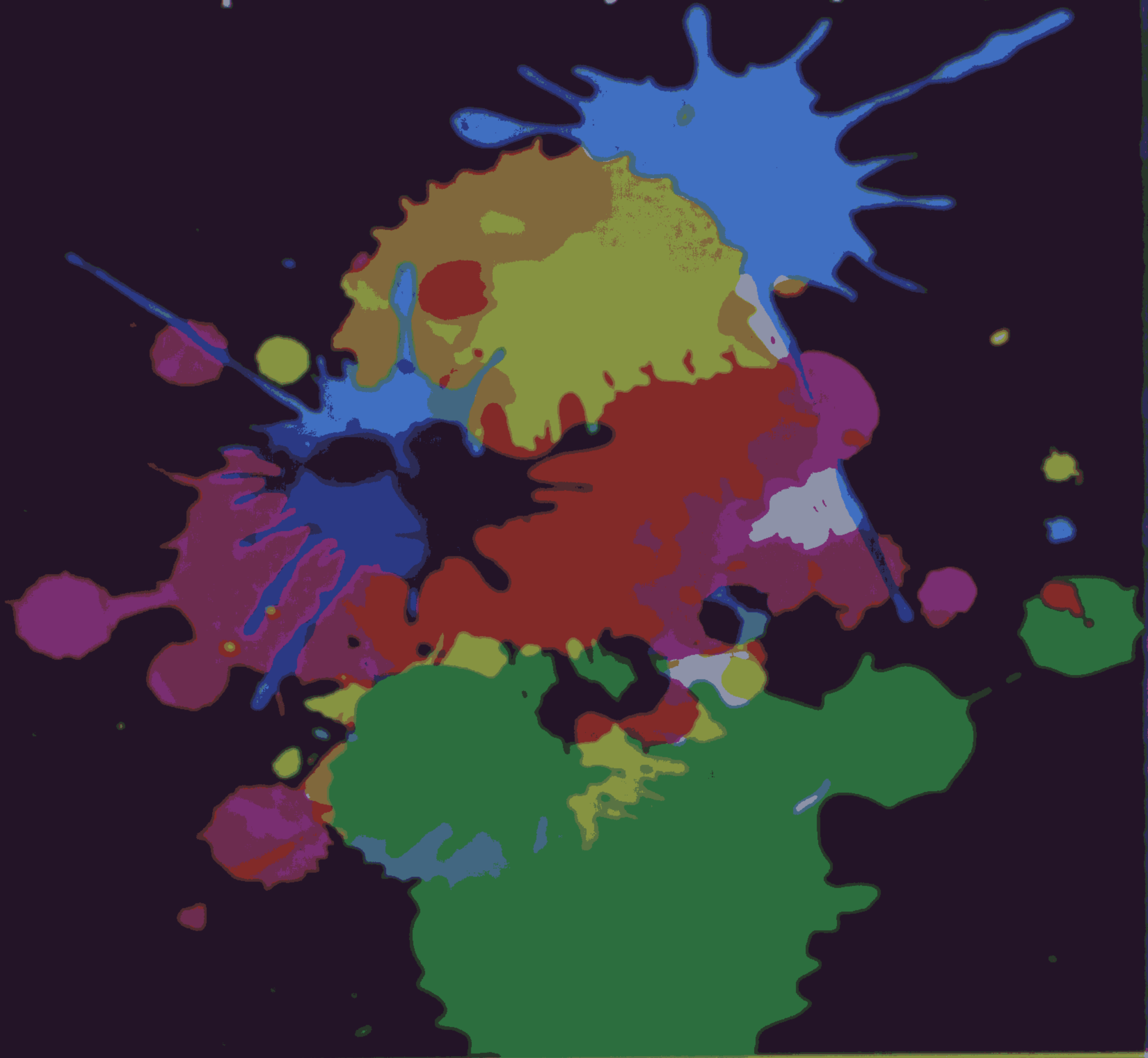


Redesign Yourself

(Theory and Practice of Buddhist
Concept of Personality Development)



Naw Kham La Dhammasami

Ph.D. (Buddhist Psych)

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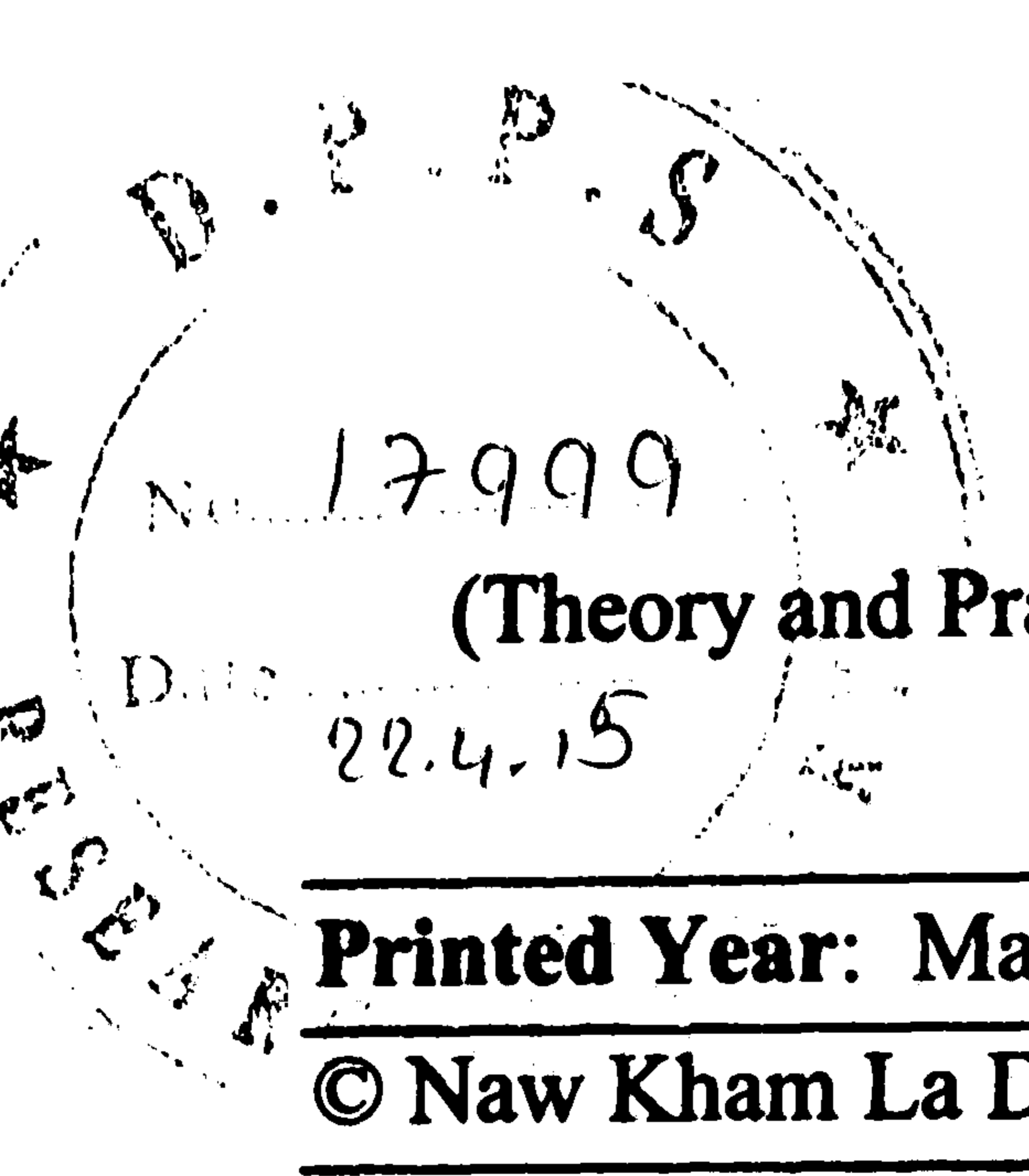
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TAI PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

SHAN STATE, MYANMAR



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Printed Year: March 2015

© Naw Kham La Dhammasami, Ph.D. (Buddhist Psych)

ISBN: 978-955-7768-00-7

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Publisher: Tai Psychological Association (TPA)

Mahabhodi Meditation Center, Makahokham
Road, Tachileik TWP, Shan State, Myanmar

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Cover design by: Ruwnapaharuwa

Printed by: Ruwanpaharuwa,

No. 14/10,

1st lane,

Mahaharagama.

Tel : / Fax : 011-2840738, 0714-320810

E-mail : ruwanpaha@gmail.com

‘‘Bāhiya, evaṃ sikkhitabbam – ‘diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati, mute mutamattam bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattam bhavissatī’ ti. Evañhi te, bāhiya, sikkhitabbam. Yato kho te, bāhiya, diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati, mute mutamattam bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattam bhavissati, tato tvam, bāhiya, na tena; yato tvam, bāhiya, na tena tato tvam, bāhiya, na tattha ; yato tvam, bāhiya, na tattha, tato tvam, bāhiya, nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena. Esevanto dukkhassā’ ti.

"Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

(Mālunkeyāputta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, Kalaka Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya & Bāhiya Sutta of Udāna)

Foreword by Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim

Dr. Dhammasami's book is an important addition to the lore of personality psychology books. As an Organisation Development Specialist, I am interested in how personality affects job performance, attitudes, social relationships, health in the organisation, and he has given me additional tools and insight into my own field. It is in my opinion a must read for professionals and academics interested in psychotherapy or the importance of personality development, as it is a thorough study of the subject from a Buddhist perspective. He has moved beyond those who have written popular work which are blends of Western Psychology and Buddhism, and present here a synthesis of all the principles and theories of personality mainly based on Theravāda teachings. Practitioners may at times find it a little too academic but it is certainly a precious reference book.

I recommend this publication to all those who work to impact people's quality of life and who wish to bring about this change differently.

**Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim
University of Mauritius, Mauritius**

Foreword by Asst. Prof. Dr. Sermsiri Akaraputipun

The chaos of modern society is a result of people having different interpretations of what they see and hear. Some of these interpretations may be quite incorrect. However, when we examine what is happening through the lens of psychology, we can have a better understanding and discover the underlying causes and meaning. By studying personality, we can come to understand people's thoughts and actions which result in the society we have.

Buddhism is the religion which describes behavior through the study of mind and body. I am delighted to see Dr. Naw Kham La Dhammasami efforts to explain personality according to Buddhist perspective. I believe that this book is of much value, and will be most useful in Buddhist University.

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Sermsiri Akaraputipun
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Bangkok, Thailand**

Foreword by Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana

This text written by Dr. Naw Kham La Dhammasami, a veteran Buddhist psychologist and scholar of erudition, meticulously deals with Early and Theravāda Buddhist perspective on personality and personality development theory in a critical and analytical aspect based on psychological elements as depicted in Early and Theravāda sources in their pristine purity.

The author endowed with extensive awareness of both modern and Buddhist psychology has been potentially capable of exposing the Buddhist psychological analysis of personality development theory up to an optimum level in which an Arahant is highlighted as the transcendental personality. Taking into account the various stages of human life, the author elucidates how internal and external characteristics are significant in the personality development. Among the various Fundamentals of Buddhist Psychology, the author is highly concerned with the Buddhist teaching of āhāras and elaborates with clarity how this teaching could be adopted to change behavioral and cognitive characteristics of an unwholesome personality into a wholesome personality. The behavioral cognitive transformation methodology of Early and Theravāda Buddhist Psychology has been ingeniously arranged in this gracious book with practical applicability as Buddhist concept of personality development.

Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana

Senior Lecturer and Head Department of Buddhist Culture

Postgraduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist Studies

University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Preface

Personality development has been a major topic of interest for some of the most prominent thinkers in psychology. When discussing any type of development, most theorists break it down into specific stages. These stages are typically progressive. In other words, you must pass through one stage before you can get to the next. Think about how you learned to run; first you had to learn to crawl, then you could learn to walk, and finally you could develop the skills needed to run. Without the first two stages, running would be an impossibility. Most of these stage theories are progressive, although in some, such as Erikson's psychosocial and Freud's psychosexual theories, a person can fail to complete the stage while still continuing. This failure, however, will result in difficulties later in life according to the hypotheses.

In this research we will discuss the most prominent stage theories with regard to cognitive and moral development. Buddhism has many different approaches to the personality development. This book used four kinds of āhāra as the main theme in its research. The four kinds of āhāra were very systematically classified and had distinct steps in personality development - from basic stages to the highest stage of development unto the attainment of Nibbāna. This study showed that the person who continuously underwent personality development according to the Buddhist teaching (āhāra) benefited in two ways. Physically he changed his unwholesome action. Mentally his mental unwholesome tendencies changed to wholesome tendencies. Finally one

attained the highest goal in Buddhism, e.g. the total eradication of dukkha which is Nibbāna.

Over these seven years, it has been my privilege and honor to work closely together with Ven. Prof. Muwaetagama Ñāṇananda and Emeritus Prof. P. D. Premasiri, I have enjoyed the opportunity to watch and learn from their knowledge and experience. Their frequent insights and patience with me are always appreciated. I am very proud of what we have achieved together, thank you both.

This book is a revised version of my Ph.D thesis, which has been written under the wise counsel of Ven. Prof. Dhammavihārī (Jotiya Dhirasekera), Ven. Prof. Gallelle Sumanasiri, Ven. Prof. Ittademaliye Indasara, Prof. Sumanapala Galmangoda, Prof. Oliver Abenayaka, Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne, Prof. G. A. Somaratne and Mr. Sanath Nanayakkara (The Former Deputy Editor of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism). They have all been steady hands to steer me through my undergraduate and postgraduate career in Sri Lanka.

I must also thank my Kalyāṇamitta-s Ven. Naw Khur Paññānanda, Ph.D. Candidate, Dr. Kab Seon Seo (Co-author of Nettipakarana translation), Assoc. Prof. Chung Ok Lee (Co-author of Nettipakarana translation) and Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim (Organisation Development Consultant), for making a much more pleasant environment to complete my research work. I will always remember your good humour, patience, understanding, generosity, compassion, and endless kindness. Words cannot express my gratitude for everything you have done.

To Sayadaw Khemindabhivamsa, Sucittalankara Monastery, Tharketa, Yangon, Myanmar, I would like to thank him for teaching me the practical wisdom of being in the moment and living simply.

Ven. Weligama Dhammissara, M.A., who died suddenly this past year, is fondly remembered. As a teacher, and a friend, he enthusiastically supported this project. I know he would have so celebrated its completion.

The Most Ven. Nyanavara, Saddhammajotikadhaja, President of Mahabodhi Meditation Center, Shan State, Myanmar; Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, the Founder of Shan State Buddhist University, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar; Ven. Nandamala Pong Wan, B.A.; Ven. Mahosadhālaṅkāra, Ph.D. Candidate; Novelist Ma'am Nam Ji Sim, The President Compassion Carrier Foundation, South Korea; Dr. You-Mee Lee, Korean Scholarship Association, Korea; Sai Oo Seng and Nang Lu, Murng Peng, Shan State, Myanmar; Sai Seng, Tachileik, Shan State, Myanmar; Nang Mya Than Htay and family (Shan Sayagyi Oo Sai Laeng Sae Company), Yangon, Myanmar; Dr. Thet Thet Nwe, the Co-founder of Dāna Sri Lanka Association, Brunei; Daw Tin Tin Myint, the Founder and President of Dāna Sri Lanka Association, Singapore; Dr. Kab Seon Seo and Dr. Sirilaksana Kunjara, London; all deserve special note here for their magnanimity, both financial and moral.

My parents - Sai Sar La and Nang Kham Sai and my brother, Sai Surinda and my sisters, Nang Kham Lee, Nang Kham Mai and Nang Kham Hong - who have untiringly supported me throughout these long years of study. I am sure

that when I was young they could never have guessed that all their encouragement would eventually lead to a Ph. D and a book. And it is to them for the love (mettā) they have always showed me that I dedicate this book.

Also thank you Asst. Prof. Dr. Sermsiri Akaraputipun, Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana and Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim (Organisation Development Consultant) for taking the time from your very busy schedule to read the entire manuscript and to write the Foreword. I have learned much from you, been enriched from our discussions and look forward to experiencing a life-long professional relationship with you. I am also grateful to Phra Sophonwachirabhorn (Sawai Chotiko), Vice-Rector for Foreign Affairs of MCU, Asst. Prof. Dr. Siriwat (Head of Psychology Department, MCU) and Asst. Prof. Dr. Prayoon Suyajaj for giving me the opportunity to work at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU).

Finally, thanks go to Tai Psychological Association (TPA) and Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim (Organisation Development Consultant) for sponsoring this book.

There are so many of you that I cannot possibly name you all, but you know who you are. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you all.

Naw Kham La Dhammasami
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Bangkok, Thailand
11 March 2015

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Abbreviations

Asl	Atthasālinī
Ap	Apadāna
ApA	Apadāna Aṭṭhakathā
Abhs	Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha
Abhk	Abhidharmkośā
A	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Akb	Abhidharmikośā Bhāṣya of Vasudandhu
AA	Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Abhsv	Abhidhammattha Vibhāvanīṭikā
BJT	Buddha Jayanti Tripiṭaka series, Sri Lanka
BD	Buddhist Dictionary
Be	Burmese edition
BCC	Buddhist Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka
BPS	Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy
CSCD	Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā (6 th Council) edition, Yangon, Myanmar
Compendium	Compendium of Philosophy
Cf	Confer, compare with
Comy (s)	Commentary, Commentaries
Ch	Chapter (plural, chs)

D	Dīgha Nikāya
DA	Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
DhA	Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā
DHT	Designation of Human Type
Dh	Dhammapada
Dhs	Dhammasaṅganī
DhsA	Dhammasaṅganī Aṭṭhakathā = Atthasālinī
Ed	Edition, editor (plural, eds), edited by
E.g	Example gratia, for example
Et seq	Et sequens, and the following
Et al	Et alii, et aliae, et alia, and others.
Ency. Bsm	Encyclopaedia of Buddhism
F	and the following (page, etc)
FF	and the following (pages, etc)
Gen	General
It	Itivuttaka
Introd	Introduction
I.e	Idest, that is.
Ibid	Ibidem, in the same place
J	Jātaka
Kvu	Kathāvatthu

Khp	Khuddakapāṭha
Khu	Khuddaka Nikāya; cf Khp
Loc. Cit	loco citato, in the place cited (referring to the same passage cited in an immediately previous footnote)
M	Majjhima Nikāya
MA	Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Mv	Mahāvagga, Vinaya
Mil	Milindapañha
MT	Mahāṭikā
M: ÑB	Majjhima Nikāya trans Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
Nett	Nettippakaraṇa
N. d	no date (of publication is given)
N. p	No place (of publication) or no publisher (is given)
Orig	Original
Op.cit	Opera citato, in the work
PTS	Pāli Text Society, London.
P	Page (plural, pp)
Par	Paragraph (plural, pars)

PED	Pāli-English Dictionary
Pug	Puggala Paññatti
Pm	Paṭisambhidāmagga
Ps	Papañcasūḍani
Pet	Peṭakopadesa
Pv	Petavatthu
PvA	Petavatthu Aṭṭhakathā
Q.v	Quod vide, which see
Rev	Revised by; reviw, reviewed by
Rpt	Reprint, reprinted by
S	Samyutta Nikāya
Sk	Sanskrit
SA	Samyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
SAT	Samyutta Nikāya Porāṇa Ṭīkā
Sn	Sutta Nipāta
SnA	Sutta Nipāta Aṭṭhakathā
Syn	synonym
Trans	Translation, translator
Theg	Therīgathā
ThgA	Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā
Thg	Therāgathā

Upd	update
Ud	Udāna
Vism	Visuddhimagga
Vbh	Vibhaṅga
VbhA	Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā
Vimm	Vimuttimagga
Vism	Visuddhimagga
Vv	Vimānavatthu
VV	Verses
V	Verse
Vin	Vinaya
Vol	Volume (plural, vols)
viz	videlicet, namely
VbhA	Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā (Sammohavinodanī)

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Buddhism's aim is liberation of man from his predicament.¹ This predicament is twofold: psychological and physical. As Buddhism is more a spiritual teaching, what is foremost, is the psychological liberation, that is what is more emphasized, though the latter is also given due consideration.²

It is quite well known that the Buddha's analysis of man's predicament (*dukkha*) and its cessation (*nirodha*) is quite different from the analysis and solution presented by his contemporaries. He argued and showed that both the predicament and solution are located in man himself.³ In other words, man's predicament is his own creation and hence, it is he himself who could undo what he creates.

When reviewed from this perspective it is seen that the Buddha's analysis of *dukkha* and the way he puts forth a solution are both very closely linked to the individual's personality. This is seen also when the Buddha emphasizes the importance of understanding this empirical individuality and the world of experience and also the necessity of bringing about appropriate changes in his personality. The path the Buddha presented as the way leading to the cessation of suffering is clearly aimed at effecting changes in man's

¹ M. I. 140: *Dukkhañceva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodham*. See also S. III. 119; IV. 384.

² S. III. 1 ff.

³ S. I. 62.



personality, changes in the emotional and intellectual dimension of his personality.⁴ The development of man's personality is the key to his liberation. This clearly shows how significant an indepth study of the individual personality is, in the context of the Buddha's teaching on liberation.

Defining Personality

Psychologists differ among themselves as to the meaning of personality. Most agree that the word "personality" originated from the Latin *persona*, which referred to a theatrical mask worn by Roman actors in Greek dramas. These ancient Roman actors wore a mask (*persona*) to project a role or false appearance. This surface view of personality, of course, is not an acceptable definition. When psychologists use the term "personality," they are referring to something more than the role people play.

However, personality theorists have not agreed on a single definition of personality. Indeed, they evolved unique and vital theories because they lacked agreement as to the nature of humanity, and because each saw personality from an individual reference point.⁵ In other words, personality differences among theorists account for fundamental disagreements between those who lean toward the *quantitative* side of psychology (behaviorists, social learning theorists, and trait theorists) and those inclined toward the *clinical and qualitative* side of psychology (psychoanalysts, humanists, and existentialists).⁶

⁴ M. II. 97 ff.

