

BASIC TEACHING ON CAUSE AND EFFECT

By Dr. Kevin O'Neil U.S.A.

Except for the few charlatans who still persist in making this claim, most modern religionists and thinkers will agree that Buddhism is not a pessimistic religion. On the other hand, even practicing Buddhists need to be reminded that the Teachings of the Buddha are practical and positive in their approach to the problem of existence. In discussing the nature of Karma Dr. Kevin O'Neil clearly shows that we need not consider ourselves passive victims of our past good or evil deeds which bind us eternally to the cycle of birth and death. On the contrary the path to salvation, to freedom from rebirth and its attendant unsatisfactoriness is very much within the grasp of every individual who has the right understanding of his existence and who is prepared to make the right effort.

Ed.

Karmic seeds inevitably ripen in accordance with their causes, virtue leads to joy and non-virtue, to sorrow. Because a karmic act has many effects, just as one gain of rice produces many grains, the store of karmic seeds is ever increasing. If a certain karma is not productive, its result will not be experienced. Karmic seeds never lose their potency. Sentient beings do not realise the law of cause and effect. For while all seek joy and shun suffering, they do not exert themselves in following virtue and avoiding non-virtue. If one contemplates the certainty of the law of cause and effect, one will surely follow virtue. Realizing that the law of cause and effect holds true both within this life and from one life to the next, one should carefully guard one's acts. If an unvirtuous act is performed, one must apply the positive powers for there is nothing that a Buddha can do when one's non-virtuous karma has ripened. Sutras contain many instances of the working of the law of cause and effect. They show one how to discriminate between virtuous and non-virtuous acts. By living in accordance with the law of cause and effect, one can attain happiness and ultimately liberation. Since this teaching is very difficult to understand, one needs to cultivate wisdom in the Buddha and the Dhamma. There are three general levels of understanding. The first is understanding which is obvious to the sense organs, directly perceived. The second is understanding which relies on reasoning and logic, the subjects of impermanence, *Sunyata* and the twelve links of interdependent

origination. Last is the understanding which is attained only by those with perfect wisdom, such as a Buddha's full understanding. Having such understanding, one is able to determine the causes of any condition, no matter how many aeons ago they were produced. A Buddha's compassion for all living beings is a special type of karma, which is effective, owing to great virtue. There are two kinds of karma, samsaric and non-samsaric. Only those who have fully realized *sunyata* possess the latter type, thus having the ability to choose their next birth. Even beings with non-samsaric karma still have some degree of delusion, and this is the source of their karma.

A shower of Dharma

The true understanding of the Buddha lies beyond the five physical senses, even beyond the sixth sense, holy, supreme, infinite. Mind permeates the universe, life permeates the universe, law permeates the universe, truth, light, wisdom, love, and compassion. This is the true nature of a grand life. When there is goodness, justice and benevolence, harmony comes of itself and there is no conflict, no preying on each other, no disease, suffering or poverty. Dharma indeed, is all in all, therefore nothing exists beyond Dharma.

May the enlightenment of all Buddhas embrace and sustain all. Mind is the creator of all things. Mind is the true essence that permeates the universe. When the mind moves all phenomena unfold and whatever you wish can come into existence. All things are mind. Matter is merely a reflection. To believe that the reflection is real is delusion. Beware and do not be caught by delusion. Know that true existence is eternal and will never perish. Illusion and delusion are transient and will soon be destroyed. True existence is Buddhahood, the end of suffering. Illusion is a captive state full of suffering.

Achieving enlightenment is the truth, everything else is a temporary form. Buddhahood can never be perceived by the physical senses. Physical senses perceive only the reflections of beliefs. Although you may have spiritual eyes you have not seen true existence. All you perceive through your senses are merely reflections of mind and not original existence. The deluded mind drifts about aimlessly. Whatever it believes will take shape and become a temporary form.

Temporary form will forever be temporary and can never be real. Never fear that which is not real. Do not treat the unreal as if it were real. Confront the

unreal with the real. Confront untruth with the truth. Confront a temporary form with a true image. Confront darkness with light. Only the real can destroy the unreal. Only light can prove the non-existence of darkness. Share with everyone the true image of life. Awaken to the truth and destroy all illusions that have become the source of suffering. May all Buddhas rain down a chorus of Dharma so that all life in this world shall be bathed with wisdom. All troubles shall vanish and this world as it is shall be turned into light.

May the troubles of all sentient beings vanish and this world turns into a Buddha land. Matter does not comprise true existence. Overcome your physical senses. Matter is neither the essence of a thing, nor life, nor truth. Matter is neither intelligence nor sensation. Matter after all is nothingness and has no qualities of its own. It is mind that gives matter its qualities. When mind thinks of good health, it creates good health. When mind thinks of illness, it creates illness.

