you spoken to Brahma ; have you smelt Brahma ? "

15. Vasettha said, "No.

16. "The other mode of proof is inadequate to prove the existence of Brahma."

17. "From what is Brahma the inference of ?" asked the Buddha. There again was no answer.

18. There are others who argue that a thing exists although it is invisible. So they say that Brahma exists although it is invisible.

19. In this bald statement it is an impossible position.

20. But for argument's sake let it be granted that a thing exists although it is invisible.

21. The best illustration of it is electricity. It exists although it is invisible.

22. This argument is not enough.

23. An invisible thing must show itself in some other form that is visible. Then alone it can be called real.

24. But if an invisible thing does not show itself in any visible form then it is not a reality.'

25. We accept reality of electricity although it is invisible because of the results it produces.

26. Electricity produces light. From light we accept the reality of electricity although it is invisible.

27. What does this invisible Brahma produce? Does it produce any visible results?

28. The answer is in the negative.

29. Another illustration may be given. In law too it is common to adopt as a basic concept a fiction—a proposition, the existence of which is not proved but which is assumed to be true.

30. And we all accept such a legal fiction.

31. But why is such a legal fiction accepted?

32. The reason is that a legal fiction is accepted because it gives a fruitful and just result.

33. "Brahma is a fiction. What fruitful result does it give?"

34. Vasettha and Bharadvaj were silent.

35. To drive the argument home he turned to Yasettha and asked "Have you seen Brahma?"

36. "Is there a single one of the Brahmanas versed in three Vedas who has ever seen Brahma face to face?"

37. "No, indeed, Gautama."

38. "Is there a single one of the teachers of the Brahmanas versed in the three Vedas who have seen Brahma face to face?"

39. "No, indeed, Gautama."

40. "Is there, Vasettha, a single one of the Brahmanas upto the seventh generation who has seen Brahma face to face?"



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41. "No, indeed, Gautama."

42. "Well then, Vasettha—did the ancient Rishis of the Brahmanas—did even they speak thus, saying : 'We know it, we have seen it, where Brahma is, whither Brahma is ?'

43. "Not so, Gautama."

44. The Buddha continued his questioning of the two Brahmin boys and said :

45. "Now what think you, Vasettha ? Does it not follow, this being so, that the talk of the Brahmanas about union with Brahma turns out to be foolish talk ?

46. "Just, Vasettha, as when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see—just even so, methinks, Vasettha, is the talk of the Brahmanas all but blind talk ? The first sees not, the middle one sees not, nor can the last one. The talk of these Brahmanas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, a vain and empty thing.

47. "Just, Vasettha, as if a man should say, 'How I long for, how I love the most beautiful woman in this land.'

48. "And people should ask him, 'Well ! good friend ! This most beautiful woman in the land, whom you thus love and long for, do you know whether that beautiful woman is a noble lady or a Brahmin woman, or of the trader class, or a Sudra ?'

49. "But when so asked, he would answer: 'No.'

50. "And when people should ask him, 'Well! good friend! This most beautiful woman in all the land, whom you love and long for, do you know what the name of that most beautiful woman is, or what her family name, whether she be tall or short or of medium height, dark or brunette or golden in colour, or in what village or town or city she dwells ?' But when so asked, he would answer : 'No.'

51. "Now what think you, Vasettha? Would it not turn out that being so, that the talk of that man was foolish talk ?"

52. "In sooth, Gautama, that would be so," said the two Brahmins.

53. So Brahma is not real and any religion based upon it is useless.

§ 4. *Belief in Soul is Not Dhamma*

1. The Buddha said that religion based on soul is based on speculation.

2. Nobody has seen the soul or has conversed with the soul.

3. The soul is unknown and unseen.

4. The thing that exists is not the soul but the mind. Mind is different from the soul.

5. Belief in soul He said is unprofitable.

6. A religion based on soul is therefore not worth having.

7. It only ends in creating superstition.

8. The Buddha did not leave the question there. He discussed it in all its aspects.

9. Belief in the existence of soul is as common as the belief in the existence of God.

10. Belief in the existence of soul was also a part of the Brahmanic Religion.

11. In the Brahmanic Religion the soul is called *Atma* or *Atman*.

12. In the Brahmanic Religion, *Atman* is the name given to an entity which was held to be abiding separate from the body, but living inside the body constantly existing from the moment of his birth.