⁵ Elizabeth B. Hurlock (30th rpt 2007), *Personality Development* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited), p. 7.

⁶ Jess Feist & Gregory J. Feist (7th ed 2009), *Theories of Personality* (Singapore: McGraw-Hill International), p. 9.



In 1927, G. W. Allport identified in the literature almost 50 definitions of personality.⁷ Today, there are doubtless more. Most of the definitions accepted today are patterned on Allport's: "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought." We note here that "there is no right or wrong definition of personality particularly at the present time, when we are without a shared understanding of basic aspects of personality functioning."⁸ This is so because personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that make a person unique. Personality originates within the individual. In this light, Buddhism has a range of possible words for denoting the human individual: Mahāpurisa, Sappurisa, Manussa, and Puggala.

(1) Mahāpurisa (mahā "great" + purisa "person"),⁹ translators have, depending on the word's context and their understanding of the intended meaning, often rendered this word into English as "great personality." We have often come across the term mahāpurisa in the texts. In other words, the term "great personality" (mahāpurisa) is also common in the later works.

Such word and term, insofar as they are acceptable in early Buddhist usage, are understood in a psychological manner, and more technically, is always taken as a person "with great characteristic of personality" (mahāpurisalakḥaṇa), which has been discussed in the Suttanta.

⁷ Penguin Reference (3rd ed 2001), *Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin), p. 525; Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey (1991), *Theories of Personality* (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited), pp. 8-9.

⁸ Pervin, L, *Personality Theory (Assessment and Research)*, p. 3.

⁹ S. V. 158; A. II. 35 f.



The common Buddhist usage of the word personality is related to an ideal of a living being, embodying both physical as well as psychological and ethical characteristics.¹⁰ However, the term such as mahāpurisa denote higher level of beings, spiritual person, who are beyond the ordinary social context.

(2) Sappurisa (sat = sant “good” + purisa “person”) refers to a true practitioner but one who is yet unawakened. In the closing of the Devadūta Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (No. 130) and its brief Aṅguttara Nikāya version, the Devadūtayama Sutta (A. III. 35), for example, it is said that:

“There are good people (sappurisa) here, who when warned by the divine messengers, Neglect not the noble Dhamma.”¹¹

The Asappurisa Sutta (S. 45. 25) has this definitive passage:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the good person? Here, someone is of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is called the good person.

And what, bhikkhus, is the one better than a good person? Here, someone is of right view... right knowledge, and right liberation. This is called the one better than a good person.¹²

In the Suttas, however, the sense of sappurisa has to be drawn out from its contexts. It refers to a good lay practitioner (A. 8. 37-8), to a true practitioner (M. Nos. 110, 113), or to the saints of the path, except the Arahants (S. 45. 26; A. 4. 201), or generally to all saints, including the Arahants (A. 4. 240). In

¹⁰ Oliver Leaman (1999), *Eastern Philosophy* (London: Routledge), pp. 231, 234.

¹¹ M. III. 137; A. I. 142. *Ye ca kho devadūtehi, santo sappurisā idha, coditā nappamajjanti, ariyadhamme kudācanam.*

¹² S. 5. 20.



other words, sappurisa can refer to unawakened practitioners, or to the saints, whether they are monastics or lay, depending on the context.

First, let us look at sappurisa as a good lay person. the Saṅkhittasappurisaḍāna Sutta (A. 8. 37) briefly defines the true lay follower as a true giver, that is, one who gives alms that is pure, choice, at the right time, what is allowable, repeatedly, discriminately (after careful examination); while giving, his mind is radiant with faith, and after the giving he is happily satisfied.¹³ The Sappurisa Sutta (A. 8. 38) declares that a good lay person arises for the good of all beings: the family, society, religion, and even the gods.¹⁴

Sappurisa in the sense of a true practitioner is found in the Majjhima Nikāya. The Cūḷapunnāma Sutta (M. No. 110) defines the sappurisa¹⁵ as one who is morally virtuous, learned, energetic, wise, and holds right view.¹⁶ Similarly, the Sappurisa Sutta (M. No. 113) says that he is one who understands the true purpose of renunciation and the holy life, so that there is nothing he would identify with.¹⁷ In other words, he is a good worldling (kalyāṇa puthujjana).¹⁸

(3) Manussa (fr. manus, cp. Vedic manuṣya. Connected etym. with Goth. manna=man) a human being, man. The popular etym. connects m. with Manu (s), the ancestor of men,

¹³ A. 4. 243 f.

¹⁴ A. 4. 244 f.

¹⁵ M: NB translates *sappurisa* here as “true man,” and *asappurisa*, as “untrue man.” These literal translations sound all right as long as we do not misconstrue them to refer to manliness or lack of it, even a man who is faithful to his spouse as against one who is not.

¹⁶ M. II. 20-24.

¹⁷ M. III. 37-45.

¹⁸ On *puthujjana*, see *Nakulapitā Sutta*, S. 22. 1; *Dhammaññū Sutta*, A. 7. 64/4, 113-117 and *Udakūpama Sutta*, A. 7. 15/4. 11-13.



e. g.:¹⁹ “Manuno apaccā ti manussā, porāṇā pana bhaṇanti ‘mana–ussannatāya manussa’; te Jambudīpakā, Aparagoyānikā, Uttarakurukā, Pubbavidehakā ti catubbidhā.” Similarly with the other view of connecting it with “mind”: “manassa ussannatāya manussā”.²⁰

There are some who take delight in making the Buddha a non-human. They quote a passage from the Aṅguttara Nikāya, mistranslate it, and misunderstand it. The story goes thus:²¹

“Once the Buddha was seated under a tree in the meditation posture, his senses calmed, his mind quiet, and attained to supreme control and serenity. Then a Brahmin, Doṇa by name, approached the Buddha and asked: “Sir, are you a god (deva) or a heavenly angel (gandhabba) or a demon (yakkha) or a human being (manussa)?” “No, Brahmin.” “Then, sir, who are you?” “Brahmin, whatever defilement (āsavas) there be owing to the presence of which a person may be identified as a god or a heavenly angel or a demon or a human being, all these defilements in me are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, done away with, and are no more subject to future arising. Just as, Brahmin, a blue or red white lotus born in water, grows in water and stands up above the water untouched by it, so too I, who was born in the world and grew up in the world, have transcended the world, and I live untouched by the world. Remember me as one who is enlightened (buddhoti mam dhārehi brāhmaṇa).”

What the Buddha said was that he was not a god or a heavenly angel or a demon or a human being full of

¹⁹ KhA. 123.

²⁰ VvA. 18.

²¹ A. II. 37 f.



defilements. From the above it is clear that the Buddha wanted the Brahmin to know that he was not a human being with defilements. He did not want the Brahmin to put him into any of those categories. The Buddha was in the world but not of the world. This is clear from the simile of the lotus.²² Hasty critics, however, rush to wrong conclusions and want others to believe that the Buddha was not a human being.

(4) Puggala (Pun'ti vuccati niraya, tasmim galanti'ti puggalā),²³ means an individual or a person as opposed to a multitude or class; a creature, being, man.²⁴ The puggala of which this Sanskrit is “pudgala”, means puruṣa, person, man, creature, and soul.²⁵

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya, there is a clear instance in which the Buddha categorically declared that he was a human being:

“Monks, there is one person (Puggala) whose birth into this world is for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the gain and welfare and happiness of gods (Devas) and humanity. Who is this one person (eka puggala)? It is the Tathāgata, who is a Consummate One (Arahant), a Supremely Enlightened One (Sammā-sambuddho)...Monks, one person born into the world is an extraordinary man, a marvellous man (Ācchariya manussa).”²⁶

²² M. I. 169.

²³ Vism. 310.

²⁴ Childers, R. C (1875, rpt 1993), *A Dictionary of the Pāli Languages* (New Delhi: Asian Education Services), p. 390. It also called be hold that man (Tam. Puggalam, eva passatha, Dh. ed. by V. Fausboll, Copenhagen, 1855), p. 61.

²⁵ Edgerton, Franklin (1998), *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), p. 347.

²⁶ A. I. 22.



In analyzing what we have mentioned above, we have noted that the term “Mahāpurisa” is more wider in sense, and is related to both mental and physical aspects. And here we shall further discuss more on the concept of personality as we find in the texts, for the purpose of getting a fuller picture related to our study.

According to the Anuruddha mahāvitakka Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya,²⁷ it is clear that “the great personality (mahāpurisa)” refers to a noble saint (ariya), that is, a saint of the path, particularly the Arahant.²⁸ In the commentaries, the word mahāpurisa, however, is always used in reference to the Bodhisatta, that is, the Buddha before his awakening (from his first public aspiration for Buddhahood onwards).²⁹

The Cūla Niddesa, commenting on the Tissa Mettaya Māṇava Pucchā³⁰ simply gives a string of synonyms and near synonyms, thus: mahāpuriso, aggapuriso, seṭṭhapuriso, viseṭṭhapuriso, pāmokkhapuriso, uttamapuriso, padhānapuriso (the great personality, the foremost personality, the excellent personality, the supreme personality, the highest personality, the main personality).³¹

The Canon itself, however, provides at least two important texts directly illuminating the meaning of

²⁷ A. 4. 228-235.

²⁸ The other three types of saints are the stream-winner, the once-returner and the non-returner. For details, see *Kīṭāgiri Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya*.

²⁹ DA. 2. 426-442, 3: 920; MA. 2. 79, 3. 67, 4: 189; SA. 1. 322, 2. 115, 242; AA. 1. 145, 2. 237, 240, 4. 76; DhA. 1. 81, 313, 2: 45; SnA. 1. 184, 187 f, 223, 258, 357, 384, 392. On the list of mythical 32 characteristics of the great man (*mahāpurisalakkhaṇa*) see D. II. 17 f; III. 142 ff; M. II. 136 f.

³⁰ Sn. VV. 1047-42.

³¹ The *Cūla Niddesa Comy* similarly merely gives the lexical meanings of these words in turn.



mahāpurisa, that is, the Tissa Metteyya Maṇava Pucchā.³² And the Mahāpurisa Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya.³³ In the first text, the question of the Brahmin youth Tissa Metteyya to the Buddha, forms part of the ancient Pārāyana-vagga of the Sutta Nipāta.

“Whom do you call a great personality (kaṃ brūsi mahāpuriso ti)?”

“Him I call the great personality—He has gone beyond the seamstress here (taṃ brūmi mahāpuriso ti, so idha sibbanim accagā’ti.)”

Although there seems to be five questions raised here by Tissa Metteyya, they all converge on the key question: “Whom do you call a great personality?” The Buddha answers accordingly.

And again, in Mahāpurisa Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya—the Sāriputta Thera asks the Buddha who is a “mahāpurisa.” The Buddha answers that it is one who has won emancipation of mind, which can be attained by practicing the four satipaṭṭhānas. The one who has an unliberated mind is not a great personality according to the Buddha.³⁴

Another definition of great personality is mentioned in Vassakāra Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya.³⁵ Vassakāra visits the Buddha at Veluvana and tells him that, among Brahmins, a man is considered great personality if:

- 1) To be concerned with the welfare of many,
- 2) To be master of the mind in the domain of thought (cetovasippatta),
- 3) To be able to enter into the four jhānas at will, and

³² Sn. VV. 1040-42.

³³ S. V. 158.

³⁴ S. V. 178 ff.

³⁵ A. II. 35 ff.



- 4) To have comprehended Nibbāna by the destruction of the āsavas.

According to early texts of the Pāli Canon, the term mahāpurisa is often explained in a spiritual sense rather than on physical signs. For example, one who has an emancipated mind (vimutti citta) is a mahāpurisa.³⁶ Verses in the Suttanipāta explain that a mahāpurisa is one who has destroyed all defilements.³⁷ The Dhammapada also gives a similar definition of the word mahāpurisa when it says that he who has overcome craving (vītataṇho) and devoid of grasping (anādāno); who is skilled in understanding words and their meanings; who knows the order of letters, who is the bearer of the last body, the one with great wisdom, is a great person (mahāpuriso).³⁸ In this connection, the Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā interprets the word mahāpurisa as one whose mind is emancipated (vimutta citta).³⁹ The Dasuttara Sutta states that there are eight thoughts of a great man (mahāpurisa-vitakka). They are: Dhamma is for one of little wants, not for one of great wants; for one who is serenely content, not for the discontented; for one who is detached, not for one who is fond of society; for one who is energetic, not for the slack; for one who has presence of mind, not a confused mind; for one whose mind is concentrated, not distracted; for one who has insight, not for the unintelligent; for one who delights not in conceit, craving and opinion, not for one who delights therein.⁴⁰ All these references suggest that the early conception of

³⁶ S. V. 158.

³⁷ Sn. VV. 1040-1042.

³⁸ Dh. V. 352.

³⁹ DhA. IV. 71.

⁴⁰ D. III. 287. Cf. A. IV. 229. See also *Dialogues of the Buddha*, part III, pp. 261-262.



mahāpurisa in the Pāli Canon refers to an Arahant endowed with spiritual achievements.⁴¹

The Buddha while emphasizing the spiritual personality, does not ignore the physical personality. The concept of physical personality or thirty-two marks of the body is referred to in the following Suttas such as: the Lakkhaṇa Sutta,⁴² the Mahāpadāna Sutta,⁴³ the Brahmāyu Sutta⁴⁴ and Chinese Āgamas.⁴⁵ The 32 marks are alluded to in the Ambattha Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, where it is stated that the science regarding the thirty-two marks form a part of Ambattha's education,⁴⁶ and that they are found in the brahmanical mantras. Furthermore, in the Buddhist hagiographies, it is a Brahmin who ascertains the thirty-two marks of a Buddha.⁴⁷

For example, in the Mahāpadāna Sutta, it is the Brahmins, "skilled in signs," who examine the body of prince Vipassī and determine that he has the thirty-two marks of a great man.⁴⁸ Another famous example is found in the

⁴¹ Cf. B. Wimalaratana, op.cit., p. 19.

⁴² D. 3. 143 f.

⁴³ D. 2. 17-19; Cf. *Mahāvadāna Sūtra*, ed. Waldschmidt, K. Wille, p. 101 f.

⁴⁴ M. 2. 136 f.

⁴⁵ The thirty two marks of a great man are mentioned in many early suttas: the Pāli suttas such as the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, II, 17-19; the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 143-144; the *Brahmāyu Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, II, 136-137; the Chinese translations such as the *Dīrghāmaṃsa*, Taisho, vol 1, 5a-b; the *Madhyamāgama*, Taisho, vol. 1, 686; 883c-884a; the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Taisho, vol. 24, 108c-109a and the *Mahāvastu*, I. 226; II. 29.

⁴⁶ D. 1. 88.

⁴⁷ For example, D. 1. 89, 114, 120; A. 1. 163; M. 2. 136; Sn. 600, 1000.

⁴⁸ D. III. 142 ff; Mil. 405 f.



Jātakanidāna: eight of the 108 Brahmin sages,⁴⁹ invited by the Rāja Suddhodana, to prognosticate on the Bodhisatta's future, were Vedic masters and sign-readers. Seven of them raise two fingers, prognosticating that the child Siddhattha would either become a universal monarch, if he lives the household life, or a universal teacher, if he renounces the world. Koṇḍañña, however, raises only one finger and declares that the Bodhisatta is sure to renounce the world to become a world teacher.⁵⁰

The Suttas often record the Buddha as looking very much like any other venerable monk. There is clear evidence that on many occasions not everyone is able at once to recognize the Buddha on seeing him; for example, the Sāmaññaphala Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya⁵¹ records that Ajātasattu has to ask Jīvaka which of the monks in the assembly is the Buddha; and the Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya records how the monk Pukkusāti recognizes the Buddha only after discovering the similarities of the teachings that they profess (but MA here, however, says that the Buddha willfully hides his marks to avoid detection).⁵² The Upakkilesa Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya mentions another example of the Buddha being indistinguishable from other monks in physical appearance. Buddha, after having left the Kosambī monks, came to the park where venerable Anuruddha and two other fellow monks were staying. The park keeper did not recognize the Buddha by his physical appearance and asked him not to enter the park because there were three mendicants practising

⁴⁹ That is, *Rāma* (father of *Uddaka Rāmaputta*), *Dhaja*, *Lakkhaṇa*, *Mantī*, *Koṇḍañña* (youngest of these eight, but the eldest of the five monks), *Suyāma* and *Sudatta*.

⁵⁰ J. 1. 55 f.

⁵¹ D. 1. 50.

⁵² M. 3. 237-247.



seriously.⁵³ The same incident is also found in the Chinese Ekottarāgama.⁵⁴ In these two instances, had the Buddha possessed the thirty-two bodily marks of a great man, they would certainly have recognized him at a glance. His long arms that could reach to his knees without bending, for instance, constitute visible signs. This suggests that the faithful followers must have added these physical attributes to the Buddha in the course of time in order to glorify him. The historical Buddha might not have had them at all. Moreover, as W. Pachow indicates, these marks do not actually enhance the real importance of the Buddha as an enlightened teacher.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, even if the Buddha was not actually endowed with these characteristics, his authenticity and spirituality were in no way affected or diminished, and that those characteristics (based on ancient Indian tradition) should then be taken to be imagined symbolism of the fruits of his past good kamma as detailed in the Lakkhaṇa Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya.

On the other hand, we have at least three Suttas that attest to the *spiritual*, rather than the physical, character of the “great man” (mahāpurisa).⁵⁶ The Vassakāra Sutta (A. 4. 35) records the Buddha as giving to Vassakāra,⁵⁷ the simplest definition of the great man, that is, he is learned, a good expositor of the meaning of what he has learned, he has a good memory, and he is skillful, industrious and expedient in his

⁵³ M. III. 155.

⁵⁴ Taisho. Vol. 2. 629b.

⁵⁵ W. Pachow, “A Hermeneutical Approach to the Supernatural Phenomena in Buddhist History.” *Chinese Culture*, vol. XXVI I, (1986), No. 1, 31.

⁵⁶ See Endo 1997: 139 f.

⁵⁷ *Vassakāra* is king Ajātasattu’s crafty Machiavellian minister whose subversive machinations led to the downfall of the Vajjī: see *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (D. 2. 73 f).



tasks.⁵⁸ In the Mahāpurisa Sutta (S. 47. 11.), the Buddha gives a spiritual definition of the great man to Sāriputta, that is, he is one who dwells with the mind liberated through the practice of the four Satipaṭṭhānas.⁵⁹ The most important discussion on the great man is found in the Anuruddhamahāvitakka Sutta (A. 8. 30), wherein the Buddha teaches how proper mental reflections can bring about inner stillness leading to spiritual liberation (Arahanthood).⁶⁰

We have learned from Lakkhaṇa Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, the Universal King (Cakkavatti) also has thirty-two signs of great physical personality as Buddha. These characteristics comprise 32 signs (dvattiṃsa-mahāpurisa-lakkhaṇas) and were supplemented by another 80 secondary characteristics (asīti-anuvyañjana). The 32 main characteristics of signs are as follows:

1. He has feet with a level sole (feet with level tread,/ so that he places his foot evenly on the ground,/ lifts it evenly,/ and touches the ground evenly with the entire sole).
2. He has the mark of a thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of his feet.
3. He has projecting heels.
4. He has long fingers and toes.
5. His hands and feet are soft-skinned.
6. He has netlike lines on palms and soles.
7. He has high raised ankles.
8. He has taut calf muscles like an antelope.

⁵⁸ A. II. 35-7.

⁵⁹ S. 5. 158. Ven. B. Wimalaratana (1994), *Concept of Great Man* (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society), n. d. On *Satipaṭṭhānas*, see D.II.290 ff; M.I.56 ff. For details, see also Soma Thera, trans. (2003), *The Way of Mindfulness* (Kandy: BPS).

⁶⁰ A. 4. 228-235.



9. He can touch his knees with the palms of his hands without bending.
10. His sexual organs are concealed in a sheath and exudes a pleasant odor.
11. His skin is the color of gold. (His body is more beautiful than all the gods).
12. His skin is so fine that no dust can attach to it.
13. His body hairs are separate with one hair per pore.
14. His body hair is blue-black, and curls clockwise in rings.
15. He has an upright stance like that of brahma.
16. He has the seven convexities of the flesh (the seven convex surfaces, / on both hands, both feet, both shoulders, and his trunk).
17. He has an immense torso, like that of a lion.
18. The furrow between his shoulders is filled in.
19. The distance from hand-to-hand and head-to-toe is equal.⁶¹
20. He has a round and smooth neck.
21. He has sensitive taste-buds.
22. His jaw is like that of lion's.
23. He has a nice smile.
24. His teeth are evenly spaced.
25. His teeth are without gaps in-between.
26. His teeth are quite white.
27. He has a large, long tongue.
28. He has a voice like that of Brahma.
29. He has very blue eyes [very (abhi) blue (nīla) eyes (netto)] “is the literal translation”.⁶²

⁶¹ Incidentally, these are also the ideal proportions according to Vitruvius, and depicted in Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.



30. He has eyelashes like that of an ox.
31. He has a white soft wisp of hair in the center of the brow (this became the symbolic ūṇa).
32. His head is like a royal turban (this denotes his cranial protrusion, visible on Buddhist iconography).⁶³

There are also 80 secondary physical characteristics of personalities (asīti-Anuvyañjana):⁶⁴

1. He has beautiful fingers and toes.
2. He has well-proportioned fingers and toes.
3. He has tube-shaped fingers and toes.
4. His fingernails and toenails have a rosy tint.
5. His fingernails and toenails are slightly upturned at the tip.
6. His fingernails and toenails are smooth and rounded without ridges.
7. His ankles and wrists are rounded and undinted.
8. His feet are of equal length.
9. He has a beautiful gait, like that of a king-elephant.
10. He has a stately gait, like that of a king-lion.
11. He has a beautiful gait, like that of a swan.

