

THE WORLD *are*  
CONVINCED *by*  
Lord Buddha

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# The Worlds are convinced by Lord Buddha

*Deva worlds, Brahma worlds, Hells, and the world of Spirits: these are things we cannot see. There are many people who suggest that they are imagined thoughts.*

## **Question:**

However, we also know that the Supreme Buddha has spoken of these places. How does the Doctrine clarify these?

Imagined thoughts are defined as mentally created images of things that may not exist. (A person who has imagined thoughts may unwittingly equate them with real things.) There are Buddhists today who place Nibbana in the category of imagined thoughts instead of the category of knowledge according to reality.

Those who have not cultivated confidence in the Three Refuges and therefore consider Dhamma in sceptical doubt will find it difficult to proceed beyond the term 'imagined thought' in regard to the Doctrine.

Hells and Deva worlds are not imagined thoughts. They are reality, true Nature. The Supreme Buddha has spoken of these matters. A group of discourses in the ***Samyutta Nikaya*** explain clearly the four lower worlds and the Deva worlds.

On a certain occasion the Supreme Buddha scooped a bit of sand with His toenail and spoke in a simile: "The chance a human being has for rebirth again in the human world is as small as the bit of sand upon this toenail compared with the great Earth." Vast numbers of sentient beings are reborn in the Hells, the world of animals and the world of spirits.

When the necessary confidence to understand the Dhamma is absent, superciliousness becomes a substitute for it in the effort to understand reality. Nevertheless, Hell and Deva worlds are real. They are part of Nature. They are not figments of the imagination.

**Question:**

**There is an idea that all worlds are within the human world. Is there any truth in this?**

We hear of such an idea. It comes primarily from people who are averse to understanding the Doctrine but ready to ridicule it.

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When we seek the Three Refuges, we accept the omniscience of the Supreme Buddha. He possessed the four faculties of wisdom. No Deva or human being approached Him in wisdom.

He has taught us about the worlds of Devas and the worlds of Hell. Those of us who accept the Buddha's Doctrine accept Deva worlds and Hells as real places, planes of existence. Those who do not accept the Doctrine will hold contrary views. They are 'wrong views' (*miccha ditthi*).

Those who consider that the Deva worlds and Hells are all parts of the world of humans may have no fear and compunction to commit sins and accumulate unwholesome volitions. They do not become confidence-devoted (*saddhasnusari*). They will not hold right views. They will not become Dhamma-devoted (*dhammanusari*). They live in a dark abyss of ignorance and die away in a dark abyss of ignorance. The Doctrine describes them as visionless children of this Earth.

### **Question:**

**Deva worlds and Hells are things we cannot see with our eyes. Do we have to accept them in *saddha*<sup>1</sup> only?**

It is not only the Deva worlds and Hells that are beyond the vision of the physical eye. There are myriads of other things we

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<sup>1</sup> *Saddha* - The Pali word *saddha* in Buddhism means absolute confidence in the Buddha, his teaching and the Sangha. The word 'confidence' is used to translate *saddha* into English.

cannot see with our visual organs. Many things in modern science today are proven to be true by inference only. The fact that we accept water to be a combination of hydrogen and oxygen does not mean that we have seen either oxygen or hydrogen with our eyes. We use electricity but we do not see it with our eyes. We accept the existence of sound waves but we do not see them. We are comfortable to accept many unseen things as real.

One of the qualities of the Buddha's Doctrine is its invitation to us to "Come and see" (*Ehi passiko*). When the Doctrine says "Come and see", this should not be taken literally to mean, come and see with the eyes. In the case of the Doctrine, we see it with our wisdom, and from within us by making it a part of our volition-making process. Thus, we see the Dhamma from within us, the way the Buddha discoursed.

One can cultivate one's concentration, the mental state of being firmly fixed on an object. After one cultivates concentration one experiences what concentration is. Similarly, when one is overcome with hate and anger one can experience the frightful consequences of hate and anger. Likewise, when one mindfully queries one's volitions one proceeds towards the experience of wise consideration of one's life.

Another thing – in worldly life we come across certain individuals who always show divine qualities, while some others cannot hide their devilish and ghoulish mentalities. Clearly, such

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people, good as well as bad, manifest the worlds towards which they are headed.

So, the visual organs are not the only means by which we see things. Wisdom, knowledge and vision according to reality, can propel us to see things that the eye cannot see.

**Question:**

**In this modern era, scientific developments have penetrated into many secrets of this and other worlds. How is it that science has not confirmed the existence of these worlds – the worlds of Devas and the Hells?**

This is a very good question. To begin answering it we must try to understand the primary goal and mission of modern science.

Modern science as we know now has been developing over a long period of time. Although it seems to have begun due to mankind's curiosity about everything in his environment, most of its significant developments were initiated to make life easy and comfortable for human beings. It also provided devices to terrify and destroy opponents, and help acquire and secure resources that make life easy and comfortable to the people who benefit from that particular development.

So, the purpose and mission of modern science are different from the purpose and mission of our current discussion. At

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present, it is not dedicated to investigate the Buddha's Doctrine about the worlds of Devas and Hells.

However, if modern science is harnessed towards such a search at some future time, it is very likely that these worlds can be found.

**Question:**

**Can a person following the Buddha's path of the Doctrine gain knowledge about these worlds – Deva worlds and Hells?**

A person following the Buddha's path of the Doctrine can certainly gain the ability to understand these worlds. Firstly, one must realize that confidence in the Supreme Buddha and His Doctrine are essential to gain that knowledge. Without confidence it is hopeless to try to get on to the path of the Doctrine.

Only one who sees the perils of defilements will seek a path to free oneself of the defilements. A person taking refuge in the Buddha and His Doctrine will accept His message that beings with defilements embark upon the long journey through a series of rebirths, in and out of Hells in the process. A devotee with confidence in the Supreme Buddha will not find it difficult to understand the real nature of the worlds of Devas and Hells.

**Question:****How does one ensure non-entry into Hell?**

The Supreme Buddha has spoken clearly of ways to ensure non-entry into Hell. A person who attains the fruition of stream-entry (**sotapanna**) will not enter Hell. Progressing from Stream-enterer: Once-returner (**sakadagami**), Non-returner (**anagami**) and the condition of one who attains Nibbana (**arahat**) are all states that will insulate a person from Hell.

The first step to prepare for non-entry into Hell is to learn and understand what the Four Noble Truths are. In the term **sotapanna** the word **sota** literally means 'stream'. The stream in this context is the Noble Path. Thus a Stream-enterer lives a life according to the Eight-fold Noble Path: His or her view, thoughts, speech, bodily action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration are all correct and fortified by wisdom. Such a person is virtuous. A Stream-enterer has fully understood and walked the Noble Path.

When one walks the Noble Path one is insulated from the four Hells. Such a person accepts the Supreme Buddha's words on such worlds. Thus he or she has the opportunity of escaping the four Hells in this life itself.

A Stream-enterer is at the first rank of the Noble Disciples. A Stream-enterer has four qualities: unshaken confidence in the Fully Enlightened One, unshakable confidence in the Doctrine,

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unshakable confidence in the Order of Monks and perfect morality.

To acquire these four qualities he or she fulfils four preliminary conditions: hearing the Good Law of the Dhamma, wise reflection, living in conformity with the Good Law and companionship with good persons...



Translated by

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