13. Belief in the soul included other beliefs, connected with it.

14. The soul does not die with the body. It takes birth in another body when it comes into being.

15. The body serves as an external clothing for the soul.

16. Did the Buddha believe in the soul? No. He did not. His doctrine about the soul is called *An-atta*, no soul.

17. Given a disembodied soul various questions arise: What is the soul? Where did it come from? What becomes of it on the death of the body? Where does it go? In what form does it exist "hereafter."





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How long does it remain there? These questions the Buddha tried to argue out with the upholders of the doctrine of the soul.

18. He first tried to show how vague was the idea about the soul by his usual method of cross-examination.

19. He asked those who believed in the existence of the soul, what the soul was like in size and in shape.

20. To Ananda he said the declarations concerning the soul are abounding. Some declare : "My soul has a form and it is minute." Others declare the soul to have form and to be boundless and minute. Others declare it to be formless and boundless.

21. "In so many ways, Ananda, are declarations made concerning the soul."

22. "How is the soul conceived by those who believe in the soul?" was another question raised by the Buddha. Some say, "My soul is feeling." Others say, "Nay, my soul is not feeling, my soul is not sentient"; or again : "Nay, my soul is not feeling, nor is it non-sentient; my soul has feeling, it has the property of sentience." Under such aspects as these is the soul conceived.

23. The Buddha next asked those who believed in the existence of the soul as to the condition of the soul after the death of the body.

24. He also raised the question whether the soul was visible after the death of the body.

25. He found infinite number of vague statements.

26. Does the soul keep its form after the death of the body? He found that there were eight different speculations.

27. Does the soul die with the body? There were innumerable speculations on this.

28. He also raised the question of the happiness or misery of the soul after the body is dead. Is the soul happy after the death of the body? On this also the Recluses and Brahmins differed. Some said it was altogether miserable. Some said it was happy. Some said it is both happy and miserable and some said it is neither happy nor miserable.

29. His answer to all these theories about the existence of the soul was the same which he gave to Cunda.

30. To Cunda he said: "Now, Cunda, to those recluses and Brahmins, who believe and profess any one of these views, I go and say this: 'Is this so, friends?' And if they reply: 'Yes. This alone is true, any other view is absurd.' I do not admit their claim. Why is this? Because persons hold different opinions on such questions. Nor do I consider this (or that) view on a level with my own, let alone higher."

31. Now the more important question is what were the arguments of the Buddha against the existence of the soul.

32. The general arguments he advanced in support of his denial of the soul were the same as those which he advanced in support of his denial of the existence of God.

33. He argued that the discussion of the existence of the soul is as unprofitable as the discussion of the existence of God.

34. He argued that the belief in the existence of the soul is as much against the cultivation of *Samma Ditthi* as the belief in the existence of God.

35. He argued that the belief in the existence of the soul is as much a source of superstition as the belief in God is. Indeed in his opinion the belief in the existence of a soul is far more dangerous than the belief in God. For not only does it create a priesthood, not only is it the origin of all superstition but it gives the priesthood complete control over man from birth to death.

36. Because of these general arguments it is said that the Buddha did not express any definite opinion on the existence of the soul. Others have said that he did not repudiate the theory of the existence of the soul. Others have said that he was always dodging the issue.

37. These statements are quite incorrect. For to Mahali he did tell in most positive terms that there is





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no such thing as a soul. That is why his theory of the soul is called Anatta, i.e., non-soul.

38. Apart from the general arguments against the existence of the soul, the Buddha had a special argument against the existence of the soul which he regarded as fatal to the theory of the soul.

39. His theory against the existence of the soul as a separate entity is called Nama-Rupa.

40. The theory is the result of the application of the Vibhaja test, of sharp, rigorous analysis, of the constituent elements of Sentient Being otherwise called Human Personality.

41. Nama-Rupa is a collective name for a Sentient Being.

42. According to the Buddha's analysis, a Sentient Being is a compound thing consisting of certain physical elements and certain mental elements. They are called *Khandas*.

43. The Rupa Khanda primarily consists of the physical elements such as earth, water, fire and air. They constitute the Body or Rupa.

44. Besides Rupa Khanda, there is such a thing as Nama Khanda which goes to make up a Sentient Being.

45. This Nama Khanda is called Vinana, or consciousness. This Nama Khanda includes the three mental elements: Vedana (sensation springing from contact of the six senses with the world), Sanna (perception); Sankhara (states of mind). Chetana (consciousness) is sometimes spoken of along with the three other mental states as being one of them. A modern psychologist would say that consciousness is the mainspring from which other psychological phenomena arise. Vinana is the centre of a sentient being.