⁶² Nīla is the word used to describe a sapphire and the colour of the sea, but also the colour of a rain cloud. It also defines the colour of the Hindu God Grishna.

⁶³ *Lakkhaṇa Sutta*, D. III, 146 ff; M. II. 133; S. I. 89, 114, 120; A. I. 163. etc. See also Ven. B. Wimalaratana (1994), *Concept of Great Man* (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society), n. d; The Toshiichi Endo (1st ed 1997), *Buddha in Theravāda Buddhism* (Dehiwala: BCC), pp. 135-165. The concepts of thirty-two physical marks are confirmed by the Chinese Āgamas as well. Guang Xing. (2005), *The Concept of the Buddha: its evolution from early Buddhism to the trīnikāya* (USA: Routledge Curzon), p. 14.

⁶⁴ Pv. II. 75; VvA. 196, 213; DhA. III. 129.

Introduction



12. He has a majestic gait, like that of a royal ox.
13. His right foot leads when walking.
14. His knees have no protruding kneecaps.
15. He has the demeanor of a great man.
16. His navel is without blemish.
17. He has a deep-shaped abdomen.
18. He has clockwise marks on the abdomen.
19. His thighs are rounded like banana sheafs.
20. His two arms are shaped like an elephant's trunk.
21. The lines on the palms of his hands have a rosy tint.
22. His skin is thick or thin as it should be.
23. His skin is unwrinkled.
24. His body is spotless and without lumps.
25. His body is unblemished above and below.
26. His body is absolutely free of impurities.
27. He has the strength of 1,000 crore elephants or 100,000 crore men. [Note: A crore is equal to 10 millions].
28. He has a protruding nose.
29. His nose is well proportioned.
30. His upper and lower lips are equal in size and have a rosy tint.
31. His teeth are unblemished and with no plaque.
32. His teeth are long like polished conches.
33. His teeth are smooth and without ridges.
34. His five sense-organs are unblemished.
35. His four canine teeth are crystal and rounded.
36. His face is long and beautiful.
37. His cheeks are radiant.
38. The lines on his palms are deep.
39. The lines on his palms are long.
40. The lines on his palms are straight.
41. The lines on his palms have a rosy tint.



42. His body emanates a halo of light extending around him for two meters.
43. His cheek cavities are fully rounded and smooth.
44. His eyelids are well proportioned.
45. The five nerves of his eyes are unblemished.
46. The tips of his bodily hair are neither curved nor bent.
47. He has a rounded tongue.
48. His tongue is soft and has a rosy-tint.
49. His ears are long like lotus petals.
50. His earholes are beautifully rounded.
51. His sinews and tendons don't stick out.
52. His sinews and tendons are deeply embedded in the flesh.
53. His topknot is like a crown.
54. His forehead is well-proportioned in length and breadth.
55. His forehead is rounded and beautiful.
56. His eyebrows are arched like a bow.
57. The hair of his eyebrows is fine.
58. The hair of his eyebrows lies flat.
59. He has large brows.
60. His brows reach the outward corner of his eyes.
61. His skin is fine throughout his body.
62. His whole body has abundant signs of good fortune.
63. His body is always radiant.
64. His body is always refreshed like a lotus flower.
65. His body is exquisitely sensitive to touch.
66. His body has the scent of sandalwood.
67. His body hair is consistent in length.
68. He has fine bodily hair.
69. His breath is always fine.
70. His mouth always has a beautiful smile.



71. His mouth has the scent of a lotus flower.
72. His hair has the colour of a dark shadow.
73. His hair is strongly scented.
74. His hair has the scent of a white lotus.
75. He has curled hair.
76. His hair does not turn grey.
77. He has fine hair.
78. His hair is untangled.
79. His hair has long curls.
80. He has a topknot as if crowned with a flower garland.⁶⁵

Buddhism defines the personality of an individual as being the particular characteristics expressed by the person through his actions, speech and thought, whether good or bad, and which are indicative of the individual's mental motivation. Personality is made up of two components: implicit personality and explicit personality. Implicit personality is related to the wholesome and unwholesome thoughts of the mind, whereas explicit personality is the actions and speech, outward expressions, whether good or bad, of the individual. This study is an attempt to prove the parallel between the concept of personality found in Buddhism and in modern psychology. Western or Modern Psychology also divides personality into two, external and internal personality which in Buddhism are described as explicit and implicit personality.

Whereas Western Psychology gives more importance to the physical or external characteristics, Buddhism emphasizes both the internal and external factors. In order to

⁶⁵ Ibid; BV. XXIV 27. *Anuvyañjanāsampannam dvattiṃsavaralakkhaṇam; sabbaṃ samantarahitaṃ nanu rittā sabbasaṅkhārā.*; Ap. I. 156. *The Apadāna* specifies the number eighty. For more on this topic, See Bellanwillla Wimalaratana (1994), *Concept of Great Man* (Singapore: Buddhist Research Society).



remain focused, this study will limit itself to the examination of the internal (mental) personality; although external (physical) personality is connected.

CHAPTER TWO

The Constituents of Personality

In Pāli Buddhist scriptures there are various theories related to the description of the sentient being. Accordingly in Buddhism man is analyzed as constituting of mental factors and physical form (nāma-rūpa) brought together as a psychophysical unit. These two forms can be further subdivided into five factors, without any abiding substantiality whatsoever. The nature of personality of a human being is, according to the Buddha, only nāma and rūpa, which is denoted as the psychophysical personality.

2.1. A Physiological Approach to Human Being

2.1.1. The Origin of Man

The psychophysical personality referred here is the foetus formed in the mother's womb (gabbha) and which represents the beginning of a new life span.

A man consists of aforesaid two important parts i. e., physical body and mind or rūpa and nāma which come to unite as the aggregate under the influence of desire, ignorance and volitional actions as we read that “cloaked in ignorance and tied by craving we are running on and faring on.”¹ The

¹ M. I. 294. Avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ kho, āvuso, sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ tatratatrābhinandanā – evaṃ āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti. Cf. S. II. 178. avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ. In Nidāna Saṃyutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, some suttas emphasize the taṇhā (S. II. 31), some avijjā (S. II. 84) and some pointed out both (S. II. 23-4). See



beginning point of the life is unknown; when we, as human, descend into this world, this remains unanswered.

Here we will discuss the Buddhist idea of the human birth in connection with consciousness as expounded in the Buddhist Suttas as follows:

2.1.2. The Story of Birth of Men in Aggañña Sutta

In the second part of the Aggañña Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Buddha tells the story of how the human beings came to dwell on earth.

The Buddha explained that sooner or later, after a very long time, there would be a time when the world shrinks. As the universe shrinks, many of its inhabitants would die. Of these deceased creatures, some were born again (due to good kamma) in the heavenly realm of ābhassara (lucid light). There, they floated for a very - very long time, as bodiless beings, radiating extreme light. They don't eat or drink, as they nourish themselves from pure spiritual joy.

Then, after some very long time, when the world began to expand again, many of these ābhassara creatures were born to the newly formed earth. They floated above and around the Earth. At this time, there were not yet seen the moon and the sun, there were not yet night and day, there were not yet names and identity or female or male. The creatures were only known as creatures (sattā).

“At that period, Vāseṭṭha, there was just one mass of water, and all was darkness, blinding darkness.... And sooner or later, after a very long period of time, savory earth spread itself over the waters where those beings

details, Naw Kham La Dhammasami (2011), *Another Way of Looking at Things (A Comparative Study of Schopenhauer & Buddha Perspectives on Human Liberation)* [Maharagama, Sri Lanka: Ruwan Paharuwa Press], pp. 73-6.



were. It looked just like the skin that forms itself over hot milk as it cools. It was endowed with color, smell, and taste. It was the color of fine ghee or heated butter and it was very sweet, like pure wild honey”²

Some of the creatures of light (the ābhassara) who had curiosity and a greedy nature began to dive and taste the savory Earth’s substance. At that moment, the creature found out that it tasted so delicious. Thus, greed started to seep in and it ate the substance voraciously, greedily, thus calling also its comrades (who were flying above and on earth) to join in the feast. Not long afterwards, the creatures began to eat so greedily and due to the huge amount of the mud substance, they could feed on it for a very long time. As they ate and ate, their luminous body began to be coated by the mud substance and formed a coarser body.

It should be noted here that the aim or the spirit of teaching of this Sutta, which the Buddha has said, is not to lay down the theories of the Histo-Biography of human beings and social-political sciences, but to teach the doctrine of equality of all men abolishing the caste system.³ Therefore according to the Buddha, no one is superior or inferior to others by birth but by his conduct (kamma),⁴ and knowledge (vijjā) and moral (sīla).⁵

2.1.3. The Scientific Theory of Human-birth in Sutta

In the case of birth-rebirth we find the scientific theory as expounded in the Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya Sutta, according to which the conception (paṭisandhi) of a man is possible when

² Bodhi, Bhikkhu, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 410.

³ D. III. 80 f.

⁴ Sn. 136. Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo, kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmaṇo.

⁵ D. I. 99-100. Vijjācaraṇasampanno so seṭṭho devamānuse.



there is the conjunction of three things, i. e., a coitus of parents, mother being in the proper period, and the rebirth consciousness is present⁶ as the Buddha himself states:

“But if O Monks, there is here a coitus of parent and it is the mother’s season and Gaṇḍhabba is present, it is conjunction of these three things that is conception.”⁷

It is obvious that life according to Buddhism is not only the result of combination of materials, for the Buddha has spoken of the Gandhabba (Sk. Gandharva) here. What is meant by Gandhabba? Gandhabba in this context indicates the re-linking consciousness (paṭisandhi-viññāṇa) as we find in the Pāli commentary:

“‘Gandhabba’ means the being who is coming into the mother’s womb, the being about to enter the mother’s womb. ‘Should be present (tatrūpakasatta)’ means it is not that he remains merely observing the union of the parents, but that a certain being is about to be born in that situation being driven on by the mechanism of kamma...”⁸

⁶ M. I. 265-6; Abhs. 239. Tiṇṇaṃ kho pana bhikkhave sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti: idha mātāpitāro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca na utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca na paccupaṭṭhito hoti. Medical science prescribes only the first two conditions. The absence of the third factor—the intermediate being—evidently explains still birth and some miscarriages.

⁷ M. I. 226. And also see M. II. 157. Yato ca kho bhikkhave mātāpitāro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti gandhabbo ca paccupaṭṭhito hoti evaṃ tiṇṇaṃ sannipātā gabbhassavakkanti hoti. Modern biology classifies life by way of phylum, class, genus, species, and so on without any suggestion that any given instance of a species will, apart from spatio-temporal location, be indistinguishable from other instances of the same species. (Paul William, ed, *Buddhism [Critical Concepts in Religious Studies]*, Vol. IV. (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 170.

⁸ MA. II. 310. And also see Edward Conze (1964), *Buddhist Texts through the Ages* (New York: Touch Book), pp. 76-7.



For, further clarification on this point let us consider the dialogue between Buddha and Ven'ble Ānanda as follows:

“I have said that there is consciousness, there is name-and-form. In what way should you understand that? If, Ānanda, there would be no consciousness appearing in the mother's womb could there be name-and form there?”

“No Lord' Replies Ven'ble Ānanda.”

“If consciousness, Ānanda, having come to life then therein should later withdraw from it could there be name-and-form coming to life?”

Ven'ble Ānanda's reply was, again, negative. Then Buddha goes on.

“Ānanda, should consciousness withdraw still later when the tiny dot has become a boy and a girl, would it be possible for name-and-form to grow up completely?”

“No Lord” was the Ven'ble Ānanda's reply. Then the Enlightened One comes to conclude that,

“Because of this, Ānanda, consciousness is called the cause, the origin, the source and the genesis of the name-and-form (Tasmātiḥā' nanda eseḥa hetu etaṃ nidānaṃ esa samudayo, esa paccayo, nāmarūpassa yadidaṃ viññāṇaṃ.)⁹

Therefore, Gandhabba, in this context, is nothing but the rebirth-consciousness Ven'ble Piyananda also states that, “If viññāṇa is unavailable to fertilize the ovum, the ovum dies. The viññāṇa which is ready to enter the ovum is called “gandhabba” or one who is ready to go.”¹⁰

⁹ Mahānidāna Sutta, D. II. 63 ff.

¹⁰ Vide F. J. Moffman (1987), *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), p. 48.



Here the rebirth or re-linking consciousness according to Pāli Abhidhamma is of the nineteen types, i. e.,¹¹ the eight kinds of the great resultant consciousness pertaining to the sensual sphere (kāmāvacara-mahāvipāka-citta) through which means one will take birth/rebirth in the happy existences, i. e., human world and six kinds of heaven the nine kinds of mahaggata-resultant consciousness (mahaggata-vipāka-citta) through which means one will be born in the sixteen Brāhma-worlds (rūpa-loka) and non-form-worlds (arūpa-loka), and the two kinds of investigating consciousness accompanied by indifference (upekkhā-santīraṇa) by which means one will take rebirth in the four kinds of unhappy planes (apāya-bhūmi) and be born as deformed man such as blind, deaf, etc., in this world.

The different births in the different families are said to be determined by our own volitional actions as we learn that the Subha youngster doubting this question asks the Buddha why someone lives for short life span, while another is in sound health, some are born very rich, while others are very poor etc. Then the Buddha answers that all living beings have their own kammas; they are: heirs of kamma, born of kamma... kamma classifies living beings to be good and bad (kammaṃ satte vibhajati yadidaṃ hinappaṇitatāya) for example, some lady or man habitually kills living beings, being unkind to living beings, not having compassion towards living beings, then he or she will be born in the unhappy worlds (apāya-loka) after death or if he or she happens to be born in this world. He or she will live for a short time, etc.¹²

How does life develop in the mother's womb? This is another matter systematically explained by the Buddha. Being

¹¹ Abhhs. III. 6. p. 12; Vism. 551.

¹² For full details, see Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta, M. III. 104 ff; *Middle Length Sayings*, vol. III. p. 147.



asked by Indaka Yakṣa about this question, Buddha answers him:

“At first the Kalala takes birth and thence the Abbuda. Therefrom the Pesī grows, developing as the Ghana in its turn. Now in the Ghana doth appear the hair, the down, the nail. And whatsoever food, and drink the mother of him takes, thereby the man in the mother’s womb doth like and grow.”¹³

The meaning of each of the technical terms is explained in the Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā as follows:¹⁴

“Kalala”: In the beginning of the conception in at which the father’s sperm gets into the mother’s ovum is called ‘kalala’ which is compared by the commentary with a clear drop of sesame-oil remaining at the end of the tail-hair of a yak after shaking for seven times.

“Abbuda”: After the lapse of the first week, the ‘kalala’ transforms itself to ‘abbuda’ the colour of which is similar to the meat-washing-water (maṃsa-dhovana-udaka-vaṇṇaṃ).

“Pesī”: In the third week, the embryo or zygote becomes a little gruel and crude like a piece of meat being dried in the sun-light, this is called ‘Pesi.’

“Ghana”: In the forth week, the zygote gets changed into a lump as round as an egg. This is ‘ghana’ (kuṭaṇḍa-santhāno-ghano).

Then, in the fifth week, the zygote develops into the fifth stage in which two arms, tow legs and the head appear.

After that the embryo goes on developing until hairs fledge, the nails sprout within the forty-two weeks.

¹³ *Kindred Sayings*, vol. I. p. 263; S. I. 206: Paṭhama kalalaṃ hoti kalalā hoti abhudaṃ abhudā jāyate pesi pesi nibbattati ghano ghanā pasākhā jāyanti kesā lomā nakhā’pi ca yañcassa bhunati mātā annaṃ pānaṃ bhojenaṃ tena so tattha yāpeti mātukucchiggato naro.

¹⁴ SA. I. 300-301.



During this period the embryo relies on whatsoever its mother has eaten, be it rice, or other edible things, when nine or ten months are completed the foetus or embryo will release itself from the mother's womb.

At the time of conception, the three groups (kalāpa) of the kamma-produced corporealities (out of the ten groups) are supposed to be born in combination with the relinking consciousness (paṭisandhi viññāṇa). They are:¹⁵

1). The decad sprung from kamma with body (kāyadasaka-kalāpa) which comprises the eight kinds of inseparable corporealities (avinibbhoga-rūpa) i. e., earth, water, fire, air, colour, smell, taste, nutriment (ojā), faculty of life, and body-sense-organ.

2). The decad sprung from kamma with heart-base (vatthu-dasaka) which consists of the aforesaid eight kinds of inseparable corporeality, faculty of life and heart.

3). The decad sprung from kamma with sex which is of eight inseparable corporealities, the faculty of life and sex i. e., be it masculinity or femininity.

In other words, the nine kinds of corporeality (out of 28), i. e., five sense-organs, two kinds of sex, faculty of life and heart-base are said to be caused to arise by the re-linking consciousness only.¹⁶

That means without consciousness our birth is definitely impossible, for the physical body (rūpa) is born and developed depending on the consciousness.

¹⁵ *Compendium*, p. 166; Vism. 552. Gabbaseyyaka-sattānaṃ pana kāya-bhāva-vatthu-saṅkhātāni tīṇi dasakāni pātubhavanti.

¹⁶ *Saddhammajotika, Paramatthajotika*, op. cit. p. 117.



2.1.4. The Buddhist Proof for the Existence of Consciousness at the Moment of Conception

1). According to the formula of dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda) name-and-form (nāma-rūpa) or mind and body is caused to arise by the consciousness (viññāṇa).

2). The consciousness is treated as one of the four nutriments (āhāra) by which the physical body is nourished.

3). The Buddha speaks of the six elements i. e., earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness. This suggests that dependent upon the consciousness-element all other material elements combine together or form the living being as we find in Aṅguttara Nikāya,

“Thus it is said what does it depend upon? It is said, O monks, dependent upon the six elements there is conception (gabbhāvakkanti), when there is conception, then there is body and mind complexity, dependent upon the body and mind complexity arise the six sense-organs.”¹⁷

4). In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Buddha is firm on the supremacy of the consciousness saying that “It is thought whereby the world is led...”¹⁸ or in the Dhammapada, He also repeats that “of all (compound) things mind is forerunner, they are mind-made...”¹⁹ (see, pp. 54-58).

5). Consciousness in the form of willing force or energy with purpose that must be present in the mother's womb. Otherwise the birth and development of embryo is impossible.

6). At the time of conception, at least the nine kinds of corporeality born of kamma (kammaja-rūpa) are required. That shows that our physical body is caused by volitional action

¹⁷ A. I. 176.

¹⁸ S. I. 39.

¹⁹ Dh. VV. 1-2.



which is just another name of consciousness associated with some mental properties.

7). Unlike the corporealities, consciousness is supposed to exist alone in some existence (bhava), but the physical body must be accompanied by some kinds of consciousness always (e.g. Rūpa-loka/bhūmi and Arūpa-loka/bhūmi).²⁰

8). In the third Pārājika even abortion of the foetus committed by the monks at the time of conception is considered as an extreme and serious offence since the foetus is assumed to be endowed with life.²¹

2.1.5. The Problem of Rebirth and No-soul

To anyone who continues to hold fast to the belief in a permanent soul or “Ātman” this problem of non-soul and rebirth will continually pose serious problem. For they are confused as to how when there is no soul one could receive the results of good and evil kamma by playing into the circle of birth and death or strictly speaking who does take rebirth when we do not accept the permanent soul.

In Pāli scripture the term “atta” (Sk: Ātman) is found used in several places for example,

“Attā hi attano nātho.” “One is lord of oneself.”²²

“Attādīpā viharatha.” “Be ye islands unto yourself.”²³

And other terms such as “puggala” means “person”, “jīva” (living being), “manussa” (sk. manuṣaya) (human being) etc., are conventional usage through which we can understand what is communicated. Nothing implies permanent being as we read in the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta that “such terms are just worldly usage, worldly terms of communication, worldly

²⁰ Abh. 181-193.

²¹ Vin. III. 68-86.

²² Dh. VV. 160, 380.

²³ D. II. 100.



description by which the Tathāgata communicates without misapprehending them.”²⁴ And again “the noble man being fully liberated would not quarrel with anybody due to the communicated language whatever the people speak he would follow but not hold fast to it.”²⁵

All Jātaka (birth-story) of Lord Buddha and others Arahants should be understood as the conventional truth only. Because in the absolute truth, a man, a living being and so on can not be found apart from the aggregates, elements and bases as the Buddhist nun (bhikkhunī) by name “vajirā” states,

“Yathā hi angasambhārā hoti satto ratho iti, evaṃ khandhesu santesu hoti satto ti sammutī ti.”²⁶

“Just as there is the sound chariot due to the assembly of parts, even so when the (five) aggregates are present, is there the convention ‘being.’”

Furthermore, Abhidharmakośa says that “what is called individual is nothing else than the component elements... when we are speaking of a human being. To these (fivefold set of elements) different names are being given such as a sentient being, a man, Manu’s progeny, a son of Manu, a child, an individual, a life, a soul.”²⁷

However the doctrine of non-soul according to Buddhist philosophy does not imply “emptiness”, “voidness” or “nihilism”, but it is so called because of the very simple reason as expounded in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta, where the Buddha has analytically taken various aspects of the personality and contends that none of them can be identified

²⁴ D. I. 202.

²⁵ S. I. 500. Evaṃ vimuttacitto kho aggivesana bhikkhu na kenaci samvadati na kenaci vivadati yañña kho loke vuttaṃ tena voharati aparāmāsan’ti.

²⁶ S. I. 135; Vism. 593.

²⁷ Abhk. Ch. IX. pp. 1189 ff; Stcherbasky, trans. (1976), *The Soul Theory of Buddhists* (Varanasi: Bharatiya vidya prkasam), p. 28.



with the Ātman. The dialogue between Buddha and his five ascetics (pañca vaggiya) runs as follows:

“Is the physical body (rūpa) permanent or impermanent? It is impermanent, Lord. (replied the five ascetics). Is what is impermanent sorrowful or happy? sorrowful, Lord.