This is like a motion picture, when an athlete is projected on the screen, an athlete appears. When an invalid is projected, an invalid appears. Yet, the film itself is colorless and clear with neither the figure of an athlete nor an invalid upon it. Thus, the creations of the mind are like the varied etchings of the developing solution that act upon the clear and colorless film to produce the figure of an athlete or an invalid. But the healthy athlete and the frail invalid are both shadows produced by the action of the developing solution, and they are not true existences. If we place a clear colorless film, free of all shadows in a movie projector and project it onto a screen, there would be neither the healthy athlete who will eventually age and die nor of course the frail invalid. All that there will be on the screen would be light itself. Our lives are far greater than that of the healthy athlete.

No matter how healthy a person may be, if one views the physical body to be everything and oneself as no more than a physical body, one is not truly healthy.

Real health is not just a matter of the physical body. All sentient beings exist beyond matter and beyond soul. We are neither matter nor soul. Life is eternally healthy and forever indestructible. From this point the teachings of the Buddha begin.

True existence is eternal, never falls ill, never grows old and never dies. To

know the truth is to know the way of the Buddhas. Dharma is called the Way since it permeates the universe and is not lacking in anything. This way is one with our human lives. One who knows true existence, and lives it, shall be free from birth and destruction. One will be eternally perfect and whole.

Life knows only how to live. It does not know death. Life is another name for Buddhahood. Buddhahood has neither beginning nor ending, neither death nor destruction. Therefore life has neither beginning nor ending, neither death nor destruction. Enlightenment is above the measure of age. Time is in the hands of life itself. An infinitesimal point can- become infinite or vice versa, depending upon what your mind chooses it to be. One who thinks young will regain youth at once, while one who thinks age will grow old and wither away at once. Space is certainly not something that restricts life. Rather, space is a mode or perception that is created by life. Life is master and space its servant.

Although matter is essentially nothingness and has neither its own nature or power, it appears that matter has its own qualities and also the power to control life. This is because of distortions that are generated when life passes through the mode of perception.

I will not become a captive of these distortions. Instead may I perceive life correctly. May I know the true image of life and rise above my karma and acquire an undistorted perfect freedom, which is the very essence of life.

Enlightenment is essentially the light of wisdom. This perfect light accompanies true existence. It is light that is constant and boundless, therefore infinite. Being infinite, it permeates all things and shines upon all. Since Buddhas share the teachings that give one access to this light, sentient beings no longer need be enslaved by ignorance, failure or obstacles. Just as celestials stroll about in perfect freedom, just as fishes swim in the sea so can people stroll about in this world filled with light and freedom.

Wisdom is the light of enlightenment, the truth that destroys the darkness of delusion. Illusion is an unenlightened state and is comparable to a bad dream. Do not have bad dreams. When one is enlightened, this world immediately turns into a paradise.

Good actions are the only power. Good actions are the best life. Good actions are the only true existence. Thus there is never any good action that

is not true existence. Actions that are not good create the power that causes misfortune. All discords and imperfections are only bad dreams. It is our bad dreams that give power to disease, misfortune, discord and imperfection. When we awaken we find that there is actually no such power, and that we suffered through our own minds.

The power of evil, the power that oppresses us and makes us suffer, is not a power that actually exists. We simply allow a dream of our own invention to bring suffering to ourselves. This is called delusion in Buddhism.

It is called delusion because the perfect and harmonious true image of life has not been realized. The perfect and harmonious true image of life is covered up and not allowed to manifest itself.

Delusion occurs when something that does not exist is thought to exist. Not knowing the reality is called delusion. Although pleasure and suffering do not exist in matter itself one believes that they do exist in matter and one seeks after them or runs away from them. Such an absurd fantasy is called delusion. Mind is master over matter, and the nature and form of matter are all creations of the mind. Deluded people suffer, depending on changes in matter. If delusion were real both sorrow and suffering which come from delusion would also be real. Sorrow and suffering are merely bad dreams that one must awaken from because they are not real.

Do not perceive nonexistent things in your dreams and live in fear of them. Sickness and death are not real. They are unreal. They are illusions. A Buddha's wisdom exists to unmask sickness and death and help you to prove that they are not real.

Become aware of your true image. Become deathless. Sickness and death are after all nothing but nightmares of your own making. Realize your own true nature. When you see through the eyes of reality it is impossible for you to perish. Death is contrary to the true nature of life itself. Sickness is merely a delusion when you dream of nonexistent things. When there is no dream whatever, one is essentially diseaseless and cannot fall ill even if one desires to. When there is no dream whatsoever one is eternal and cannot die.

Those who seek outside themselves are chasing after a dream and shall not attain perfection. This world is nothing but a reflection. The land of eternal bliss is only found within. It is only by realizing within, that the land of

eternal bliss shall be manifested.

If you wish to purify the world of reflections, you must purify your original mental conditions and remove the stains of delusions.

See the emptiness of the material world. The material world is no more than a shadow. Never take the reflection that you see as true existence. Never think that the death of your physical body is your death. Life never knows death. Life may manifest various conditions upon body and circumstances according to one's thoughts, time and need. Life itself shall never fall ill or die. By changing your thoughts you may change your health or circumstances.

May the blessings of the Teaching extend to all beings throughout the universe. And thus may we together with all other living beings come to realize Buddhahood.