46. Consciousness is result of the combination of the four elements, Prithi, Apa, Tej and Vayu.

47. An objection is raised to this theory of consciousness propounded by the Buddha.

48. Those who object to this theory ask, "How is consciousness produced ? "

49. It is true that consciousness arises with birth and dies with death. All the same, can it be said that consciousness is the result of the combination of the four elements ?

50. The Buddha's answer was not that the co-existence or aggregation of the physical elements produces consciousness. What the Buddha said was that wherever there was rupa or kaya there was consciousness accompanying it.

51. To give an analogy from science, there is an electric field and wherever there is an electric field it is always accompanied by a magnetic field. No one knows how the magnetic field is created or how it arises. But it always exists along with the electric field.

52. Why should not the same relationship be said to exist between body and consciousness ?

53. The magnetic field in relation to the electric field is called an induced field. Why cannot consciousness be called an induced field in relation to Rupa-Kaya.

54. The Buddha's argument against the soul is not yet complete. He had further to say something of importance.

55. Once consciousness arises man becomes a sentient being. Consciousness is, therefore, the chief thing in man's life.

56. Consciousness is cognitive, emotional and volitional.

57. Consciousness is cognitive when it gives knowledge, information, as appreciating or apprehending, whether it be appreciation of internal facts or of external things and events.

58. Consciousness is emotional when it exists in certain subjective states, characterized by either pleasurable or painful tones, when emotional consciousness produces feeling.

59. Consciousness in its volitional stage makes a being exert himself for the attainment of some end. Volitional consciousness gives rise to what we call will or activity.





60. It is thus clear that all the functions of a sentient being are performed by the sentient being through and as a result of consciousness.

61. After this analysis the Buddha asked what are the functions which are left to be performed by the soul? All functions assigned to the soul are performed by consciousness.

62. A soul without any function is an absurdity.

63. This is how the Buddha disproved the existence of the soul.

64. That is why the existence of the soul cannot be a part of Dhamma.

§ 5. *Belief in Sacrifices is Not—Dhamma*

(i)

1. The Brahmanic religion was based upon sacrifices.

2. Some sacrifices were classified as *Nittya* and other sacrifices were classified as *Naimittik*.

3. The *Nittya* sacrifices were obligations and had to be performed whether one got any fruit therefrom or not.

4. The *Naimittik* sacrifices were performed when the performer wanted to gain something by way of worldly advantage.

5. The Brahmanic sacrifices involved drinking, killing animals and merry-making.

6. Yet these sacrifices were held as religious observances.

7. The Buddha declined to regard a religion based on sacrifices as worth having.

8. He has given his reasons to many a Brahmin who went to have a controversy with him as to why sacrifices were not part of religion.

9. It is reported that there were three Brahmins who had a controversy with him on the subject.

10. They were Kutadanta, Ujjaya and the third was Udayin.

11. Kutadanta the Brahmin requested the Blessed

One to tell him what he thought about the value of a sacrifice.

12. The Blessed One said: "Well then, O Brahmin, give ear and listen attentively and I will speak."

13. "Very well, sir," said Kutadanta in reply ; and the Blessed One spoke as follows :

14. "Long ago, O Brahmin, there was a king by name Maha Vigeta, mighty, with great wealth and large property; with stores of silver and gold, of aids to enjoyment, of goods and corn ; with his treasure-houses and his garners full.

15. "Now when King Maha Vigeta was once sitting alone in meditation he became anxious at the thought: 'I have in abundance all the good things a mortal can enjoy. The whole wide circle of the earth is mine by conquest to possess. It were well if I were to offer a great sacrifice that should ensure me weal and welfare for many days.'

16. "Thereupon the Brahmin who was chaplain said to the king : 'The king's country, sire, is harassed and harried. There are dacoits abroad who pillage the villages and townships and who make the roads unsafe. Were the king, so long as that is so, to levy a fresh tax, verily his majesty would be acting wrongly.

17. "'But perchance his majesty might think : ' I'll soon put a stop to these scoundrels' game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death !' But their licence cannot be satisfactorily put a stop to. The remnant left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm.

18. "'Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this order. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them let His Majesty the King give food and seed-corn. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to trade, to them let His Majesty the King give capital. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to government service, to them let His Majesty the King give wages and food.





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19. “ ‘Then those men, following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm; the king’s revenue will go up; the country will be quiet and at peace; and the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors without fear.’