Of what is impermanent, sorrowful, and liable to change is it proper to regard it as ‘this is mine’, ‘this I am, this is my soul?’ ‘It is not Lord.’

Were the physical body self, then the body would not be subject to affliction; one should be able to say to it, let my body be thus, let my body be not thus. But this is not possible, the body is shifting and ever in change and therefore, ever accompanied by misery and affliction. Accordingly it can not be the soul.”²⁸

The same is repeated for the remaining aggregates i. e., feeling (vedanā), perception (saññā), mental formations (saṅkhāra) and consciousness (viññāṇa).

In Abhidharmakośa (ch. 9), there is an argument between the Vātsīputriya (Pāli: Vajjiputtaka) and Ven’ble Vasubandhu, as we read:

“If there is no individual or pudgala existing, who is it that does transmigrate from one existence to another? Why Lord Buddha has spoken thus: obscured by ignorance (avidyā) the living beings are wandering about and migrating through birth and death, and I was at the time Sunetra, the venerable teacher etc.”²⁹

Very similar to the explanation given in the Milinda-pañha, the life according to Ācariya Vasubandhu is comparable to fire which consumes and passes from one fuel

²⁸ Vin. I. 13.

²⁹ Abhk. P. 417. Cf. Chaudhuri. S, *Analytical Study of Abhidharmakośā*, op. cit. p. 2231.



to another. It is not the same and disappears at every moment. While Ven'ble Nāgasena answers this question saying that the previous life and the present life (nāma-rūpa) are neither exactly the same nor entirely different (na ca so na ca añño, M. I. 40) and the stream of life continues uninterruptedly like the flame of a lamp or candle and the mango tree and its fruits. Due to confusion according to the absolute truth and the conventional truth Sāti Bhikkhu was reported to assume that according to the Buddha's doctrine one's consciousness runs on and on and continues without break of identity (annañña).³⁰

As has been discussed earlier, consciousness according to Buddhism is a compounded and conditioned thing which, of course, cannot be identical with the permanent soul. Based on the principle of Middle Way i. e., the Dependent Origination (paṭiccasamuppāda), Buddha was reported to have been silent on such a metaphysical question (M. I. 426 ff). He tried to keep himself away from being associated with the two extremes of permanent soul (sassatadiṭṭhi) and annihilation view (ucchedadiṭṭhi) which were considered by him as being equally wrong views.³¹

In other words such a kind of question may be wrongly put, for when there is no individual in the present time why are we worrying about the soul or the life in the future? Once Buddha reproving a monk who approached him with such a question states: "O Monks, is it possible, here a certain stupid man who is in the dominion of ignorance and desire thinks to go beyond the mind of master?"³²

³⁰ M. I. 256. Tad'va idaṃ viññāṇaṃ sandhāraṭi saṃsaraṭi, anaññaṃ.

³¹ M. I. 256 f.

³² S. III. 103: Thānaṃ kho panetaṃ bhikkhave vijjati yaṃ idhekacco moghapuriso avijjāgato taṇhā-adhigatena cetasā satthu sāsanaṃ atiddhāvitabbaṃ maññeyya.



Moreover the teaching of non-self (anattā) is the most difficult to realize as Ven'ble Ācariya Buddhaghosa states that “the description of the characteristics of non-self is the province of none but the Buddha.”³³

Here the contrasted point between Buddhism and Materialism is the problem of moral responsibility. That is to say, all noble men according to Buddhism even realized that there is no soul apart from the mind-and-body-complexity, and they have sacrificed their lives for the well being and peace of the world by engaging in teaching and social work out of their compassion and loving-kindness. And at the same time they are behaving as models for their followers in terms of good conduct and morality.

However, there is no inconsistency between the law of kamma and the doctrine of non-substantiality (anattavāda) at all. Since there is law of change the living beings can be developed and the mentality can be elevated to a superior level. In the words of T. R. V. Murti “An unchanged eternal soul, as impervious to change, would render spiritual life lose all meaning; we would in that case, be neither the better nor worse for our efforts.”³⁴ Because if there is a permanent soul, pure and free from defilements, how does it become impure and corrupted? Why is the permanent soul subject to birth and death again and again? Even the Hindu philosophers have tried to answer this question by dividing the soul into two levels as is done by the Vedānta Schools, but it is not acceptable to all. The refutation of the theory of Māyā of Advaita by Rāmānuja can be one of the best examples.³⁵

³³ S. IV. 400; VbhA. 49. Cf. Malalasekara, G. P(1966), *The Truth of Anattā* (Kandy: BPS), p. 17.

³⁴ Murti, RTV, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, op. cit. p. 17.

³⁵ Ibid; VbhA. 49. Cf. Malalasekara, G. P (1966), *The Truth of Anattā* (Kandy: BPS), p. 17.



The Law of Kamma, according to Buddhism, automatically functions without interference of any unseen mighty God. Ācariya Buddhaghosa points out:

“Kamma-result proceeds from kamma,
Result has kamma for its source,
Future becoming springs from kamma,
And this how the world goes found.
There is no doer of a deed,
Or one who reaps the deed’s result,
Phenomena alone flow on,
No other view than this is right.”³⁶

2.2. The Classification of Corporeality (rūpa)

In general, rūpa is the Buddhist concept of material form, including both the body and external matter. Karunadasa begins his *Buddhist Analysis of Matter* by mentioning that at least four definitions of corporeality/matter (rūpa) can be distinguished in the Pāli Canon, thus:

- 1) As form (rūpa)
- 2) As what is visible (rūpāyatana);
- 3) As a sentient realm (rūpa dhātu or rūpāvacara); and
- 4) As jhāna or meditation absorption (rūpajjhāna).

He adds that they “may be represented as the generic, specific, cosmological and the psychological meaning of the term.”³⁷ Here, we shall examine the first, rūpa, as “form,” that is, physical or material form.³⁸ In the Pāli Canon, rūpa is defined as the four elements, earth, water, fire and wind.³⁹

³⁶ Vism. XIX. For detail, see Vide Ch. Sharma (1979), *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), p. 358 ff.

³⁷ Karunadasa (1976), *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, p. 1; see also Boisvert 1995: 31-34.

³⁸ S. 3. 47 f.

³⁹ S. II. 3-4.



2.2.1. The four great elements (mahābhūta) explained in Nikāyas

Empedocles, Greek philosopher, passionate belief that all things (including being) that are composed of a mixture of the four elements. These are earth, fire, air and water.⁴⁰ The physical body according to the Buddha is nothing but a combination of the four great elements (mahābhūta) which, under the influence of the power of kamma, desire and ignorance has come together. Therefore, the four great elements are said to form the different parts of our body as follows:⁴¹

1). The earth-element (paṭhavi-dhātu) in the solid, having property of keeping its shape and size in the body and is enumerated as hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bone, marrow, spleen, heart, liver, fascia, kidney, lungs, small intestines, large intestines, food not yet digested excrement and other things are solid characters.

2). The water-element (āpo-dhātu), as liquid having the property of flowing or absorbing including bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, mucus, the fluid, which lubricates the joints and urine or other things are of liquid properties.

3). The fire-element (tejo-dhātu) which has the heating property as the heat warming the body, the heat exhausting the

⁴⁰ Merlin Peris (1st ed 2007), *The Philosophers of Ancient Greece* (Wellampitiya, Sri Lanka: Godage International Publishers), p.142.

⁴¹ D. II. 294; M. I. 57 f; S. II. 3-4; Vism (348) says that the four primary elements are only briefly explained here, but at the length in *Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* (M. I. 185-191), *Mahārāhulovāda Sutta* (M. I. 421-426) and *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* (M. III. 240-242). The four elements are explained in some detail in *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*. On how the four elements cannot exist in themselves, see also McGovern, W. M, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, op. cit. p. 162.



substance of body, the heat making a person restless as a delirium patient and the heat that help the digesting of the food or others are of heat properties.

4). The air-element (vāyo-dhātu) that which has the blowing property as the air in the body which blows upwards, blows in the stomach, blows in intestines, blows through the body and blows in the process of breathing or the others have the blowing properties.

Accounted in this way the earth-element contributes the nineteen kinds of body's part, the water-element forms thirteen parts of the body including the brain (matthaluṅgaṃ), taking all together we have the thirty-two fold physical body (dvattimsākāra). Here again, the physical body is said to be divided into the three portions i. e., lower body, middle body and upper body. And each of them consists of various groups of materiality (rūpa-kalāpa) as Atthasālinī says that:⁴²

“Of these, from the naval downward is the lower body in which there are forty-four material qualities: body-decad, sex-decad, the eight material things sprung from nutriment, eight from the caloric order, and eight from mind. From the naval upwards till the wind-pipe is the middle body in which are the fifty-four material qualities: body-decad, sex-decad, baseis-decad, three sets of eight sprung from the nutriment etc. from the wind-pipe upward is the upper body wherein are eighty-four material qualities: eye-decad, ear-decad, nose-decad, tongue-decad, there sets of eight sprung from the nutriment etc.”

The term “Kalāpa” (group/aggregate) as mentioned above according to Abhidhammatthasangaha is of twenty-one kinds namely the 9 decads sprung from mind (cittajakalāpa), the 4 decads sprung from caloric order (cittajakalāpa), and the

⁴² Cf. M. III. 240; I. 185; Vism. 347; D. II. 294.



two decades sprung from (kammajakalāpa), for example, Cakkhudasaka (the group/aggregate of material quality with the eye as the leading item) is of ten kinds of materialities, i. e., 8 kinds of inseparable materials (avinibbhogarūpa) namely earth, water, fire, air, colour, smell, taste, and nutriment, vitality and eye-sense-organ.⁴³ Similarly in the case of body-decad and sex-decad there are sex-distinction (femininity or masculinity) and body-sense-organ as the leading items.

2.2.2. The 28 kinds of Corporeality (rūpa)

In addition to the four kinds of corporealities, twenty-seven⁴⁴ or twenty-eight types of corporealities (rūpa) are expounded by the Pāli Abhidhamma as it states:

“Essentials, sensory organs, objects, sex, heart, vitality and food thus (matter) is eighteenfold. Limitation (space), intimation, changeability and characteristic—thus there are ten non-conditioned (by kamma). In all there are twenty-eight.”⁴⁵

Here the essential (mahābhūta) as that of the Abhidharmkosā is of four classes, i. e., earth element (paṭhavī), water element (āpo), fire element (tejo), and air element (vāyo). They are also called “mahābhūta-rūpa.” Because it implies the mighty change and the vastness of their becoming. In other words, they are called “great” because they require mighty effort to cope with and “phenomena” because of their existence⁴⁶ as discussed earlier. Apart from these, the remaining 24 kinds of them are called “the derivative corporealities (upādāya rūpa).

⁴³ Abhs. 253-255.

⁴⁴ Chaudhuri, S, *Analytical Study of Abhidharmakośā*, op. cit. p. 75.

⁴⁵ There are only 23 kinds of derivative corporealities found in *Atthasālinī*, DhsA. 305.

⁴⁶ Abhs 27; *Saṅgaha*, pp. 33-4.



Like that of the Sarvāsativādin and Yogācāra shool, among the derivative corporealities, the first five sensitive materialities (pasāda-rūpa), i. e., eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body and the four kinds of material qualities of sense (gocara or visaya rūpa), i. e., colour, sound, smell, and taste are expounded in the Pāli Abhidhamma.

The two kinds of material qualities of sex (bhāva-rūpa), i. e., femininity (itthibhāva) and masculinity (purisabhāva), one physical basis of mind (hadaya-rūpa), one material qualities of life (jivitindriya), one material quality of nutrition (kabalīṅkārāhāra = edible food), one material quality of delimitation (pariccheda rūpa), i. e., space (ākāsa), two kinds of material quality of communication (viññatti-rūpa), i. e., bodily intimation (kāya-viññatti) and verbal intimation (vacī-viññatti), two kinds of material quality of plasticity or alterability (vikāra-rūpa), i. e., lightness (lahutā), and pliancy or elasticity (mudutā), the four kinds of material quality of salient feature (lakkhaṇa-rūpa), i. e., growth or integration (upacaya), continuity (santati), decay (jaratā) and impermanence or resolution are discussed.⁴⁷

These twenty four kinds of material quality are called “upādāya rūpa”, because they are derived from or dependent upon the four great essentials (mahābhūta) as the Atthsālinī states:

“The materiality which has proceeded in dependence on, is derived from, has not let go the four great essentials... or... there is matter derived... here “derived” is “it grasps.” The meaning is grasping the great essentials, not let go. Such (derived forms proceed in dependence upon them”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ DhsA. 300; *Expositor*, vol. II. p. 395; Vism. 444; Abhs. 27.

⁴⁸ Ibid.



It should be noted here that there are ten and fourteen types of citta-viprayukta-dharmas (the dharma which are not associated with either matter or mind) that are accepted by Sarvāsativādin and Yogācāra School respectively. Some of them are identified with those of the derivative corporealities of Pāli Abhidhamma, that is jivitindriya (vital force), jāti (growth), which is identical with upacaya (growth), sthiti which is equal to santati (continuity), jarā (decay) and aniccatā (resolution) are found both in Saṅskrit and Pāli scriptures.⁴⁹ While ākāsa-dhātu (space-element) is regarded as the uncompounded thing (asamskrta dharma) by Abhidharmakosa and as “deśa” (space) by Yogācāra respectively.⁵⁰

2.2.3. The 24 kinds of Derived material Qualities explained

With regard to the five receiving sense-organs (pāsāda-rūpa), eye-sense-organ according to Pāli Abhidhamma is of two portions, i. e., compound organ (sambhāra) and sensitive organ (pāsāda-cakkhu).

“The former is identified with the lump of flesh which is situated in the cavity of eye, bound by the bone of the brow above, by the eye-peaks on both-sides, by the brain inside, and by eye-lashes outside... While the latter is in size not bigger than the head of a louse (okāsira-mattam) which stands as the basis and door of visual cognition.”⁵¹

The different names of eye-sense-organ are given by Atthasālinī with specific explanation:

“It is called “eye” (cakkhu) because it directs the vision, it is called “the field of vision” (cakkhu-āyatana) since it is the source and collocation, and it is,

⁴⁹ DhsA. 300-305; *The Expositor*, vol. II. pp. 395, 402.

⁵⁰ Abhk. II. 35-48; Cf. Chaudhuri, S, op. cit. p. 108.

⁵¹ DhsA. 316; *The Expositor*, II. pp. 413-4. [See fn 58, pp. 404 op]



too, called “visual element” (cakkhu-dhātu) for it is void of entity etc.”⁵²

Likewise “ear-sense-organ” accompanied by various components is said to be located at the top of ear-hold shaped like a finger-ring which functions as the basis and door of the ear-cognition.⁵³

“Tongue”, likewise, accompanied by the various components being identified as like the upper part of a torn lotus leaf which functions as the basis and door of the gustatory cognition, is situated at a spot above the middle of the human tongue.⁵⁴

Lastly the “bodily sense-organ” is said to diffuse over the body like the oil diffusing over cotton-rag which is accompanied by service, sustenance, protection and attendance as mentioned earlier and serves as the base and door of bodily cognition.⁵⁵

The sixfold respective sense-objects have been discussed earlier. So, they would not be explained again. Now let us pass over to consider the two kinds of sex.

The femininity (itthī-bhāva) is determined by feature (liṅga), i. e., shape of a woman’s hand; feet; neck; and breast which are not like that of a man, by mark (nimitta) or recognizable sign such as the prominence of the breast and absence of beard and moustache, by occupation (kuttaṃ) or action (kiriya) such as the play of a young girl with tiny shallow basket, Pestles and mortar, and variegated dolls, and by the deportment, i. e., mode of going, walking and standing, etc.

⁵² Abhs. VI. 6. p. 28; *Compendium*, p. 165. [Fn 59, pp. 404 op]

⁵³ DhsA. 306, 308; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 403.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 455; p. 310, 407.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 455, 310, 407.



Likewise the masculinity (purisattam) is said to be identified with afore-said four characteristics, i. e., shape (saṇṭhāna) of hands; of feet, neck, breast etc., of a man is unlike that of a woman. For the upper body is broad, the hands, feet and face are large while the breast-flesh is less full and there are beard and moustache. They in the time of youth like to play with chariot and ploughs etc. The mode of walking, going, etc., is very bold and dignified.

These two material qualities according to Pāli Abhidhamma can be apprehended through mind-cognition only.⁵⁶

The heart-base (hadaya-vatthu) as discussed in the precedent chapter is regarded as the physical basis of mind. Now let us come to consider the material quality of life (jivitindriya).

Like the “vital life” or “force or mental state” (jivitindriya -cetasika) the materiality of life, the main function of which is to protect or watch over the co-existence materialities and make them continue as long as their life span lasts has sprung up from the kamma.⁵⁷

Thus explained life and kamma are inseparable factors that is to say, the material quality of life authorized by kamma is incharge of supporting the other co-existing material qualities to continue until the power of kamma is used up.

The material quality of nutrition (ahāra-rūpa) is one of the conditions of materialities which is identified with an edible food or an essential of such a food (ojā). That is to say through this edible food the physical body grows up and continues, for the food when being digested becomes flesh, blood and energy, etc.

⁵⁶ Cf. Vism. 446; DhsA. 311; *Path of Purification*, p. 494-5; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 407-8.

⁵⁷ DhsA. 321 f; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 419-21.



Now we will consider the material quality of delimitation (pariccheda-rūpa).⁵⁸ It is defined as the space inside the holes of our body such as two holes of ears, mouth etc., and the gap between one group of materiality and another (kalāpa) by means of which we can realize the numbers, the other feature etc., of materialities, otherwise the material qualities would appear as a harmonious one than the knowledge of contemplation on the rise and fall of the material qualities (udayabbayanupassanā-nāṇa) would not be possible.

Actually the term “ākāsa” means “space” with its etymological analysis as that which is “shining forth”, i. e., the illuminated space (ā + kassati’ti akāso)⁵⁹ or that “the place in which no one can plough, i. e., space (na kassati’ti ākāso vā akāso yeva ākāso)⁶⁰ or that which is not scratched or which is impossible to scratch, cut or break is called “space” (na kassati na nikassati kasitum vā chinditum vā bhinditum na sakkā’ti ākaso).⁶¹

The two kinds of material qualities of communication (viññatti-rūpa) are of two categories, i. e., bodily intimation or gestures (kāya-viññatti) and verbal intimation or speech (vacī-viññatti). The material quality which functions to communicate

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 321, 407-9, 421-2.

⁵⁹ Vide B. Medhankur and V. Vaidayasevee (2521-6 / 1978-83), *Kumuakānsuksā-phara-abhidham-mattha-sangaha*, vol. VI, (Bangkok: Wat Po), p. 36 f.

⁶⁰ PED, p. 93.

⁶¹ In the “*Kumuakānsuksā-phra-abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*”, op. cit. “ākāsa” (space) seems to be an uncompounded thing (asaṅkhata-dhamma), because the Buddha’s sayings have been quoted that “dveme bhikkhave dhammā niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā katame dve? Ākāso ca nibbānaṇca.” But the source of it was not given and it might be the idea of Sarvāsativādins.



one's feeling to others or causes others to understand one's wishes is called "viññatti."⁶²

Each of them is further divided into two kinds i. e., usual intimation without intention such as going, standing, lying down, singing and reading, and the deliberate intimation such as moving hand, bending down the head and verbalization. According to the Aṭṭhasālinī these two kinds of material quality are said to arise due to the thirty-two kinds of consciousness.⁶³

The three kinds of material quality of plasticity or the alterability (vikāra-rūpa) which are considered as the specific characteristics (visesa-ākāra) of the animate things only, because they function to make the physical body suitable to move and work differentiated from the dead-body.

Lahutā (buoyancy) is defined as non-sluggishness, non-heaviness of materialities. That is to say the materialities endowed with lahutā (buoyancy) is very quickly moveable. And Mudutā (plasticity or pliancy) can be identified with non-rigidity of our physical body.

Kammaññatā (wieldiness a adaptability) is to be characterized as workableness of materialities that is our body possessed of wieldiness is suitable or favourable to exercise any kinds of works.⁶⁴ Anyway the similar aspects of these three material qualities should be understood that of the three named mental states mentioned earlier.

There are four kinds of salient features of material qualities (lakkhaṇa-rūpa). Upacaya (growth) integration can be determined as the beginning point of the birth or the moment of conception (paṭisandhi-khaṇa) which is identified with "jāti" (birth) of the formula of Dependent Origination (paṭicca-

⁶² DhsA. 325; *The Expositor*, vol. II, p. 425.

⁶³ B. Medhankhur and V. Vaidayasevee, op. cit. p. 37.

⁶⁴ DhsA. 323; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 424.



samuppāda). Santati (continuity of material quality) is a successive process of conception i. e., when all parts of the body have occurred, then they continue to arise uninterruptedly as long as the life span is fixed.

The contrast of these two materials is explained with a metaphor in the Atthasālinī as follows:

“Upacaya (accumulation) should be understood as genesis, as when the water issues from hole dug in the river-bank; integration as growth, and when the hole is full of water; and Santati (continuity) as the continuous proceeding, as when the water overflows.”⁶⁵

Jaratā (decay) which is divided into two, i. e., the evident decay and hidden decay (pakata-jarā-and paṭiccchanna-jarā) such as the growth of a baby into youth is called hidden old age, while decreptitude and hoariness etc., is evident old age. And also it is of further two kinds i. e., uninterrupted decay and interrupted decay (avici and savicijarā). The former indicates the decay which is difficult to know as in the case of the gems, gold, the moon and sun etc., the latter is the opposite to that of the former.⁶⁶

Anyway, Jarā (decay) in the formula of Dependent Origination (paṭicca-samuppāda) is defined as:

“And what brethren, is old age and decay? That which of this and that being in this and that group is decay, decreptitude, breaking up, hoariness, wrinkling of the skin, shrinkage of life span, overripeness of faculties, this is called old age.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid, 474-5; pp. 326-7; p. 425.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 475; pp. 327, 426.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 477; p. 328; p. 428. It depends on the context. Some Suttas mention that taṇhā or avijjā are the condition for starting of the aggregate of consciousness. For details, see Naw Kham La Dhammasami, *Another Way of Looking at Things (A Comparative Study of Schopenhauer and Buddha Perspectives on Human Liberation)*, pp. 73-78.



