The Light of Dharma

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Dharma

"The Dharma of the Tathagata does not require a man to go into homelessness or to resign the world, unless he feels called upon to do so but the Dharma of the Tathagata requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up his thirst for pleasure and lead a life of righteousness."—Gospel of Buddha.

The Light of Dharma

"As the vast ocean, O disciples, is impregnated with one taste, the taste of salt, so also, my disciples, this law and doctrine is impregnated with but one taste, the taste of deliverence." CULLAVAGGA.

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A Buddhist View of War.

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki.

EVERY religion strives to bring about universal peace on earth; every prophet points out a way to paradise; every philosopher promises us the attainment of eternal happiness; every wise man tells us how to enjoy the bliss of life; and finally, every one of us wishes and endeavors to be delivered from all anxiety, worry, fear, grief, despair, etc. And in spite of all this, our world, our life is anything but peaceful, blessed and happy. How do we account for the paradox?

Is our idea of peace chimerical? Are we building an air-castle to bring it about? Is our civilization founded on the sand? Are all the noble aspirations of our ancestors and our enthusiasm to follow in their wake like running after a mirage in a desert? Is our very existence an empty dream which is charming only as long as it lasts? Or perhaps are some mischievous spirits hovering over our heads and luring us to a land of eternal contradiction?

Whatever our objective experiences are, the final verdict comes from within, not from without. It is after all our will to believe, our subjectivism, that decides our destiny on earth and in heaven. In spite of its contradictions, its apparent disappointments, and its visionary promises, religious faith is our final bulwark which is invincible even unto death. We know not the reason why; nay, it is idle to court the question. It is enough that it is so. Infinitely happy is he, indeed, who takes refuge in this sanctum of faith.

What then is the faith entertained by a Buddhist in the midst of this constant warfare between individuals, between classes, between nations, and between all things?

To express most outspokenly, Buddhist faith is essentially optimistic.

Whatever apparent and temporary evils, they are destined in their very constitution to come to a happy terminus. The cosmological development of Dharmakaya is so vast and comprehensive that all things are, at least temporarily, possible here,—even such as appear irrational, inharmonious, or immoral in their partial realization. Wht we poor mortals experience here is only an infinitesimal portion of the grand scheme of Dharmakaya.

There was once an idiot who observed the heavens through a hollow tube of reed. He sincerely believed what he discovered with his instrument, for hence his heavens could not be made any vaster than the diameter of the tube. Perhaps we shall repeat the folly if we attempt to scale the infinitude of the Dharmadhatu with our limited intellect.

Such is the fundamental faith of Buddhism. And the faith is attainable only by pureness and simpleness of heart. The superficial, dissecting, murderous intellect is forever barred out in the holy realm.

How vague, how hazy, how mystical! But this vague mysticism is the very source from which religion drinks to her heart's content. It is the most wonderful fact in this world of prosaic

ism that every soul is capable of experiencing it sooner or later.

Enlightened Buddhists, however, do not hide themselves forever in the shrine of eternal subjectivism, as far as their every-day dealings are concerned. They have no spite for the realm of relativity, because their temporal existence is possible only under this condition, and also because there is nothing dual in life which is the highest synthesis of all contradictions. They eat, they drink, they propagate, they collide, they struggle, they strike, and they succumb.

War is abominable, and there is no denying it. But it is only a phase of the universal struggle that is going on and will go on, as long as one breath of vitality is left to an animate being. It is absurdity itself to have a perpetual peace and at the same time to be enjoying the full vigor of life. We do not mean to be cruel, neither do we wish to be self-destructive. When our ideals clash, let there be no flinching, no backsliding, no undecidedness, but for ever and ever pressing onwards. In this kind of war there is nothing personal, egotistic, or individual. It is the holiest spiritual war.

One thing most detestable and un-Buddhistic in war is its personal element. Egotistic hatred for an enemy is what makes a war most deplorable. But every pious Buddhist knows that there is no such irreducible a thing as ego. Therefore, as he steadfly moves onward and clears every obstacle in the way, he is doing what has been ordained by a power higher than himself; he is merely instrumental. In him there is no hatred, no anger, no ignorance, no prejudice. He has lost himself in fighting.

Another thing that makes good Buddhists shrink, though not irrecoverably, is the physical side of war. Brutality has never appealed to Buddhism. It is barbarism pure and simple. As a matter of fact, we cannot escape our material existence, but it is our solemn duty to make its significance as spiritual as possible, for herein lies divinity of our being. At the present stage of civilization in which we are living, great masses of people are still des-

perately groaning under the yoke of crass materialism, and war is still liable to rage in its most diabolical form. This is an evil Buddhists cannot take for a part of the grand scheme of Dharmakaya, comprehensive as it is. It must be crushed down at any cost with all the strenuosity Buddhists may possess.

As a physical being we are nothing. Even the strongest man cannot stand the explosion of a compound of nitroglycerin, an innocent-looking chemical in itself. Strange, indeed, that such a spiritual essence as ourselves should be encased in such a fragile vessel as flesh. Stranger still that this spiritual essence very frequently yield itself to the clamoring demands of the flesh. But in spite of the incongruity, the significance of our existence asserts itself in a most unmistakable way and sometimes quite unexpectedly. History bears witness to all this. Let us then shuffle off this mortal coil whenever it becomes necessary, and not raise a grunting voice against the fates. From our mutilated, mangled, inert corpse will there be the glorious ascension of something immaterial, which leads forever progressing humanity to its final goal.

Resting in this conviction, Buddhists carry the banner of Dharma over the dead and dying until they gain final victory.

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Regard as true Renouncer him that makes
Worship by work, for who renounceth not,
Works not as Yogin. So is that well said
"By works the votary doth raise to saint,
And saintship is the ceasing from all works."
Because the perfect Yogin acts—but acts
Unmoved by passions and unbound by deeds,
Setting result aside.

—Song Celestial, Sir Edwin Arnold.

The Buddha Dharma.

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By the Anagarika Dharmapala.

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BUDDHISM is the greatest and the oldest missionary religion in the world. The proper term to designate the universality of the great Teacher's Doctrine is the Pali word *Dhamma*. It means all knowable and the yet unknowable truths of the universe.

Unlike other missionary religions it was welcomed from the commencement of the glorious career of the omniscient Teacher by Kings, Rulers, Nobles, Plebians, and Brahmans. It began with the glad tidings of great joy to all living beings, sweet in the beginning, sweet in the middle, and sweet in the end. No sword was ever used in its career of conquest; not a drop of blood was shed in its triumphant march which began 2,500 years ago. Asia was made mild by the softness of the Buddha's love. In his incomparable life is to be found the marvellous potentialities of what a human being can become by the development of his natural tendencies, guided by the purified consciousness of his own perfected personality.

In the long reign of forty-five years as the King of Righteousness he was the acknowledged Supreme Being in all the three worlds. No living being ever appeared before Him to question his absolute nature: the proud Kshatriya Ruler who claimed kinship with the light-giving sun, who traced his descent from the beginning of time to the pure unspotted line of Suryavansa kings; the equally conceited Brahman who traced his descent to one of the