20. “Then King Maha Vigeta, O Brahmin, accepted the word of his chaplain, and did as he had said. And those men, following each his business, harassed the realm no more. And the king’s revenue went up. And the country became quiet and at peace. And the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, dwelt with open doors.

21. “When peace and order was restored, King Maha Vigeta had his chaplain called again and said : ‘The disorder is at an end. The country is at peace. I want to offer that great sacrifice—let the Venerable One instruct me how—for my weal and my welfare for many days.’

22. “The chaplain, replying to the king, said, ‘Be it so. Let His Majesty the King send invitations to those in the town and the country in his realm who are Kshatriyas, vassals of his; who are ministers and officials of his or who are Brahmins of position, or who are householders of substance, saying: ‘I intend to offer a great sacrifice. Let the Venerable Ones give their sanction to what will be to me for weal and welfare for many days.’

23. “Then the king, O Brahmin Kutadanta, accepted the word of his chaplain, and did as he had said. And they each—Kshatriya and Ministers and Brahmins and householders—made a like reply: ‘Let His Majesty the King celebrate the sacrifice. The time is suitable, O King !’

24. “King Vigeta was wise and gifted in many ways. And his chaplain was equally wise and gifted.

25. “The chaplain, O Brahmin, before the sacrifice had begun, explained to the king what it would involve.

26. “ ‘Should His Majesty the King, before

starting on the great sacrifice or whilst he is offering the great sacrifice, or when the great sacrifice has been offered, feel any such regret as : ‘Great alas, has been the portion of my wealth used up herein,’ let not the king harbour such regret.



27. “And further, O Brahmin, the chaplain, before the sacrifice had begun, in order *to* prevent any compunction that might afterwards arise as regards those who had taken part therein, said: ‘Now there will come to your sacrifice, sire, men who destroy the life of living things, and men who refrain therefrom—men who take what has not been given, and men who refrain therefrom, men who act evilly in respect of lusts, and men who refrain therefrom, men who speak lies, and men who do not, men who slander, and men who do not, men who speak rudely, and men who do not, men who chatter vain things and men who refrain therefrom, men who covet, and men who covet not, men who harbour ill will and men who harbour it not, men whose views are Wrong, and men whose views are right. Of each of these let them, who do evil, alone with their evil. For them who do well let Your Majesty offer, for them, sire, arrange the rites, them let the king gratify, in them shall your heart within find peace.’

28. “And further, O Brahmin, at that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats, nor fowls, nor fatted pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts, no Dabbha grasses mown to strew around the sacrificial spot. And the slaves and messengers and workmen there employed were driven neither by rods nor fear, nor carried on their work weeping with tears upon their faces. Whoso chose to help, he worked whoso chose not to help, worked not. What each chose to do, he did; what they chose not to do, that was left undone. With ghee, and oil and butter, and milk and honey, and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished.

29. “Let your sacrifice be such as that of King Vigeta if you at all wish to perform any sacrifice.



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Sacrifices are a waste. Animal sacrifices are cruelties. Sacrifices cannot be part of religion. It is a worst form of religion which says you can go to heaven by killing an animal.”

30. I was inclined to ask “Is there, O Gautama, any other sacrifice with more fruit and more advantage than killing animals ?”

31. “Yes, O Brahmin, there is.”

32. “And what, O Gautama, may that be ? ”

33. “When a man with trusting heart takes upon himself the precepts—abstinence from destroying life; abstinence from taking what has not been given; abstinence from evil conduct in respect of lusts; abstinence from lying words; abstinence from strong, intoxicating, maddening drinks, the root of carelessness that is a sacrifice better than open largesse, better than perpetual alms, better than the gift of dwelling places, better than accepting guidance.”

34. And when he had thus spoken, Kutadanta the Brahmin said to the Blessed One: “Most excellent, O Gautama, are the words of thy mouth, most excellent.”

(ii)

1. Now the Brahmin Ujjaya said this to the Exalted One :

2. “Pray does the worthy Gautama praise sacrifice ? ”

3. “No Brahmin, I do not praise every sacrifice. Yet I would not withhold praise from every sacrifice. In whatever sacrifice, Brahmin, cows are slaughtered, goats and sheep are slaughtered, poultry and pigs are slaughtered and divers living creatures come to destruction—such sacrifice, Brahmin, which involves butchery, I do not praise.” “Why so ?”

4. “To such a sacrifice, Brahmin, involving butchery, neither the worthy ones nor those who have entered on the worthy way draw near.