Anicca (impermanent) which indicates the destruction, being destroyed, passing away and dissolution etc., which is identified with “maraṇa” (death) of living beings and as “bhedaṇa” of inanimate things, the Buddha’s explanation of the term is as follows:

“What, O monks, is death? That which of this and that (living) being from this or that group is falling or decease, accomplishment of time, separation of component factors, laying down of carcase, this is called ‘death’ (maraṇa).”⁶⁸

2.3. A Psychological Approach to Human Being

2.3.1. Analysis of Nāma

As far as Pāli Buddhist psychology is concerned, the human being is neither a creation of an omnipotent being nor of an external power. The human being is analyzed as a psycho-physical organism (nāma-rūpa) constituted of the five aggregates. The human being’s existence is determined by the interdependency of the psycho-physical complex. In the Majjhima Nikāya, the Buddha states, “O monks nāma and rūpa (psycho-physical) is the cause, nāma and rūpa is the condition for the arising of the aggregate of consciousness.”⁶⁹

In this connection feeling (vedanā), perception (saññā), volition (cetanā), contact (phassa), and attention (manasikāra) are called “nāma.”⁷⁰ The most popular description follows the method of pañcakkhadhā to distinguish between nāma and rūpa. Vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa are known as

⁶⁸ S. II. 2-3; *Kindred Sayings*, vol. II. p. 3.

⁶⁹ M. III. 17. Nāmarūpaṃ kho, bhikkhu, hetu nāmarūpaṃ paccayo viññāṇakkhandhassa paññāpanāyāti.

⁷⁰ S. II. 3; *Kindred Sayings*, vol. II. p. 4. Vedanā saññā cetanā phasso manasikāro idam vuccati nāmaṃ.



nāma. And rūpa is called mahābhūtā. Here we follow the definition given by traditional method.⁷¹

The Pāli term “nāma” has been used in Buddhist psychology to denote the non-material basis of the human being. This non-material basis is four-fold as:

- I. Feeling (vedanā)
- II. Perception (saññā)
- III. Disposition (saṅkhāra) and
- IV. Consciousness (viññāṇa).

2.3.2. Feeling (vedanā)

What is meant by vedanā? Vedanā is “feeling” or “sensation” by which is meant one’s experiencing of pleasure or pain or neutral sensations. As the scriptures say:

“Your venerable, it is said ‘feeling,’ ‘feeling.’ Now what are the respects in which it is called ‘feeling’ your venerable.

“Your venerable, it is said ‘He feels, he feels,’ it is, therefore called ‘feeling.’ And what does he feel? He feels pleasure and he feels pain, and he feels neither pain nor pleasure.”⁷²

The salient characteristic of vedanā is to notice objects; that is to say vedanā means experiencing the pleasure and pain etc., as expound in Aṭṭhasālinī.

“Vedanā, indeed, experiences all objects fully due to being independent and master, so that it can be compared to the royal monarch who enjoys wholly a

⁷¹ David J. Kalupahana, (1st Indian ed 1992), *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publication), pp. 17-8.

⁷² M. I. 293; *Middle Length Sayings*, vol. I. p. 352; *Vibhavinī*. 57; S. III. 86. Veditantīti kho bhikkhave tasmā vedanā ti vuccati, kiñca vediyati, sukham pi vediyati dukkham pi vediyati adukkhamasukham pi vediyati, vediyatīti kho bhikkhave tasmā vedanā ti vuccati.



number of dishes while the remaining mental states are like his cook etc. being allowed just to taste it only.”⁷³

Vedanā is said to be the subsequent result produced by the mind-contact (ceto-saṃphassajā vedanā).

The number of classificatory sets of vedanā which is equal to that of consciousness is found discussed in Vibhaṅga.

Generally we are acquainted with the three or five kinds of feeling, e. t. seq., bodily pleasure (sukha-vedanā), bodily pain (dukkha-vedanā), joy (somanassa-vedanā), unhappiness (domanassa-vedanā), and indifferent or neutral feeling (upekkhā/ adukkha-masukha-vedanā).⁷⁴

Upekkhā, however, is not found in modern psychology, for every sensation according to them must have its effect, either one of pleasure or pain and there it cannot be the case of neutrality.⁷⁵

Again based on the six sense-organs, vedanā is said to be divided into the six kinds as the feeling arisen from visual contact (cakkhu-saṃphassajā-vedanā) etc.⁷⁶ And again the seven kinds of feeling, i. e., the feeling arisen from mind-contact (mano-saṃphassajā vedanā) being divided into two kinds namely, the feeling arisen from the mind-element contact (mano-dhātu-saṃphassa-vedanā) and the feeling arisen from the mind-consciousness element-contact (manoviññāṇa-dhātu-saṃphassajā).⁷⁷

Further classifications of vedanā is found in Saṃyutta Nikāya in which it is divided into two classes, i. e., bodily and

⁷³ BD, pp. 46-7.

⁷⁴ S. IV. 293. saññāca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapaṭibadhā tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca citta-saṅkhārā’ti.

⁷⁵ Dhs. 209. katame dhammā cetasikā vedanāk-khandho, saññāk-khandho, saṅkhārak-khandho ime dhammā cetasikā.

⁷⁶ Kvu. 33. Nanu atthi keci dhammā cittaena sahaḡatā samaṭṭhā, saṃpayuttā, ekuppādā, ekanorodhā ekavatthukā ekārammaṇā’ti āmantā.

⁷⁷ Ibid, same page and also see Dhs. 209 f.



mental feeling firstly, then its classification has gone up to a hundred and eight gradually.⁷⁸

Anyway vedanā alone is supposed to enjoy the fruits of kamma, since a permanent soul finds no room in Buddhist thought.⁷⁹

Finally let us come to consider the contact between vedanā of the worldly folks and the perfect men (arahant) which is remarkable as the Lord Buddha himself states:

“...The untaught ordinary person, brethren, being touched by feeling that is painful, weeps and wails, cry aloud, knocks the breast, falls into utter bewilderment. For he feels a twofold feeling, bodily and mental...if he feels feeling that is pleasant, he feels it as one in bondage, if he feels feeling that is painful, he feels it as one in bondage, if he feels feeling that is bodily and mental.”⁸⁰

2.3.3. Perception (saññā)

Saññā is derived from “sañ” (prefix = well, completely) + the root “ñā” (to know) the meaning of which is as follows:

“Your venerable, if it is said ‘He perceives, he perceives,’ it is therefore, called ‘perception.’ And what does he perceives? He perceives what is dark green and he perceives what is yellow and he perceives what is red and he perceives what is white. If it is said ‘He perceives,’ ‘he perceives,’ your venerable, it is therefore called perception.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ Abhs. vol. II. 6; *Compendium*, p. 94.

⁷⁹ A. VIII. 83, X, 58. Kim samosaraṇā sabbe dhamma...vedanāsamosaṇā sabbe dhammā.

⁸⁰ M. I. 396 f; DhA. Vol. I; Pm. I. 18.

⁸¹ M. I. 293, *Middle Length Sayings*, vol. I. p. 352; S. III. 87, *Kindred Sayings*, vol. III. p. 73. Sañjānātīti kho bhikkhave tasmā saññā ti vuccati, kiñca sañjānāti, nīlam pi sañjānāti pītakam pi sañjānāti lohitaṇṇam pi



In other words, that which is called “saññā” is simple perception, i. e., upholding the sign of objects.⁸² The simile of the group of blind men disputing on an elephant based on signs of its different parts perceived is the salient characteristic of perception.⁸³

Perception according to modern philosophy is apprehension of ordinary sense-object such as a tree, a house, etc. through sensory stimulation.⁸⁴

Like vedanā, saññā is regarded as a “khandha” (aggregate) the various classificatory sets of which are divided.

Based on the six external objects, saññā is of six classes such as “rūpasaññā” (perception derived from form). Similarly based on the objects of meditation saññā, too, is of five classes, six classes going upto ten classes⁸⁵ such as anicca-saññā (the transitory perception), dukkha-saññā (perception based on misery), and again it is divided in to ten kinds in accordance with ten asubha (ten kinds of foulness)⁸⁶ such as uddhumātaka-saññā (perception based on the swollen up corpse).

2.3.4. Mental Formation (saṅkhāra)

As it was mentioned “saṅkhāra” is the another name of mental factors (cetasika) the etymological analysis of which is given by the Buddha himself:

“Why, brethren, do ye say ‘mental formation (saṅkhāra)’? Because they compose a compound. That is why, brethren, the word ‘mental formation’ is used. And what compound do they compose? It is body that

sañjānāti odātam pi sañjānāti, sañjānātīti kho bhikkhave tasmā saññā ti vuccati.

⁸² Quoted in W. M. Gogovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 150.

⁸³ Ud. VV. 68-9. See also Yamakami Sogen, op. cit., p. 219.

⁸⁴ W. M. McGovern, op. cit., pp. 155-6.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 150.

⁸⁶ Vism. 436-7.



they compose into a compound of body. It is feeling...It is perception...The activities into mental formation, consciousness into consciousness-compound.”⁸⁷

2.3.5. Three Kinds of Mental Formations

Here “saṅkhāra” is divided into three categories namely,

- I. The formation of merit (puññābhisāṅkhāra)
- II. The formation of demerit (apuññābhisāṅkhāra) and
- III. The unperturbable (āneñjābhisāṅkhāra).

Concealed by ignorance a person creates these three kinds of mental qualities:

“If, brethren, a man who is ignorant plans an act of merit, consciousness is on its way to merit; if he plans an act of demerit, consciousness is on its way to demerit; if he plans an act that is stationary (āneñjam), consciousness is on its way to that which is stationary.”⁸⁸

And again:

“O monks, whatsoever things are evil, have part in evil, are on the side of evil:—all such have mind for their

⁸⁷ S. III. 87; *Kindred Sayings*, vol. III. p. 73. Saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharontī bhikkhave tasmā saṅkhārā ti vuccanti, kiñca saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharoti, rūpaṃ rūpattāya saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharonti vedanaṃ vedanattāya saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharonti, saññaṃ saññattāya saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharonti, saṅkhāre saṅkhārattāya saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharonti, viññāṇaṃ viññāṇatthāya saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharonti, saṅkhatam abhisāṅkharontī kho bhikkhave tasmā saṅkhārā ti vuccati.

⁸⁸ S. II. 82; *Kindred Sayings*, vol. II, p. 57. Avijjāgato yaṃ bhikkhave purisapuggalo puññaṃ ce saṅkhāram abhisāṅkharoti, puññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ, apuññaṃ ce saṅkhāram abhisāṅkharoti, apuññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ, āneñjaṃ ce saṅkhāram abhisāṅkharoti, āneñjūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ.



causing. First arises mind as the forerunner of them, and those evil things follow after.”⁸⁹

However all evil mental states are led by mind, and arise following up the mind:

“O monk whatsoever unwholesome states, partners of unwholesome, on the side unwholesome states there, of all such states mind is the fore-runner, for mind arises prior to them and then they follow up.”⁹⁰

Consciousness, feeling, and perception according to Buddhism are mixed up, not separated since they experience collectively one and the same object.

“That which is feeling, your venerable, that which is perception and that which is consciousness—these states are associated, not disassociated, and it is not possible to lay down a difference between these states having analysed them again and again.”⁹¹

And the sutta continues:

“That which is intuitive wisdom, your venerable, and that which is discriminate consciousness, these states are associated, not dissociated and it is not possible to lay down a difference between these states, having analysed them again and again. Whatever one comprehends, your venerable, that one discriminates, whatever one discriminates that one comprehends: therefore, these states are associated, not dissociated, and it is not possible to lay down a difference between these states, having analysed them again and again.”⁹²

⁸⁹ *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. I. p. 9; A. I. 11. Cf. Dh. VV. 1-3.

⁹⁰ A. I. 11. Yekeci bhikkhave dhammā akusalā akusala-bhāgiya akusala-pakkhikā sabbe te manopubbaṅgamā mano teasm dhammānaṃ paṭhamam uppajjati anvedeva akusalā dhammā’ti.

⁹¹ M. I. 295; *Middle Length Sayings*, vol. I. p. 351.

⁹² M. I. 292; *Middle Length Sayings*, vol. I. p. 351.



According to Dhammasaṅgani and Visuddhimagga, saṅkhāra consists of fifty states, which can be enumerated as follows:

1) Contact, 2) Thinking, 3) Conception, 4) Discursive thought, 5) Joy, 6) Self-collectedness, 7) Faculty of faith, 8) Faculty of energy, 9) Faculty of mindfulness, 10) Faculty of concentration, 11) Faculty of wisdom, 12) Faculty of vitality, 13) Right views, 14) Right intention, 15) Right endeavour, 16) Right mindfulness, 17) Right concentration, 18) Power of faith, 19) Power of energy, 20) Power of mindfulness, 21) Power of concentration, 22) Power of wisdom, 23) Power of conscientiousness, 24) Power of the fear of blame, 25) Absence of lust, 26) Absence of hate, 27) Absence of dullness, 28) Absence of covetousness, 29) Absence of malice, 30) Right views, 31) Conscientiousness, 32) Fear of blame, 33) Serenity of sense, 34) Serenity of thought, 35) Buoyancy of sense, 36) Buoyancy of thought, 37) Plasticity of sense, 38) Plasticity of thought, 39) Wioldiness of thought, 40) Wioldiness of thought, 41) Fitness of sense, 42) Fitness of thought, 43) Rectitude of sense, 44) Rectitude of thought, 45) Mindfulness, 46) Intellect, 47) Quiet, 48) Insight, 49) Grasp, and 50) Balance.⁹³

2. 3.6. Consciousness (viññāṇa)

The definition of consciousness is given in two Nikāyas, i. e., Majjhima and Saṃyutta Nikāya. In the Majjhima Nikāya, viññāṇa is defined as “discriminative consciousness”.

“Your reverence, it is called “viññāṇa, viññāṇa.” Now in what respect, your reverence, is it called “viññāṇa”?

“Your reverence, if it is said “it discriminates, it discriminates,” it is, therefore, called discriminative

⁹³ Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids (3rd ed 2004), *Buddhist Psychological Ethics* (USA: Wisdom Publications), p. 28 f; *Path of Purity*, III. 540 f.



consciousness. And what does it discriminate? It discriminates pleasure, and it discriminates pain and it discriminates neither pain nor pleasure.”⁹⁴

Therefore, O monks, the word ‘viññāṇa’ is used.”

This conversation is reported to have taken place between Buddha and Bhikkhus. (Viññāṇa as being derived from the verb “vijānāti” [vi = discriminatively, ñāṇa = ‘to know’, ‘to perceive’], literally means ‘to discriminate’). It discriminates sour and bitter, acrid and sweet, alkaline and non-alkaline, salty and non-salty.⁹⁵

It should be noted here that among the Pāli terms that signify mind or consciousness, only viññāṇa has been defined by the Buddha as being found in the early Buddhist texts. Therefore, it can be presumed that the term “viññāṇa” is the prominent one.

2.3.6.1. Viññāṇa as Synonyms of Citta and Ceto

The term citta is derived from the root √cint, “to think”, and the neuter noun-forming suffix “a”. Psychologically, it has the meaning of the heart, i. e., “the man’s emotional centre as well as the intellectual element which inheres in and accompanies its manifestations that is thought”. From this standpoint, citta, denotes both the agent and that which is enacted. In Indian psychology, citta is considered as the seat and organ of thought.⁹⁶

Scholars, both medieval and modern, have rendered citta variously as “mind”, “thought”, “heart”, “conception”, “consciousness”, “mood”, “emotion”, “spirit”, “idea”, and “attitude”. In the Abhidhamma, it appears to refer to the centre and focus of man’s emotional nature as well as to the seat and

⁹⁴ M. I. 292, III. 242.

⁹⁵ S. III. 86 f.

⁹⁶ PED, p. 266.



organ of thought in its active and dynamic aspect. Citta plays a more central and crucial role in Buddhism than in any other Indian systems of philosophic thought and religious practice.⁹⁷

The commentary of Dhammasaṅgaṇī states, “citta is that which thinks of an object, that is to say, that which recognizes an object”.⁹⁸ According to this definition, citta is common to all or classes of consciousness, i. e., 89 or 121 types of consciousness.

Citta is classified into four categories as found in the following definition: “consciousness is common to all states or classes of consciousness, that which is known as worldly, moral, immoral, or the great inoperative, is termed ‘consciousness,’ because it arranges itself in a series (cintoti, or, its own series or continuity) by way of apperception in a process of thought.”⁹⁹ Citta is also referred to as vipāka citta, where it is said: “the resultant (vipāka citta) is also termed consciousness because it is accumulated by kamma and the corruptions”.¹⁰⁰

The commentators define citta in three ways: as agent, as instrument, and as activity. As agent, citta is that which cognizes an object. The commentaries define it as that which thinks of an object (ārammaṇaṃ cintetīti cittaṃ). Here, the word cinteti, “to think”, is used in its most comprehensive sense of vijānāti, “to know”. Therefore, citta is “that which is conscious of an object”. As an instrument, citta is that by

⁹⁷ Ency. Bsm, vol. IV. p. 169. For details, see. O. H. de A. Wijesekera (1962), *The Buddhist Concept of Mind*, Bodhi Leaves, No. A 9 (Kandy: BPS).

⁹⁸ *The Expositor*, p. 84; DhasA. 112: Ārammaṇaṃ cintetīti cittaṃ, vijānātīti attho. Tasmā yadettha lokiyakusalākusalakiriyacittaṃ, taṃ javanavīthivasena attano santānaṃ cinotīti cittaṃ.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *The Expositor*, p. 85; DhasA. 106 f. Vipākaṃ kammakilesehi cittanti cittaṃ.



means of which the accompanying mental factors cognize the object (etena cintetīti cittaṃ). As activity, citta itself is nothing but the process of cognizing the object (cintanamattam cittaṃ).¹⁰¹

In his discourses, the Buddha equates the term citta with two other cognate terms, “mano” and “viññāṇa”. In many suttas, he clearly confirms that viññāṇa, citta and mano are synonyms: “Monks, what is called cittaṃ, that is also called mano, as well as viññāṇam.”¹⁰²

The term ceto is a combination of the root √cet, “to think” and the suffix “as”. The Pāli-English Dictionary mentions that there are two terms derived from the verb cinteti that are closely allied and almost inseparable in meaning, namely, citta and ceto.¹⁰³ In some discourses, the Buddha sometimes uses citta and ceto together. For instance, in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, he states, “cetasā cittaṃ samannesati”.¹⁰⁴ Generally speaking, there is no distinction between these two terms. According to T. W. Rhys Davids, the meaning of citta mostly “emphasizes the emotional and cognitive side of thought more than its mental and rational side”. Therefore, usually the term citta is translated as “intention”, “mood”, “state of mind”, or “reaction to impressions.”

The role of citta or ceto is evident from its connection with kamma because it is the source of action. To perform any kamma, citta must be present. Without citta there is no action. In this aspect, citta is understood as intention. But later some scholars translated the term citta as “thought” in its technical

¹⁰¹ Abhs. p. 27.

¹⁰² S. II. 94: Yañca kho etaṃ bhikkhave vuccati cittaṃ itipi mano itipi viññāṇam itipi. D. III. 103: Evampi te mano, itthampi te mano itipi te cittaṃ.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ S. I. 194. One thinks of other’s mind with one’s mind.



sense;¹⁰⁵ such as “mā pāpakaṃ akusalaṃ cittaṃ cinteyyātha” (do not think any evil thought);¹⁰⁶ or “na cittaṃ attampi” (not even a thought).¹⁰⁷

In actuality, both citta and ceto are identical in meaning; for instance, “citta-samādhī” and “ceto-samādhī” have the same meaning of “concentration of mind”. Some cases show a preference for either one or the other, for example, while ceto is preferred in “ceto-khila” (fallowness, waste of heart or mind) citta is preferred in “vimutta-citta” (emancipation of mind). Nevertheless, there is no reasonable evidence of the difference in respective meanings of the terms citta and ceto. A few cases indicate the role of ceto as the seat of citta, whereas most of them show no distinction. As for citta, it is restricted to combined words such as “vivaṭena cetasā sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti” (with open heart he contemplates a radiant thought).¹⁰⁸

Although viññāṇa, citta and ceto are regarded as synonyms, their meaning and usage are not completely similar. Some scholars’ explains the meanings of citta and ceto emphasize the emotional side that is connected with one’s feelings; whereas viññāṇa refers to the rational aspect that is behaviour or ideas based on reason rather than emotions. On the other hand, citta is translated as “intention” or “thought” while viññāṇa is never rendered as “thought” but only as “mind” or “consciousness”. Citta can cognize the object; viññāṇa cognizes not only the object but also the taste of the object.

In comparing the definitions of viññāṇa, citta, and ceto from the Buddhist point of view, it is clear that although these

¹⁰⁵ PED, pp. 266-8.

¹⁰⁶ S. V. 418.

¹⁰⁷ PvA. 3.

¹⁰⁸ PED, pp. 266-8.



three terms are used in different contexts, basically the meaning is the same, that is “consciousness that recognizes objects and taste of object”. In addition, consciousness refers to any of the 89 or 121 types of consciousness.

2.3.6.2. Viññāṇa as Synonyms of Mano and Mānasa

Other synonyms of viññāṇa are mano and mānasa. Among them, the term mano is derived from the root √man and the suffix “as”. Mano means “mind” or “thought”. The word “mānasa” is a secondary formation, which comes from the word mano or manas. In the Vedic literature, mānasa literally means “intention”, “purpose”, “mind as active force”, and “mental action”. This term is almost equivalent to mana. The Dhammapada states that:

“All mental phenomena have mind (mano) as their forerunner, they have mind (mana) as their chief, they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with pure mind (manasā), happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves.”¹⁰⁹

T. W. Rhys Davids argued that the term mānasa is synonymous with mana, but it is used more in philosophy than as a living part of the language.¹¹⁰ According to Robert Caesar Childers, viññāṇa is translated as “thought” or “mind” and the term mana is more or less an accurate synonym for it.

Although mano and viññāṇa are here considered equivalent in meaning, actual usages in specific contexts tend to confirm the view that these terms convey three distinct aspects of mentation in the Canon. The author of *The Mind in Early Buddhism* opines that, “In spite of their

¹⁰⁹ Dh. V. 2. Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, manoseṭṭhā manomayā, manasā ce pasannena, bhāsatī vā karoti vā, tato naṃ sukhamanveti, chāyāva anapāyinī.

¹¹⁰ PED, p. 529.



interchangeability and same denotation we still, however, can notice with a little arbitrariness that they tend towards three distinct aspects, subjective, sensory, perceptive, and intellectual aspects respectively”.¹¹¹

The term *mano* may thus be said to represent the rational faculty of man that is the intellectual functioning of his consciousness. The term *viññāṇa* represents the field of sense and sense-reaction, that is the sphere of sensory and perceptive activity. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, it is mentioned, “*vijānātīti kho bhikkhave tasmā viññāṇanti vuccati*”¹¹² (Indeed, it knows the object, bhikkhus, therefore it is called *viññāṇa*). Accordingly, the term *citta* represents the subjective aspect of consciousness.¹¹³

The *Visuddhimagga* points out similar identity among *viññāṇa*, *citta*, and *mana*, saying: “*viññāṇaṃ, cittaṃ, manoti atthato ekaṃ*” which means “the words *viññāṇa*, *citta*, and *mano* are one in meaning”.¹¹⁴ The Buddhist Dictionary also confirms that *mano*, *citta*, and *viññāṇa* are synonyms, which are in opposition to *kāya* “body” (*rūpa*).¹¹⁵

Regarding the above mentioned synonyms, the commentary of the *Dhammasaṅgani* explains: “*citta* is so called because of its variegated nature (*cittavicittatāya cittaṃ*). *Mano* is so called because it knows the measure of an object (*ārammaṇaṃ minamānaṃ jānātīti mano*). *Mānasa* is just mind (*mānasan’ti mano eva*).¹¹⁶

It is important to know the different contexts in which these terms are used to indicate that they have both a general

¹¹¹ Bh. Thich Minh Thanh, *The Mind in Early Buddhism*, p. 4.

¹¹² S. III. 72.

¹¹³ Ency. Bsm, vol. IV. p. 171.

¹¹⁴ *The Path of Purification*, XIV, 82.

¹¹⁵ BD, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ *The Expositor*, p. 185.



and specific sense. In general, viññāṇa, citta, and mano refer to the conscious life and therefore they are considered synonyms. Specifically, viññāṇa refers to the ego-consciousness or self-consciousness, citta refers to thinking and mano the faculty of mind.¹¹⁷ The main distinction between viññāṇa, citta, and mano, however, is summed up in the following statement by Venerable Buddhaghosa:

“Viññāṇa is loosely more or less a synonym of mano and citta; technically, it is bare cognition considered apart from feeling (vedanā), perception (saññā) or formation (saṅkhāra). Mano rendered by “mind”, when used technically, is confined to the sixth internal base for contact”.¹¹⁸

Table. 1. Translation of Five Aggregates

AUTHOR	RŪPA	VEDANĀ	SAÑÑĀ	SAṆKHĀRA	VIÑÑĀṆA
S. Bernard-Thierry	corporate	Sensations	representations	formations	connaissance
Edgerton	physical form	feeling, sensation	notion, idea, conception	predispositions	(practical) knowledge
H.V. Guenther	expressive form	Feeling	sensation	motivation	discrimination, psychological process, mentalism
H. Inagaki	matter,	Perception	conception	volition	consciousness

¹¹⁷ Ency. Bsm, vol. IV. p. 235.

¹¹⁸ *The Path of Purification*, n. 35. p. 507.



	form				
J.E.B.D.	forms of matter	Perception	mental conceptions and ideas	volition	consciousness of mind
D. Kalupahana	material form	Feeling	perception	dispositions	consciousness
M. Monier-Williams	bodily forms	Sensation	perception	aggregates of formation	consciousness or thought faculty
Nyanatiloka MT	corporeality	Feeling	perception	mental formations	consciousness
PTSD	material qualities	Feeling	perception	coefficients of consciousness	consciousness
W. Rahula	matiere	Sensations	perception	formations mentales	conscience, connaissance
C. Rhys-Davids	the seen-thing, body	Feeling	perception	activities, planning	mind, survivor
Soothill (CSB)	form, sensuous quality	reception, feeling, sensation	thought, consciousness, perception	action, mental activity	cognition
D.T. Suzuki	material existence	perception, sensation	mental perception and ideas	volition and other related activities	consciousness of mind



J. Takakusu	form	Perception	ideas/conception	volition	consciousness, mind
comparative psychology	“stimulus”	“response”	“conception”	“drives”	“learning”

The five khandha makes up the “person pact”. This is what the Buddha called the “World” (loka).¹¹⁹ This World consists of the past, present, future, one’s own or external, gross or subtle, high or low, far or near. Whenever consciousness arises, there arise also body, feeling, and perceptions, thought constructions. The five khandhas are, in and of themselves, neutral, it is the craving and clinging involved that is dukkha. This is why they are called “the five aggregates effected by clinging.” (pañcupādānakkhandhā)¹²⁰ The khandhas are where the work of following the path takes place. The five khandhas are a process within dependent origination, not a true self or soul. Consciousness, viññāṇa, should never be understood in terms of soul or “original self.”¹²¹ It is the unwise attention given to the five, and the

¹¹⁹ S. IV. 52 ff.

¹²⁰ S. III. 47 f.

¹²¹ E. g. *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* [known as *Anātmalakṣaṇa Sūtra* in Sanskrit. See “*The Anātmalakṣaṇa Sūtra*”. Lapis Lazuli Texts. Retrieved 2010-12-28. From the *Samyukta Āgama* translated by Guṇabhadra (T02n99)], this Sutta is also known as the *Pañcavaggiya Sutta* (S. III. 66 ff). The basis for this latter title is that the Buddha is addressing his original “group of five” (pañcavaggiya) disciple (Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa,



false beliefs and concepts that arise from that, that are to be corrected with virtue, concentration, and wisdom.¹²² The five khandha are the target that all the methods of the path are aimed at and the thing that must be understood.

Mahānāma and Assaji), all of whom become Arahants upon hearing this Sutta (Mhv. 6: 47 ff). The first discourse traditionally ascribed to the Buddha is the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (Vin. I. 10 ff & S. V. 420 ff). Parallel texts can be found in other early Buddhist sources as well, such as the Sarvāstivādin *Lalitavistara*; and, the Lokottaravādin *Mahāvastu*.

¹²² M. I. 7.

Other titles by Naw Kham La Dhammasami

- 1) Buddhist Psychiatry (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2007) [In English]
- 2) Overcoming Sleepiness and Sleeplessness (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2007) [In English]
- 3) Dhamma: The Art of Stress Management (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2007) [In English]
- 4) Buddhist Psychology of Feelings (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2008) [In English]
- 5) An Analytical Study of Shan Buddhism (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2009) [In Shan]
- 6) A History of Early Shan People in Myanmar (Yangon: Aye Publication, 1997) [In Shan]
- 7) Schopenhauerism and Buddhism: A Comparative Study of Philosophy of Freedom (Yangon: Aye Publication, 2010) [In Shan]
- 8) Another Way of Looking At Things: A Comparative Study of Schopenhauer & Buddha Perspectives on Human Liberation (Ruwan Paharuwa, Maharagama, Sri Lanka, 2011), [In English], etc, etc.

CHAPTER THREE

Analyses of Character Traits and Personality Types

Chapter two has established how in Buddhism personality is made up of five aggregates or pañcakhandhā. These five aggregates make up our different personalities. The Suttanta and Abhidhamma will now be examined so as to determine what they exactly mean by personality.

Personality as described in western psychology has many definitions. The theories of Freud, Reich, Jung, Fromm, Erikson, Maslow, and others cover an array of views to explain personality development, temperament, and cognitive style. The focus on the aspects of personality differs accordingly with some highlighting patterns based on desire, power and authority, autonomy, or thinking modes. Each assumption clarifies an aspect of human development and presents a new avenue for therapeutic intervention.¹

The focus of this study will be directed more on Buddhist concepts of personality rather than its western counterpart, although comparisons will be provided when deemed necessary. In Buddhist scriptures six kinds of formal designations (paññatti) are named : (1) nominal aggregates

¹ Howard S. Friedman & Miriam W. Schustack (2009), *Personality (Classic Theories and Modern Research)*, [India: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd], pp. 69 ff.



(khandha paññatti),² (2) nominal sense-bases (āyatana paññatti),³ (3) nominal elements (dhātu paññatti),⁴ (4) nominal truths (sacca paññatti),⁵ (5) nominal faculties (indriya paññatti),⁶ and (6) nominal personalities (puggala paññatti).⁷ The following are listed: 5 aggregates, 12 senses, 18 elements, 4 truths, 22 faculties. In the following discussion, the focus will be on personality types and resulting forty-six personalities.

² Pañca-khandha - The five-aggregates means elements or attributes of being form, sensation, perception, discrimination, and consciousness. The five aggregates embrace all the essential properties of every sentient being: some beings possess them less completely than others, and the inhabitants of the four Arūpa Brahmālokas do not possess the first aggregates at all. Vedanā, saññā, and saṅkhāra are collectively termed dhamma, “faculties”. Viññāṇa is intelligence, knowledge; consciousness; thought, mind. It is one of the aggregates and in this sense is generally rendered “consciousness”, a term, however, which is inadequate to express all that is meant by viññāṇa.

³ Āyatana paññatti = yāvata dvādasa-āyatanāni (1) cakkhāyatanaṃ, (2) rūpāyatanaṃ, (3) sotāyatanaṃ, (4) saddāyatanaṃ, (5) ghāṇāyatanaṃ, (6) gandhāyatanaṃ, (7) jivhāyatanaṃ, (8) rasāyatanaṃ, (9) kāyāyatanaṃ, (10) phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ, (11) manāyatanaṃ, and (12) dhammāyatanaṃ.

⁴ Yāvata aṭṭhāsa dhātuyo: cakkhudhātu, rūpadhātu, cakkhu viññāṇadhātu; sotadhātu, saddadhātu, sotaviññāṇadhātu; ghāṇadhātu, gandhadhātu, ghānaviññāṇadhātu; jivhadhātu, rasadhātu, jivhaviññāṇadhātu; kāyadhātu, phoṭṭhabbadhātu, kāyaviññāṇadhātu; manodhātu, dhammadhātu, manoviññāṇadhātu; ettāvata dhātūnaṃ dhātupaññatti.

⁵ The four truths are: (1) dukkha, (2) dukkha-samudaya, (3) dukkha-nirodha, and (4) dukkha-nirodhagāminīpaṭipadā.

⁶ “Indriya” means - a power, faculty, functional organ, a moral quality; sense, perception, acquisition, and sex.

⁷ Puggalapaññatti takes up the topic, grouping personalities by one, two, three, etc., up to ten. There are 54 classed by ones, 26 by twos, 17 by threes, 29 by fours, 14 by fives, 1 by sixes, 2 by sevens, and 1 each by eights, nines, and tens. For the purpose of our study, here we shall choose only some of them.

3.1. Types of Personality in Buddhism

In terms of spiritual development, the texts divide persons into three types:⁸ the ordinary man or worldling (puthujjana),⁹ the learner or initiate (sekha) and the adept (asekha).¹⁰ Puthujjana is any layman or monk who is still possessed of all the ten fetters (saṃyojana, q. v) binding to the ground of rebirths, and therefore has not yet reached any of the four stages of holiness (s. ariya-puggala).¹¹ The learner or initiate is one who is under training in the higher morality (adhisīla), the higher thought (adhicitta) and the higher insight (adhipaññā),¹² no more worldling, but not yet Arahant. The third category is that of the adept, that is, the spiritually developed individual, the Arahant.

⁸ In *Anguttara Nikāya*, the gotrabhū (“become of the lineage”) or “Mature One”, i. e., one in the lightning-like transitional state of consciousness between that of a worldling (puthujjana) and that of a Streamwinner (thus joining the Family of the Noble Ones), is listed as the ninth Noble Disciple (A. 4. 373; 5. 22). In later works, the term “Maturity Moment” (gotrabhū-citta) is used to refer to the thought-moment just before one’s gaining of Mental Absorption (jhāna) or entrance into one of the Supermundane Paths. The Gotrabhū were further divided into two typologies: the dhammānusārī, “the one devoted to dhamma”, and the saddhānusārī, “the one devoted to faith”. In *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (S. V. 200), the former is said to be superior to the latter. In another place (M. I. 142), it is said that the former are bound for enlightenment (sambodhiparāyanā), while the latter are bound for heaven (saggaparāyanā). Here, in this study, we will not deal with this term or concept. For details on this topic, see Nathan Katz (rpt 2004), *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (New Delh: Motilal Banarsidass), pp. 92-4.

⁹ Pe Maung Tim, the translator of *Atthasālinī*, translated as “average man”. Ñāṇatiloka Mahāthera translated as “one of the many folk”, or “worldling”. Bhikkhu Bodhi rendered as “uneducated person”.

¹⁰ Nett. 49; Pet. 42.

¹¹ Pug. 9.

¹² S. IV. 14; A. I. 231.



3.1.1. Puthujjana Personality

Puthujjana puggala is one of the many-folk; a “worldling” or run-of-the-mill person or nonelect. An ordinary person who has not yet realized any of the four stage of awakening.¹³ Religiously speaking, one who is yet unconverted as opposed to one who has entered the paths.¹⁴

3.1.2.1. The Andha puthujjana Personality

The commentaries often speak of two kinds of worldlings: the blind worldling (andha puthujjana) and the good worldling (kalyāṇa puthujjana). The blind worldling is an unawakened being who does not study the five aggregates, the four elements, the six sense-bases and related teachings, nor question about them, nor listen to them, nor remember them, nor reflect on them; while the good worldling does so.¹⁵ In the following personalities are including under the roof of the blind worldling personality.¹⁶

1. The lustful type (rāgacarita)

This is a person in whom the first hindrance is dominant. At the moment of his birth-producing kamma, lust, non-hate and

¹³ PED, p. 466.

¹⁴ R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*, p. 396.

¹⁵ DA. I. 59; PmA. I. 266; Cf. PmA. I. 205: Tattha yassa khandadhātu, āyatan’ādīsu uggahaparipucchā savanadhāṇa paccacekkhaṇāni n’atthi, ayaṃ andhaputhujjano. Yassa tāni atthi, so kalyāṇaputhujjano.

¹⁶ The Commentaries also use the expression “foolish worldling” (bāla puthujjana) here. Bāla has a range of related meanings: a young body, a fool, an immature person. Such a person is “apart, separate” is possible for the immature worldling to mature in due course into a wise person. Here we will leave aside bāla puthujjana and only pay attention on andha puthujjan because it’s similar to andha puthujjana in meaning. Nm. I. 138; Mil. 69; VA. 5. 1032; MA. I. 183; SnA. I. 99, II. 534; ThgA. II. 278, III. 41, 78; ApA. 118, 178.

non-delusion are strong. Non-lust, hate and delusion are weak. As a result, his temperament is one of lust, but good nature and non-anger, and possess a keen acumen.

A person of lustful or sensual temperament usually walks carefully, putting his foot down slowly and evenly, and lifts it up evenly with a springy step (that is, there is a break between the print made by the toes and the heels). When standing, he appears comfortable and polite. He goes to bed without haste and in a composed manner and when woken, gently replies as though unwillingly. When sweeping, he holds the broom well and makes clean even sweeps. He is a circumspect worker, subtle and polished.

His clothes are neither too tight nor too loose, pleasing and level all around. He loves soft sweet food, eats without haste and makes round lumps of food not too big, savouring every taste. When he experiences even a slightly pleasing object, he enjoys it long, looking surprised. He harps on small virtues and discounts genuine faults. He expresses regret when departing as if unwilling to leave. These states arise frequently in him: deceit, fraud, pride, evil desire, covetousness, discontent, foppery and frivolous vanity.

The lustful personality is sometimes known as the craving personality (*taṇhā carita*) of which there are two further kinds: the dull and the intelligent; and also as the conceited personality (*māna carita*).¹⁷

2. The hating type (*dosa carita*)

The second hindrance (ill will) is dominant in him. In terms of rebirth-producing kamma, there are two kinds of hating personality. The first, at the moment of his rebirth-producing

¹⁷ Vism. § III; Nett. 7. He should begin with Calmness (*samatha*) meditation and then go on to Insight (*vipassanā*) suitable practices are the Meditation on the Impurities (10 types of corpses) and the Mindfulness of the 32 Parts of the Body.



kamma, non-lust, hate and delusion are strong; the other roots are weak. As a result, he has little defilement and is unshakable even on seeing a heavenly object, but has hate and is slow in understanding.

The second kind, at the moment of his rebirth-producing kamma, non-lust, hate and non-delusion are strong; the other roots are weak. As a result, he has no lust and possesses understanding but has hate and is easily angered.

Such a choleric person, when walking, digs his toes, puts his foot down and lifts it quickly, and drags his steps. When standing, he appears stiff. He goes to bed in a haste; with his body flung down, he sleeps with a scowl. When awakened, he gets up quickly and answers as though annoyed. When sweeping he grasps the broom tightly and sweeps uncleanly, hurriedly, and unevenly with a harsh noise throwing up sand on each side. He is a tense, stiff and uneven worker.

His clothes are worn tight and uneven all around. He likes rough sour food and takes a mouthful hurriedly without savouring the taste. He grieves on getting something distasteful. When he experiences even a slightly unpleasing object, he quickly turns away as if tired. He picks at trivial faults and discounts genuine virtues. He departs without regret as if anxious to leave. These states are frequent in him: anger, malice, disparagement, dominance, envy, and meanness.¹⁸

3. The deluded type (moha carita)

The third hindrance (sloth and torpor) is dominant in him. At the moment of his rebirth-producing kamma, lust, non-hate and delusion are strong; the other roots are weak. As such his temperament is both of lust and dullness, but he is good-natured and unangry.

¹⁸ Vism. § III; Nett. 7. Suitable meditation practices for the hating type are the 4 colour kasinās: blue, yellow, red and white, and the 4 positive emotions (brahma vihāra).

Such a person's walk is wobbly. He puts his foot down and lifts it hesitantly as if frightened. His footfall is abrupt. When standing, he appears troubled. His bed is messy and sleeps with arms outstretched, mostly prone. On being wakened, he rises sluggishly, mumbling "Hmph!". When sweeping he holds the broom lightly, and sweeps unevenly and uncleanly making a mess of the rubbish. He is an unskillful, clumsy, uneven and indecisive worker.

His clothing is loose and untidy. He has no particular food preference and when eating, makes small unrounded lumps and dropping bits of food, smearing his face with his mind astray. He criticizes or praises whatever he experiences according to the opinion of others but is himself ignorantly disinterested. These states are frequent in him: sloth, torpor, distraction, worry, uncertainty and obstinacy.¹⁹

4. The faithful type (*saddhā carita*)

The faith personality type parallels the lustful because faith is strong when wholesome kamma occurs in one of lustful temperament. While lust seeks out sense-desires as objects, faith looks for such qualities as moral virtue, etc. Lust does not give up what is harmful; faith does not give up what is beneficial. These states occur frequently in him: pure charity or generosity, desire to see the Blessed Ones, desire to hear the Good Dhamma, great joy, ingenuousness, honesty, and trust in objects of faith.

At the moment of his rebirth-producing kamma, non-lust, non-hate and delusion are strong; the other roots are

¹⁹ Vism. § III. The suitable practice for him is the Breath Meditation, like that for Speculative Personality.



weak. By temperament he is therefore good-natured but slow in understanding.²⁰

5. The intellectual type (buddhi carita)

The intellectual personality type parallels the hating type because understanding is strong when wholesome kamma occurs in a hating person. The fifth hindrance (spiritual doubt) is dominant in him. Hate seeks our unreal faults; understanding seeks real faults. Hate condemns living beings; understanding condemns conditioned things. These states are frequent in him: being easy to speak to, has spiritual friendship, moderation in eating, mindfulness and circumspection, wakefulness, has a sense of urgency in those things inspiring urgency and skilful effort.

At the moment of his rebirth-producing kamma, non-lust, non-hate and non-delusion are strong; the other roots are weak. By temperament he therefore has no lust or hate and possesses understanding.

The intellectual personality is sometimes known as the skeptical personality (*ditṭhi carita*) of which there are two further kinds: the dull and the intelligent.²¹

6. The speculative type (vitakka carita)

The speculative personality type parallels the deluded because obstructive thoughts often arise in one of deluded temperament. While delusion is restless because of confusion, speculation is restless because of various thoughts. Just as

²⁰ Vism. § III. Suitable meditation methods for the faith-inclined are the 6 recollections: on the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, Moral Conduct, Generosity, and the Gods.