5. “But in whatever sacrifice, Brahmin, cows are not slaughtered—and living creatures come not to destruction, such sacrifice not involving butchery,

I do praise; such as, for instance, a long-established charity, an oblation for the welfare of the family.”

6. “Why so?” “Because, Brahmin, the worthy ones, those who have entered on the worthy way, do draw near to such- a sacrifice which involves not butchery.”



(iii)

1. The Brahmin Udayin asked the same question to the Exalted One as was asked by the Brahmin Ujjaya:

2. “Pray, does the worthy Gautama praise sacrifice?” The Buddha gave the same answer which he gave to Ujjaya.

3. He said :

*“Fit sacrifice performed in season due
And free from cruelty, to such draw near
Those well trained in the God-life, even those
Who have the veil rolled back while (yet on
earth),*

*Who have transcended time and going. Such do
the enlightened praise; those skilled in merit.*

*“Whether in sacrifice or act of faith,
Oblation fitly made with heart devout
To that good field of Merit,—those who live
The Good—life, sacrificed, conferred,—so given
Lavish the offering; devas therewith are pleased.
Thus offering, the thoughtful, thereby becoming
wise,
Wins the blissful world from suffering free”*

§ 6. Belief Based on Speculation is Not— Dhamma

(i)

1. It was usual to ask such questions as (1) Was I in ages past? (2) Was I not in ages past? (3) What was I then? (4) From what did I pass to what? (5) Shall I be in ages to come? (6) Shall I not



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be in ages to come? (7) What shall I then be? (8) How shall I then be? (9) From what shall I pass to what? Or, again, it is Self today about which he is in doubt, asking himself—(1) Am I? (2) Am I not? (3) What am I? (4) How am I? (5) Whence came my being? (6) Whither will it pass? ”

2. As regards the Universe various questions were raised. Some of them were as follows :—

3. “How was the Universe created? Is it everlasting?”

4. In answer to the first question some said everything was created by Brahma—others said it was created by Prajapati.

5. In answer to the second question some said it was everlasting. Others said it was not. Some said it was finite. Others said it was infinite.

6. These questions the Buddha refused to entertain. He said that they could only be asked and entertained by wrong-headed people.

7. To answer these questions required omniscience which nobody had.

8. He said that he was not omniscient enough to answer these questions. No one could claim to know all that is to be known nor what we wish to know at any time is known at the time. There is always something that is unknown.

9. It is for these reasons that the Buddha excluded such doctrines from his religion.

10. He regarded a religion which made such doctrines a part of it as a religion not worth having.

(ii)

1. The doctrines with which the contemporaries of the Buddha had made the basis of their religion were concerned with (1) Self; and (2) the origin of the Universe.

2. They raised certain questions about the self. They asked: “(1) Was I in ages past? (2) Was I not in ages past? (3) What was I then? (4) From what did I pass to what? (5) Shall I be in ages to come? (6) Shall I not be in ages to come? (7) What

shall I then be ? (8) How shall I then be ? (9) From what shall I pass to what ? Or, again, it is Self today about which he is in doubt, asking himself—(1) Am I ? (2) Am I not ? (3) What am I, (4) How am I, (5) Whence came my being ? (6) Whither will it pass ? ”



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3. Others raised the question regarding the origin of the Universe.

4. Some said it was created by Brahma.

5. Others said it was created by Prajapati sacrificing himself.

6. Other teachers had other questions to raise : “The world is everlasting,—the world is not everlasting—the world is finite,—the world is infinite, the body is the life (jiva),—the body is the one thing and the life another,—truth-finder exists after death,—a truth-finder does not exist after death,—he both exists and does not exist after death,—he neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

7. These were questions which the Buddha said could be asked by wrong-headed persons.

8. There were three reasons why the Buddha condemned these religious theories.

9. In the first place, there was no reason to make them, part of religion.

10. In the second place, to answer these questions required omniscience which nobody had. He emphasised this in his addresses.

11. He said that at one and the same time, no one can know and see everything. Knowledge is never final. There is always something more to be known.

12. The third argument against these theories was that they were merely speculative. They are not verified nor are they verifiable.

13. They were the result of imagination let loose. There was no reality behind them.

14. Besides of what good were these speculative theories to man in his relation to men ? None whatever.

15. The Buddha did not believe that the world was created. He believed that the world had evolved.



III

§ 7. *Reading Books of Dhamma is Not— Dhamma*

1. The Brahmins put all their emphasis upon knowledge. They taught that knowledge was the be-all and end-all of every thing. Nothing further was to be considered.