²¹ Vism. § III; Nett. 7. Suitable meditation methods for the intellectual are: mindfulness of death, recollection of peace, perception of the loathsomeness of food, and analysis of the four elements.

delusion wavers due to superficiality, speculation wavers because of over-conjecturing. These states are frequent in him: talkativeness, sociability, boredom in wholesome things, failure to complete undertakings, contemplating plans at night and effecting them in the day²² and a restless mind.²³

In such a person, the fourth hindrance (restlessness and worry) is dominant. At the moment of his rebirth-producing kamma, lust, hatred and delusion are strong; the other roots are weak. As a result, he has both lust and hatred, and is deluded.²⁴

7. The mixed type (sabba carita)

His rebirth-producing kamma is accompanied by mixed lust etc. A few or all of the five hindrances are present in such a person.²⁵

8. Angry (kodhana) and hostile types (upanāhi)

He has anger, and after that comes vengeance, the act of revenging is the state of being vengeance. But the person in whom the sense of revenge does not appear always keeps himself away from it and is said to be an unrevengeful person.²⁶

9. Quarrel type (paḷāṣī).

His nature will be quarrelsomeness, the way of quarrel, the point of dispute, coming to fight, unrelenting, this is called quarrelling. The person who does not remove himself from quarrelsome action, is said to be a quarrelsome person. But, a

²² Cf. M. I. 144.

²³ Cf. Ud. 37.

²⁴ Vism. III; Nett. 7. The suitable meditation practice for the speculative type is the breath meditation (as for the deluded type).

²⁵ Vism. § III. Nett. 7. For such a personality, the suitable meditation practices are the 6 kasīṇas: earth, water, fire, wind, space and light, and the 4 formless meditations.

²⁶ Pug. 18; DHT, p. 28.



person in whom quarrelling like this is put away is said to be not quarrelsome.²⁷

10. Infringement of moral law type (sīlavipanno)

His transgression with regard to the body, with regard to speech and with regard to both—this is said to be infringement of moral law. Immorality of every description is an infringement of moral law. The person who is possessed of such an infringement as this, is said to be an infringer of moral law. But non transgression with regard to body and to speech and with regard to both—this is said to be observance of moral law; all restraints under moral law are its observance. Any one equipped with this observance of moral law is said to be the observer of moral law.²⁸

11. Cancer mind type (arukūpamacitta)

Cancer minded persons are always angry, full of despair get wrathful and enraged and become out of sorts and stubborn when something, however, little, is spoken to him. They give vent to their rage, to the spirit of enmity and suspicion.²⁹

12. Bad type (asappuriso)

The bad man is a destroyer of life, takes the things but not given, misbehaving in sensual desires, liar; one indulging in the enjoyment of spirituous, fermented liquors and intoxicants.³⁰

13. More bad type (asappurisenā asappurisataro)

The more bad man is himself a destroyer of life and urges others to do the same, himself takes the things but not given

²⁷ Pug. 18-9; DHT, pp. 28-29.

²⁸ Pug. 21; DHT, p. 32.

²⁹ Pug. 30; DHT, p. 44.

³⁰ Pug. 38; DHT, p. 44.

and urges others to do like wise, himself misbehaves in the matter of sensual desires, himself tells a lie, himself indulges in the enjoyment of spirituous; fermented liquous; intoxicants and instigates others to do the same.³¹

14. Wicked type (pāpa)

The wicked person is a destroyer of life, taker of things not given, misbehaves in sensual pleasures, is a liar, a slanderer, speaks harsh words, is a gossip, covetous, of malevolent thoughts an upholder of false doctrines.³²

15. More wicked type (pāpena pāpatara)

The more wicked person is he who himself destroys life, takes things not given; misbehaves in sensual pleasures; a liar; a slanderer; harsh; speaker; a gossip; covetous; of malevolent nature; an upholder of wrong views instigates others to do likewise.³³

16. Ox type (balivaddūpamā)

There are four persons that are comparable with the ox. There are four kinds of oxen. viz, pest to its own herd but not to another herd; pest to another herd but not to its own herd; pest to its own as well as to another herd; pest neither to its own herd nor to another herd. In the same way, a certain person creates trouble in his own congregation but not in another congregation. The person is a pest in his own congregation but not in another. Just as that ox is a pest in its own herd but not in another herd, so also in this person. Again, a certain person creates trouble in another congregation but not in his own. The person is a pest outside but nor in his congregation. Just as that ox is a pest outside but not in its own herd so also is this

³¹ Pug. 39; DHT, p. 55.

³² Pug. 39; DHT, p. 56.

³³ Pug. 39-40; DHT, p. 56.



person. Again, a certain person creates trouble in as well as outside his own congregation. The person is one who is a pest in as well as outside his own congregation. The person is one who is a pest in as well as outside his own congregation. Just as that ox is a pest in as well as outside its own herd, so also is this person. Again, a certain person creates trouble neither in his own congregation nor in another congregation. The person is said to be a pest neither to his own congregation nor to another congregation. Just as that ox is neither a pest to his own herd nor to another herd, so also is this person. These are the four types of persons, who live and have their being in this world comparable to the ox.³⁴

17. Serpent type (āsīvisūpamā)

Another four types of persons comparable to a serpent. The four kinds of snake, viz., the quick but not strong poisoning, strong but not quick poisoning, quick as well as strong poisoning, neither quick nor strong poisoning. In the same way, a certain person gets angry repeatedly but the anger does not linger for a very long time. Thus is a person of quick but not of strong poison. Just as that serpent has a quick but has not a strong poison, so also is this person. Again, a certain person does not get angry repeatedly, but when he is angry, his anger endures for a pretty long time. Just as that serpent has a strong but not quick poison, so also is this person. Again, a certain person does not get angry repeatedly but when he is angry, his anger has a strong but not quick poison, so also is this person. Again, a certain person neither gets angry repeatedly, nor does his anger endure for a long time. The person is neither of quick nor of strong poison. Just as the serpent has neither quick nor strong poison, so also is this person.³⁵

³⁴ Pug. 47; DHT, p. 65.

³⁵ Pug. 48; DHT, pp. 66-67.

18. Dark and light types (tamaparāyana)

Another, four types of persons are in the dark and tend towards darkness; those in the dark and tend towards light, those in the light and tend towards darkness; those in the light and tend towards light. The first types of persons in this group is in the dark and tend towards darkness. Who was born in a family of low degree, of caṇḍālas, or of nesādas, or of basketweaves, or of chariot makers, or of pukkusas, poor, illfed, in straitened circumstances where victuals are obtained with difficulty, is swarthy, ill-featured, hunchbacked, a prey to many diseases, purblind or with a crooked hand, lame or paralysed, one who receives neither food nor drink, nor raiment, nor conveyances, not wreaths, perfume and unguents, nor bed, dwelling, and light; he is an evil doer in deed, word, and thought, he having been an evil doer in deed, word, and thought, is reborn at the disintegration of the body after death in misery, to woeful doom, to disaster. The second type of persons in this group is in the dark tend towards light who was born in a family of law degree, be it of caṇḍālas, or of nesāds, etc., one who receives neither food nor bed, dwelling, and light, he is a welldoer in deed, word and thought he having been a welldoer in deed, word and thought, is reborn at the disintegration of the body after death to a happy destiny in the bright world. The third type of person is in the light tends towards darkness. He is born in a family of high degree, be it eminently noble or of a house holder of high position, rich, of enormous wealth, owner of abundant objects of enjoyment, having ample hoards of gold and silver, having ample aids to enjoyment, ample stores of money and corn, is handsome, fair-looking, charming, endowed with the most exquisite complexion, the recipient of food, drink, reiment, means of transport, wreaths perfumes and unguents, bed, dwelling, and light; he is an evil-doer in deed, word, and thought, is reborn at the disintegration of the body after death in misery, to woeful doom, to disaster. The fourth



and the last type of persons is in the light and tends towards light. He is born into a family of high degree, be it eminently noble or of a Brahmin magnate, etc... dwelling and light; he is a well doer in deed, word and thought, he having been a welldoer in deed, word and thought, is reborn at the disintegration of the body after death to a happy destiny in the bright world. There are the four types of persons who lives and have their being in this world.³⁶

19. Tree type (rukkhūpama)

Another four types of persons are comparable to trees. The four kinds of trees are as follow—one itself weak but surrounded by strong ones, one itself strong but surrounded by weak ones; one itself weak but surrounded by strong ones, one itself weak and surrounded by weak ones; one itself strong and surrounded by strong ones. In the same way a certain person is of bad morals, wicked, while his associates are moral men of lovely nature. The person who himself is weak surrounded by the strong. Just in the same way as a weak tree is surrounded by strong ones. Again, a certain person who is moral, of lovely nature has associates who are immoral, wicked. He is person strong surrounded by the weak. Just in the same way as a strong tree is surrounded by weak ones. Again, a certain person who is immoral, wicked, having associates who are also immoral, wicked. He is person who himself is weak and surrounded by the weak. Again, a certain person who himself is moral and of lovely nature, has similar associates. The person who is strong surrounded by the strong just in the same way as a strong tree is surrounded by strong ones.³⁷

³⁶ Pug. 51-2; DHT, pp. 70-72.

³⁷ Pug. 52-3; DHT, pp. 72-73.

20. Slander type (makkhī)

He does not remove himself from the act of slandering act. So he is said to be a slanderer. But a person in whom such slander is put away is said to be not a slanderer.³⁸

21. Envy type (issukī)

Another person who is called envious, which is envying, enviousness jealousy, regarding with jealousy, the state of being jealous with regard to the gain honour, respect, reverence; salutation and worship paid to others, this is said to be envy. The person does not removed from envious action, is said to be an envious person. But, a person in whom such envy is put away is said to be inenvious.³⁹

22. Avarice type (macchari)

His nature is avarice. There are five forms of avarice—avarice with regard to residence descent, gain, beauty and merit (Dhamma) that which is avarice of this nature, harbouring avarice avariciousness, inordinate longing covetousness, presenting a harsh appearance, unrestraint of mind. This is said to be avarice. The person in whom this avarice remains unremoved is said to be an avaricious person. But a person in whom such avarice has been put away is said to be an unavaricious person.⁴⁰

23. Crafty type (saṭha)

His nature is craftiness, state of being crafts, hardness, toughness, counterfeit, sham. The person does not remove from craftiness work is called a crafty person. But, the person

³⁸ Pug. 18; DHT, p. 28.

³⁹ Pug. 19; DHT, p. 29.

⁴⁰ Pug. 19; DHT, p. 29.



in whom such craftiness has been put away is said to be one not crafty.⁴¹

24. Deception type (māyāvi)

Someone misbehaves bodily and in word and thought, and with a view to hide, entertains a sinful desire, resolves, says and acts which is this deception, deceitfulness, hiding, cheating, guile, guilefulness, avoiding, closing up, closing up completely, screening, screening perfectly, unrevealing, undisclosing and suppressing particularly. This is sinful act called deception. The person in whom this deception has been put away is said to be undeceiving.⁴²

25. Shameless type (ahirika)

We find the shameless person to become who is not being ashamed, where one should be ashamed. He who is not ashamed of acquiring sinful and immoral qualities—this is said to be shamelessness. A person who is possessed of this shamelessness is said to be a shameless person. But, a person who is not possessed of shamelessness like this is said to be shameful person.⁴³

26. Impudence type (anottappi)

A person who is not repenting where one ought to, not repenting on acquiring sinful and immoral qualities, this is said to be impudence. A person who is not possessed of impudent as this is said to be impudence. But, a person who is not possessed of impudent like this is said to be a unimpudence person or discreet person.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Pug. 19; DHT, p. 29.

⁴² Pug. 19; DHT, pp. 29-30.

⁴³ Pug. 19-20; DHT, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Pug. 20; DHT, p. 29.

27. Association with the wicked type (pāpamitta)

He is an associate of the wicked person who is serving, following attending on, having devotion to, honoring reverence, veneration for learning towards those men who are faithless, wicked, uneducated, avaricious and foolish. This is said to be association with the wicked.⁴⁵

28. Unguarded sense-doors type (indriyesu aguttadvāra)

The person who is seen in society at all times, unguarded as to the sense doors and immoderate as to food, sees an object with the eye and is enamoured of its form and beauty. Where as if he lives with his sense of sight unrestrained the sinful and wicked mental conditions—namely covetousness and dejection—will flow in, he does not strive to restrain, he does not guard, the sense of sight, nor does he get control over the faculty of sight. In the same way he hears a sound with his ears, smells an odour with the nose, tastes with the tongue, feels a tangible thing with the body, knows a mental state with the mind and is enamoured of its form and beauty, where as if he lives unrestrained as to the faculty of mind, the sinful and wicked mental conditions—viz., covetousness and dejection—will flow in, he does not strive to restrain nor does he guard the faculty of mind, nor does he get control over the faculty of mind. That which is not controlling these six faculties in this way is said to be unguarding as to the “sense doors”. The guarding, restraining, protecting and controlling of these six faculties in this way— this is said to be guarding the “sense doors.”⁴⁶

29. Immoderation in eating type (bhojane amattaññū)

One who has such a vigilance over the sense as vigilance over the sense-doors is said to be guarded as to his “sense-doors”, and somebody thoughtlessly and unwisely, takes food for the

⁴⁵ Pug. 24; DHT, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Pug. 20; DHT, pp. 30-31.



sake of amusement, pride, decoration ornamentation, insatiability, immoderation and thoughtlessness as to food—they are said to the sense-door and to be immoderate as to food. One who wisely thinking takes food not for the sake of amusement, not for pride, not for decoration, not for ornamentation, so far as it is necessary for the sake of relieving the distress of hunger, helping the cause of a holy life: “Thus I shall put an end to my past feelings and shall not give occasion to new felling; thus shall come to me sustenance, purity, and peaceful life; that which is contentment, moderation thoughtfulness as to food—this is said to be moderation in food. A person possessing such temperance is said to be moderate as to food. In the Dhammapada, Yamak Vagga (v. 7) a person similar to that is mentioned as: “The man who lives contemplating pleasure with senses unrestrained, in food moderate, lazy, inert him verily Māra overthrows as wind a weak tree.”⁴⁷

30. Upholding of (dangerous) views type (diṭṭhivipanna)

The person who is an upholder of dangerous views. There is no merit in charity, sacrificial rites and sacrificial offerings and there is no fruit nor result of good or bad deeds. There is neither the present nor a future world. There is neither mother nor father, nor beings who are born spontaneously. There are no recluses or Brahmins in this world who have attained peace of mind and are acting their best, and who having by their own effort known and seen this world and the next make known to others. Views like this, the way of opinion the wilderness of opinion, this disorder of heresy, this fluttering of opinion, this fetter of opinion this seizing and grasping, the devotion to it, its conduct, this bad path this wrong way, this falsehood, the “landing-place,” this holding the contrary aim—all this is said to be dangerous views. Wrong opinion of every description is

⁴⁷ Pug. 21; DHT, p. 31.

known as dangerous views. The person who has taken a dangerous view such as this is said to be an upholder of dangerous views.⁴⁸

31. Foul mouthed type (gūthabhāni)

These men are liars. Being brought into an assembly, into the midst of a meeting or into the midst of his relations or into a congregation or into the prince's council and interrogated as a witness thus, "come, good man just tell us what you know and knowingly he would say, "I know" when he does not know and knowing he would say, "I do not know." Thus either for his own sake, or for the sake of others, or for the sake of any least gain to him he would speak untruth consciously. The man is called to be foul mouthed.⁴⁹

32. Forgetful type (mutṭhassati)

The person who is forgetful; that which is forgetfulness, failing of memory, non remembrance, non recollection, unretentiveness, inattention, oblivion—this is said to be forgetfulness, a person possessed of such forgetfulness is said to be forgetful.⁵⁰

33. Unmindful type (asampajāno)

The person who is unmindful that which is want of knowledge, want of vision, want of comprehension, want of understanding, want of perfect knowledge, want of penetration, not grasping, not diving deep, not surveying, not reflecting, absence of work of intelligence, delusion, infatuation, bewilderment, ignorance, the flood of ignorance, the bond of ignorance, the barrier of ignorance, the accession of ignorance, the propensity of

⁴⁸ Pug. 21-2; DHT, p. 32.

⁴⁹ Pug. 29; DHT, p. 43.

⁵⁰ Pug. 20. DHT, p. 30.



ignorance, dullness, a root of evil. The person who is possessed of such unmindfulness is said to be unmindful.⁵¹

34. Disobedience type (dubbaca)

Another pair of persons we see in the society who are called disobedient and the associate of the wicked respectively. He who lacking obedience, taking up of a hostile attitude, persisting in antagonism, want of respect, disrespect, irreverence, unruliness when the matter of the observance of duties is of spoken of, this is said to be disobedience.⁵²

3.1.2.2. The Kalyāṇa Puthujjana Personality

The good worldling (kalyāṇa puthujjana),⁵³ although still unawakened, is open to the Dhamma, and reflects and reviews on the true nature of things, especially that of impermanence. While the blind worldling (andha puthujjana) is one who goes with the worldly flow (anusotagāmī), the good worldling goes against worldly current (paṭisoagāmī).⁵⁴

He has just managed to hold on to a safe and strong tree trunk or flotsam, as the floods (ogha) of sense-desire, existence, views and ignorance⁵⁵ wash and drag him around.

⁵¹ Pug. 21; DHT, pp. 31-32.

⁵² Pug. 20; DHT, p. 29.

⁵³ Sappurisa Sutta (M. Sutta No. 113) says that he (sappurisa) is a good worldling (kalyāṇa puthujjana).

⁵⁴ Nm. I. 138; Mil. 69; VA. 5. 1032; MA. I. 183; SnA. I. 99, II. 534; ThgA. II. 278, III. 41, 78; ApA. 118, 178.

⁵⁵ The 4 floods (ogha), also known as “yokes” (yoga), are technically known as “mental influxes” (āsava). The term āsava (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from ā-savati “flows towards or inwards” (i. e., either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as cankers, taints (deadly taints), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 āsavas: the influx of (1) sense-desire (kāma’āsava), (2) desire for eternal (existence) (bhava’āsava), (3) views (diṭṭh’āsava), (4) ignorance (avijjā’āsava) [D. II. 82, 91; Pm. I. 442, 561; Dhs. §§ 1096-1100;

He is struggling hard to stay afloat and as long as he holds onto the support, he is safe. He has to paddle hard with his arms and legs,⁵⁶ and find a way to get nearer to land.⁵⁷ But first he must look around for safety. The following personalities are included under the roof of the good worldly personality.

35. Flower speaker type (pupphabhāni)

Flower speaker giving up falsehood refrains from speaking the same and when he is brought into an assembly, or into the midst of a meeting etc. does not utter false words to other. Thus neither for his own sake, nor for the sake, nor for the sake of any least gain to him. He would speak truth consciously. The person is said to be a “flower speaker.”⁵⁸

36. Honey tongued type (madhubhāni)

Honey tongued persons words are blameless, pleasing to the ear, lovely appealing to the heart urbane, coveted by many and fascinating to many. The person is said to be honey tongued.⁵⁹

Vbh. § 937]. These four also known as “floods” (ogha) and “yokes” (yoga). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the cancer of view) is probably older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D. III. 216; M. I. 55, III. 41; A. III. 59, 67). The destruction of these āsavas is equivalent to Arahant hood.

⁵⁶ Cf. A similar parable is found in Alagaddūpama Sutta, M. I. 134 f; Āsivīsopama Sutta, S. 4. 174 f.

⁵⁷ This kind of person is likely to call himself a Buddhist, even to go for refuge in the Three Jewels, and involve himself in some Buddhist social activity. However, his efforts are limited, due to being a busy person, or lack of inspiration. In other words, he is uncommitted and inconsistent in his Buddhist life. In fact, Buddhism is not very high in his list of priorities, although he may often think about it, that is, he is only a nominal Buddhist. See Nakulapitā Sutta, S. 22. 1.

⁵⁸ Pug. 29; DHT, p. 43.

⁵⁹ Pug. 29-30; DHT, p. 43.



37. Lightning mind type (vijjūpamacitta)

The lightning minded persons truly understand suffering, the genesis of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Such persons are called lightning minded.⁶⁰

38. The Diamond mind type (vajirūpamacitta)

The diamond minded persons are on the destruction of his sinful tendencies, lives having come to know and realize sinless emancipation of mind and of insight even in the present existence. Just as there is nothing which cannot be pierced by a diamond, be it a precious or ordinary stone, so also there is a certain person who, on the destruction of his sinful tendencies, lives, etc. Such a person is said to be diamond minded.⁶¹

39. Good type (sappurisa)

A good man refrains from destruction of life, taking anything not given, misbehaviour in the matter of sensual pleasures and lastly, indulging in the enjoyment of spirituous, fermented liquors and intoxicants.⁶²

40. Better type (sappurisenā sappurīsatara)

The better man than the good man himself refrains from the destruction of life, taking things not given, misbehaviour in sensual pleasures, speaking falsehood, indulging in the enjoyment of spirituous, fermented liquors and intoxicants, and incites others to refrain.⁶³

⁶⁰ Pug. 30; DHT, p. 44.

⁶¹ Pug. 30; DHT, p. 44.

⁶² Pug. 39; DHT, p. 56.

⁶³ Pug. 38; DHT, p. 56.

41. Lovely type (kalyāṇa)

The lovely dispositional person refrains from killing, taking what is not given, misbehaving in sensual pleasures, speaking falsehood, slanderous speech, using harsh language, gossip. He is not covetous or malevolent.⁶⁴

42. The more lovely type (kalyāṇena kalyāṇtara)

The more lovely dispositional person himself refrains from destruction of life and incites others as well refrain from killing; from taking things not given incites others to abstain from taking what is not given, from misbehaving in sensual pleasures and incites others to refrain from misbehaving in sensual pleasures.⁶⁵

3.2. The Learner Personality (sekha)⁶⁶

The Pāli terms for the learner is “sekho”, and it means one who is under training. This term is applied to the first seven Ariya puggalas. It implies that they have still a remainder of human passion to eradicate, still duties to perform, still a probation to be passed through. The seven sekhas or sekkapuggalas are “sotāpattimagga, and phala, sakadāgāmīmagga and phala, anāgāmīmagga and phala, arahattamaggaṭṭho. Of these the first has a maximum of human passion to get rid of, and the last a minimum, being but every slightly removed from the perfect sanctification of the arahattaphalaṭṭho or arahant.⁶⁷ The detailed group of sekha personalities are as follows:

⁶⁴ Pug. 40; DHT, p. 56.