2. The Buddha was on the other hand an upholder of education for all. Besides, he was more concerned with the use of knowledge a man is likely to make than with knowledge itself.

3. Consequently he was very particular to emphasize that he who has knowledge must have Sila (Virtue) and that knowledge without Sila (Virtue) was most dangerous.

4. The importance of Sila as against Prajna is well illustrated by what he told the Bhikku Patisena.

5. In olden times when Buddha was residing at Sravasti, there was an old mendicant called Patisena who being by nature cross and dull, could not learn so much as one Gatha by heart.

6. The Buddha accordingly ordered 500 Arahatas day by day to instruct him, but after three years he still was unable to remember even one Gatha.

7. Then all the peoples of the country (the four orders of people) knowing his ignorance, began to ridicule him, on which the Buddha, pitying his case, called him to his side, and gently repeated the following stanza : “He who guards his mouth, and restrains his thoughts, he who offends not with his body, the man who acts thus shall obtain deliverance.”

8. Then Patisena, moved by a sense of the Master’s goodness to him, felt his heart opened, and once he repeated the stanza.

9. The Buddha then addressed him further—“You now, an old man, can repeat a stanza only, and men know this, and they will still ridicule you, therefore, I will now explain the meaning of the verse to you, and do you on your part attentively listen.”

10. Then the Buddha declared the three causes connected with the body, the four connected with the

mouth, and the three connected with the thoughts, by destroying which men might obtain deliverance, on which the mendicant, fully realizing the truth thus explained, obtained the condition of an Arahāt.



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11. Now, at this time, there were 500 Bhikkhunis dwelling in their Vihara, who sent one of their number to the Buddha to request him to send them a priest to instruct them in the Dhamma.

12. On hearing their request the Buddha desired the old mendicant Patisena to go to them for this purpose.

13. On knowing that this arrangement had been made, all the nuns began to laugh together, and agreed on the morrow, when he came, to say the Gatha wrong (backward), and so confuse the old man and put him to shame.

14. Then on the morrow when he came, all the Bhikkhunis, great and small, went forth to salute him and as they did so, they looked at one another and smiled.

15. Then sitting down, they offered him food. Having eaten and washed his hands, they then begged him to begin his sermon. On which the aged mendicant ascended the elevated seat, and sitting down, began :

16. "Sisters ! My talent is small, my learning is very little. I know only one Gatha, but I will repeat that and explain its meaning. Do you listen with attention and understand."

17. Then all the young nuns began to attempt to say the Gatha backwards; but lo! they could not open their mouths ; and filled with shame, they hung down their heads in sorrow.

18. Then Patisena having repeated the Gatha, began to explain it, as the Buddha instructed him.

19. Then all the Bhikkhunis hearing his words, were filled with surprise, and rejoicing to hear such instruction, with one heart they received it, and became Arahatas.

20. On the day after this, the King Prasenjit invited the Buddha and the whole congregation of



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priests to assemble at his palace to partake of hospitality.

21. The Buddha therefore recognizing the superior and revered appearance of Patisena, desired him to bear his alms-dish and follow him as he went.

22. But when they came to the palace gate, the porter, knowing his character (antecedents), would not let him go into the hall, saying : “We have no hospitality for a priest who knows but one Gatha ; there is no room for such common fellows as you— make place for your betters and begone.”

23. Patisena accordingly sat down outside the door.

24. The Buddha now ascended the dais, after having washed his hands, and lo ! the arm of Patisena, with the alms-dish in its hand, entered the room.

25. Then the king, the ministers, and all the assembly seeing this sight, were filled with astonishment, and said, “Ah ! Who is this ?”

26. On which the Buddha replied, “It is Patisena, the mendicant. He has but just obtained enlightenment, and I desired him to bear my alms-dish behind me; but the porter has refused him admission.”

27. On this he was admitted and entered the assembly.

28. Then Prasenjit, turning to Buddha, said : “I hear that this Patisena is a man of small ability, and knows only one Gatha, how, then, has he obtained the supreme wisdom ?”

29. To which Buddha replied : “Learning need not be much, conduct (Sila) is the first thing.

30. “This, Patisena, has allowed the secret virtue of the words of this one Gatha to penetrate his spirit ; his body, mouth, and thoughts have obtained perfect quietude; for though a man knows ever so much, if his knowledge reaches not to his life, to deliver him from the power which leads to destruction, what benefit can all his learning be ?”

31. Then the Buddha said :

32. “Although a man repeats a thousand stanzas (sections), but understands not the meaning of the