⁶⁵ Pug. 40; DHT, p. 57.

⁶⁶ A. III. 2; 4. 292 ff.

⁶⁷ R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*, p. 472. The Pāli Commentator Buddhaghosa commenting on the word “sekha” says: “sekkhoti adisīlasikkhā, adhicittasikkhā adhipaññati ima tisso sikkhā sikkhito sotāpattimaggaṭṭhānaṃ ādiṃ katvā yāva arahatta maggaṭṭhānā satta vidho sekho, DhA. P. 190. Tvañca sekho sakaraṇīyo—thou art yet



43. Stream-enterer (Sotāpanna) type

Sotāpanna (one who has entered the stream leading to nibbāna) has broken the first 3 fetters that bind one to cyclic existence (saṃsāra), namely: (1) self-identity view, (2) doubt, and (3) attachment to rules and rituals. Such a one will take rebirth amongst devas and humans for a maximum of 7 lives, after which he will attain final nibbāna. Due to his spiritual attainment, a streamwinner will never break any of the five precepts nor be reborn lower than the human realm.⁶⁸

All these latter 3 types of saints still remain subject to the five higher fetters (uddhambhāgiya saṃyojana): (6) craving for form existence, (7) craving for formless existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, and (10) ignorance. These saints are, however, all endowed with the spiritual faculties of higher moral conduct (adhisīla), higher consciousness (adhicitta), and higher wisdom (adhipaññā) that enable them to progress on the spiritual path without sliding back to the level of the worldling (puthujjana). Because they train in the 3 aspects of the spiritual higher learning (adhisikkhā), they are called “learners” (sekha), that is, they are learning to walk the path to awakening.

44. Once-returner (Sakadāgāmī) type

Sakadāgāmī has not only overcome the first 3 fetters, but by further development on the path, he has removed (4) sensual craving and (5) ill will in their grosser forms, that is, he has attenuated lust, hatred and delusion, and will return to this world only once more before reaching nibbāna.

under discipline and has duties to perform, B. Lot, “*Le Lotus de La Bonne Loi*”, p. 297.

⁶⁸ A. I. 231-235.

45. The Non-returner (Anāgāmī) type

Anāgāmī (i. e. one who does not return to the sense world) has eliminated the fetter of sensual craving and ill will, thereby fully liberating himself from all the first 5 or “lower” mental fetters (orambhāgiya saṃyojana), thus ensuring his rebirth in the Pure Abodes (suddhāvāsa) of the higher Brahma world (4th jhāna), where the momentum of his spiritual training will lead him to final liberation.

3.3. The Non-learner (Asekha) Personality

The non-learner (asekho) means one who has nothing to learn or who is perfect in knowledge, an Arahant.⁶⁹ This is a name for the Arahant, the perfection in higher moral training, higher mind training, and higher wisdom training and needs no longer to train himself therein.⁷⁰

46. Worthy (Arahant) type

An Arahant is a person who has broken all the ten mental fetters and one’s defilements are all destroyed (khīṇāsava); therefore one is an adept (asekha),⁷¹ that is, no more a learner. Once an Arahant passes away, he is no more reborn but attains final nibbāna, free of all suffering. Although the Buddha and all Arahants have the same spiritual liberation, the Arahant (and the learners) are known as the Buddha’s followers (buddhānubuddha)⁷² because they arise after the Buddha, the first Arahant. Although the wisdom of an Arahant (other than the Buddha) is less than that of the Buddha himself, all the

⁶⁹ Waskaduwe, Subhuti, *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, p. 10; R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*, p. 60.

⁷⁰ BD, p. 24.

⁷¹ A. 4. 379.

⁷² Thg. 679, 1246.



Arahants have various types of great spiritual accomplishments.⁷³

3.4. Differentiating Normal and Abnormal Personality

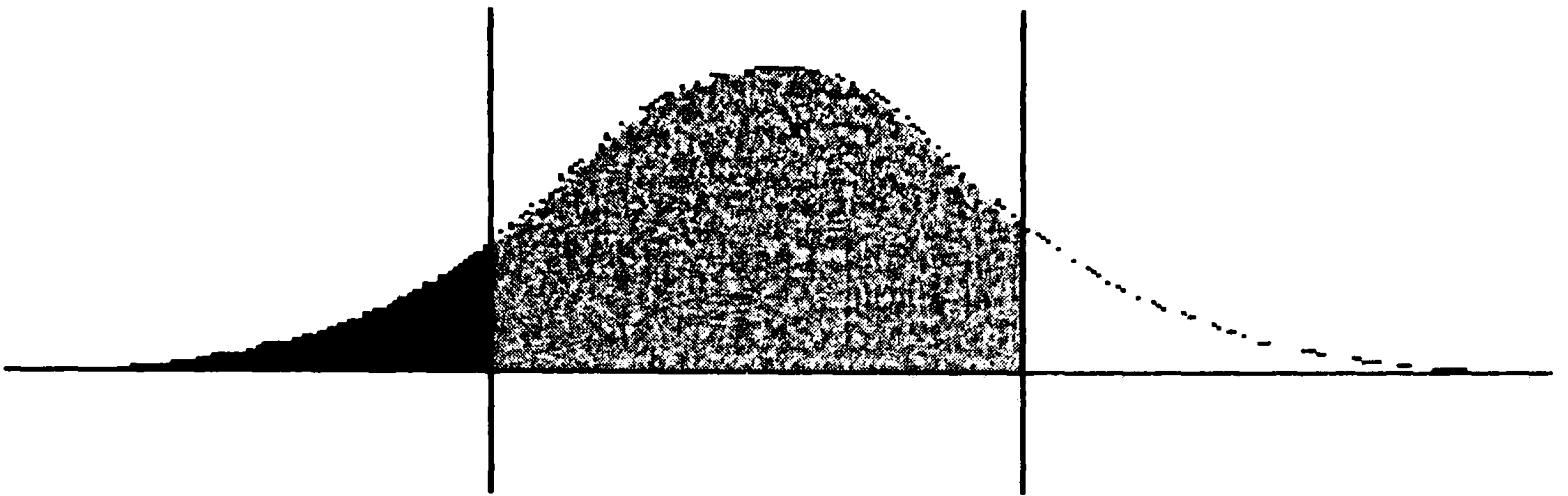
The definition of the word abnormal is simple enough: deviating from the norm. However, applying this to psychology poses a complex problem: what is normal? Whose norm? For what age? For what culture? Some would simply classify what is “good” as normal and what is “bad” as abnormal, but this is a vague and narrow definition and brings up many of the same questions for the definition of “good” as does the definition for “normal.” There are many more ways of determining a more objective reference point.⁷⁴

One way of defining abnormality is statistical deviation. Most human characteristics are nicely distributed along a smooth bell-shaped curve.

⁷³ Buddhaghosa gives list of 5 kinds of Arahants (Vism. 710), viz: (1) those wisdom-liberated (*paññā vimutti*); (2) those liberated both ways (*ubhatobhāga vimutti*) by the formless attainments and from the mental body (*nāmakāyato*) - i. e., for the “mind class” of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness - through the path of Arahant hood (see *Kīṭāgiri Sutta*), (3) those possessing the threefold knowledge (*tevijjā*), i. e., of an anamēsis or retrocognition (the recollection of the past lives), of clairvoyance (divine eye), and of the extinction of defilements (D. III. 220, 275; A. 5. 211), (4) those possessing the sixfold superknowledge (*chaḷabhiññā*), i. e., psychic powers, clairaudience (divine ear), telepathy (mind-reading) and the 3 knowledges mentioned in 3, and (5) those accomplished in the 4 analytic skills (*paṭisambhidāpatta*) (A. I. 24, III. 120; Pm. 2. 202).

But we know only three types of arahant through the *Aṭṭhakathā*. The three arahants, namely, *suññato*, *animitto* and a *appaṇihito* called *vimokkhā*. *Tattha suññātā vimokkhena vimuttakhiṇāsavo paṭipadāvasena catubbidho hoti. Tathānimittaappaṇihitavimokkhenāti evaṃ dvādasāarahanto veditabba*, (*Puggalapaññatti Aṭṭhakathā*), p. 203.

⁷⁴ Arthur S. Reber and Emily S. Reber (3rd ed 2001), *Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin), p. 2.



Those who stray too far from the average on this curve are then considered abnormal. This definition, however, has its problems. It does not recognize valuable derivations, such as genius, nor does it recognize common but maladaptive behavior like smoking and drinking.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, this method is both objective and scientific.

Buddhist commentarial expositions reveal that all worldlings (*puthujjana*) are deranged (*sabbe putthujjanā ummattakā*).⁷⁶ But it is discussed in depth in the analysis of ten fetters, that not only worldlings but the spiritual beings except the Arahants are also deranged by defilements. In other words, the dominant concern of Buddhism was the normal man and helping him to grow and achieve his potential was the focus of

⁷⁵ Deahl, Gina, “*Abnormal Psychology Index*.” 1 September 1998. Online. SAU Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Internet. 16 April 1999. Available at <<http://peace.saumag.edu/faculty/deahl/courses/abnormal/default.html>>

⁷⁶ However, we only found the term “*ummattako viya hi puthujjano*” in the *Majjhima Nikaya Atthakathā* (MA. I. 25). The Buddha described *ummattaka* as the faculties being deranged and no longer under the individual’s control (M. II. 106). The Buddha also said that thinking overly hard about things that cannot be known by thought can also make one, if not mad, then at least obsessive (S. V. 446). Psychologically speaking, intense and prolonged grief, fear, stress or frustration or a chemical malfunction within the brain can all cause insanity. In Buddhist monastic jurisprudence, the plea of “temporary insanity” is considered a legitimate one (M. II. 248). The plea of being innocent on account of insanity was not recognized in English criminal law until the early 19th century.



its teachings. However, those who had serious problems with themselves and/or society were not ignored, and in the Canon, one finds examples of Buddha's compassion reaching out to the maladjusted individual, Kisa Gotamī was an example.⁷⁷ In other words, Buddhism did not classify types of abnormal shades of behaviour—for them madness was basically bizarre, dramatic or extreme behaviour. However, they did not recognize “degrees of madness,” and they had a large number of terms to refer to the many shades of behaviour which were not normal.⁷⁸ Buddhism considered all life to be dukkha and thus it aimed at providing an alternative. It gave to all men the goal of Nibbāna, and sought to show them the way to this “place in the sun”—a quickening and deepening and deepening of man's quest of seeking to become actually what he was potentially. In dealing with an individual whether adjusted or maladjusted it strove to understand him in his total life situation- the expectations he faced, conflicts he perceived and the cross-currents of expectations and behaviour that led to his present personality.

The Buddha seems to have been far ahead of his time—to him a maladjusted individual was regarded as a person who had achieved his present state due to exposure to a certain type of psychological and social environment. This also implied the individual's previous kamma. Buddhism unlike many contemporary cultures of ancient times, regarded abnormality as a disease entity, and demon possession or a supernatural explanation was not emphasized. The Aṅguttara Nikāya records the Buddha as saying that there are two kinds of

⁷⁷ S. 5. 3. See C. Rhys Davids & K. Norman, *Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns*, pp. 88-9.

⁷⁸ Ummatta, ummāda, jaḷa, maṇḍa, bāla, vikkhittacitta, khittacitta, moha, eḷamūga, cittassa vyāpatti, etc.

diseases - that of the body and the mind, and the disease of the mind was a state which did not lead to growth.⁷⁹

The Vinaya mentions two kinds of madmen - one who does not remember aright, and the other who does not come aright.⁸⁰ This was with reference to individuals who forgot or failed to come at the proper time and place for the observance and formal acts of the Order. In such instances the monks had to give an agreement for a madman (ummattaka sammuti) to such a person. This rule was made with reference to Gagga the monk who epitomizes madness in Vinaya.⁸¹ Many of the Vinaya rules are not considered legally valid for an abnormal person, and it is repeatedly stated that it is not an offence if they have not been admonished, if they give it up, if they are mad, out of their minds, in pain, beginners.⁸²

In the Canon, some of the characteristics of a mad person would be: (1) inability to foresee the consequences of his action, (2) improper behaviour and appearance, (3) living in a fantasy world; disorientation for time, place and person, (4) no responsibility for acts performed, and (5) ability to recover from madness. The Buddhist did not regard madness as a natural predisposition, or something inherited, but felt that it was due to the circumstances in which the individual was placed. In the ten disasters which befall a monk if he abuses a fellow Ariyan "going out of his mind with distraction" is one of them.⁸³

During the 1950s, humanistic psychology began as a reaction to psychoanalysis and behaviorism, which dominated psychology at the time. Psychoanalysis was focused on

⁷⁹ *Gradual Sayings*, vol. II. 146; V, 99-101.

⁸⁰ *Book of Discipline*, vol. IV. 163.

⁸¹ *Book of Discipline*, V, 107; II. 426 etc.

⁸² Vin. III, 177, 33, *Book of Discipline*, vol. I. 46, 51, 303, 308, 313, 327, etc.

⁸³ *Gradual Sayings*, vol. V. 112-3.



understanding the unconscious motivations that drove behavior while behaviorism studied the conditioning processes that produced behavior. Humanist thinkers felt that both psychoanalysis and behaviorism were too pessimistic, either focusing on the most tragic of emotions or failing to take into account the role of personal choice.

Humanistic psychology was instead focused on each individual's potential and stressed the importance of growth and self-actualization. The fundamental belief of humanistic psychology was that people are innately good, with mental and social problems resulting from deviations from this natural tendency.⁸⁴ Here humanistic psychologists speak a language having similarity to that spoken by the Buddha.

⁸⁴ Jess Feist & Gregory J. Feist (7th ed 2009), *Theories of Personality* (New Delhi: McGraw-Hill), p. 276 ff; Elizabeth B. Hurlock (30th reprint 2007), *Personality Development*, pp. 393-394.

CHAPTER FOUR

Formation of Personality

4.1. Habitual behavior (kamma) and Renunciation (nekkhamma)

Western psychology points out that three major factors are at work in determining the development of the personality pattern: *first*, the individual's hereditary endowment; *second*, early experiences within the family; and *third*, important events in later life outside the home environment.¹

According to Buddhism, human behavior is determined by one of three factors: (1) external stimuli, (2) conscious motives, or (3) unconscious motives. The first is a reflex response caused by sensual contact with an external stimulus, e. g., "an innocent little baby lying on its back quickly draws back its hand or foot if it happens to touch a live ember."² Because such behavior is unmotivated (*asañcetanika* or *acetanika*), caused entirely by physical stimulation, the responsibility for it is not laid on the person himself.

Second, there is that activity which is volitional (*cetanika*) in nature, determined by either conscious motives, such as attachment or greed (*rāga*), aversion or hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), or their absence (*alobha*, *adosa*, and *amoha*); or, third, by unconscious motives such as the desire to

¹ Elizabeth B. Hurlock (30th rpt 2007), *Personality Development* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill), p. 19.

² M. I. 324, trans. by Kalupahana, David J (1975), *Buddhist Philosophy* (Hawaii: Honolulu), p. 47.



perpetuate life (jīvitukāma) and the desire to avoid death (amaritukāma) (both related to what Freud called the “life instinct”)³ (both related to what Freud called the “pleasure principle”).⁴ These motives result from a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of existence and of the human personality complex. Since the later types of behavior are purely motivational or volitional, the individual may be held responsible for his behavior. It is this volitional type of activity to which we will be addressing ourselves.

“While human behavior is itself conditioned by cause, it is followed by correlated consequences. This correlation between action (kamma) and consequences (vipāka or phala) constitutes the doctrine of kamma in Buddhism.”⁵ Depending on the nature of kamma and the circumstances in which it is committed, there will be appropriate consequences. The determinism between kamma and phala is conditional upon the circumstances in which the action is done. In this way, kamma is individualistic, because it is dependent upon the particular personality of the individual at that moment and the circumstances in which the individual is personality involved.⁶

Kamma may be defined as “intentional or willful activity with resultant effects.” It is activity motivated by conscious and unconscious motives that desire to achieve desired results. Volition or conation (cetanā) arises from the mental concomitants, co-operatives, or activators (saṅkhārā, “dispositions or attitudes,” “volitional formations”) and acts in

³ Robert H. Hopcke (10th ed 1999), *A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Massachusetts: Shambhala Books), p. 45 ff.

⁴ Snyder, C. R. & Lopez, Shane J (2007), *Positive Psychology* (California: Sage Publications, Inc), p. 147.

⁵ M. I. 324.

⁶ The proceeding paragraphs follow the explanation in Kalupahana (1975), *Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 46-7.



attempting to obtain desired results or accomplishing tasks, i. e., cetanā—determines the action and the aim of action. Cetanā - functions as the determination of what is determined (i. e., desired).⁷ According to H. V. Guenther:

“That which arouses and sustains activity on the part of the human psyche is called cetanā. Broadly speaking, it is a stimulus, and in sense, may be considered as a motive and also as a drive. A drive is a stimulus that arouses persistent mass activity, and a motive is a stimulus that sustains activity until the stimulus is removed, as by eating in the case of hunger, or until the organism has moved out of the range of that stimulus, as in the case of a pin-prick. Since cetanā and kamma are synonymous... this idea of motive and drive applied to kamma would mean that the individual is bound and fettered to the effective range of kamma, hence the equation of attainment of Nirvāna and cessation of all kamma.”⁸

“Volition is action, thus I say, bhikkhus, for as soon as volition arises one does the action, whether bodily, vocally, or mentally.”⁹ Kamma is action which strives to gain desired results, done for the sake of the doer, and ignorant that in reality there is no doer, let alone any object or result that is permanent, substantial, and satisfactory. When the motives and drives are removed by insight and self-control, then there occurs the cessation of all kamma.

⁷ Aung, Shew Zan (rev 1972), *Compendium of Philosophy* (London: PTS), pp. 235-36.

⁸ Guenther, H. V (1975), *Philosophy and Psychology of Abhidharma* (Lucknow: Buddha Vihara), p. 62.

⁹ A. III. 415: Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi; cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā. In respect to the five aggregates, the saṅkhāra's activate the other four.



We may contrast kamma- as “forceful” activity in comparison to the “nonforcefulness” of spontaneity;¹⁰ or the activity of one who is bound by his habits in comparison to the man who is completely free. By forcefulness is meant essentially two things. First, kamma- is compulsive behavior caused by the force of habit (s).

“The indispensable key to an understanding of the Buddha’s therapeutic attack upon suffering is best grasped in the West through the concept of compulsive behavior, understood as behavior driven by unconscious motivations which exploit all powers of sensation and thought and thus permit the individual no alternative course of action. It is as though the basic needs of the individual were blocked and turned into neurotic, i. e., rigid and compulsive demands... behavior is compulsive as long as it is motivated, i. e., aroused, driven, and controlled by forces of whose identity a person is unaware.”¹¹

Behavior of this nature is conditioned by ignorance (avijjā, i. e., the lack of self-knowledge and insight) and by certain acquired dispositions (saṅkhārā) which affect either an attraction - to or repulsion - from or neutral reaction towards an object.¹² As long as dispositions are present, coupled with ignorance, habitual, activity will continually occur.

¹⁰ The idea of “forceful” and “nonforceful” are taken from Potter, Karl H (1975), *Presuppositions of India’s Philosophies* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press), pp. 131-35.

¹¹ Nolan Jacobson (1966), *Buddhism: The Religion of Analysis* (London: Allen & Unwin), pp. 72-3.

¹² Surama Dasgupt (2nd ed 1994), *Development of Moral Philosophy in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd), p. 160-161.



Second, habitual behavior (kamma) is forceful because it causes in return either new habits or reinforces previous ones. This regeneration of habits forces man into habitual patterns or ruts which deny him flexibility and spontaneity. This cycle of habits breeding new habits is perpetuated by the impulse of ignorance and by the drive of thirst or craving (taṇhā) which causes intentional striving (kamma) directed towards objects mistakenly presupposed as permanent, substantial, and satisfactory.

“By ignorance the being fails to view the true impermanent and substanceless nature of existence. He relished the things of the world, taking them to be real and lasting and creates a craving for them. Due to his cravings, he grasps to attain one and avoid the other. This craving leads to the continuity of his life-process, a chain of struggle for living. His cravings and graspings do not end with the destruction of his physical frame, but they keep the struggle on in another birth.”¹³

Ignorance and thirst lead to subsequent attachment or clinging (upādāna) to sensual objects. The behavior which we call kamma - is the behavior of one attached (by habit) to the fruits of action or to the objects which his actions are directed. The counterpart of kamma - is renunciation (nekkhamma) and the counterpart of attachment or clinging is nonattachment (virāga, literally “dispassion”). The necessary condition for both is the faith born of the conviction that one is capable of mastering whatever challenge confronts him. Without faith, even though the person maybe aware of his dilemma, he may refuse to exert his powers. This is resignation not renunciation.

“The crucial difference between these two polar attitudinal concepts is that while the resigned man

¹³ Bhikkhu J. Kashyap (1954), *The Abhidhamma Philosophy* (Kandy: BPS), p. 212.



doubts his ability to master that which he is resigned to, the man who renounces is confident of his ability to gain that which he renounces but finds more master - greater freedom - in meeting the challenge of not exerting his power for gain. The man who renounces has faith in his powers, while the resigned man does not have faith and doubts his capacity to effect all that he wishes... And that which signifies lack of faith is doubt, that doubt born of an inadequate conception of self, a conception of self broken off from others and from the world in which we live in some way sets limits on man's capacities in general. This doubt is manifested inwardly as fear, the fear that one is at the mercy of some or all of one's environment since it is irradicably other than onself and thus incapable of being brought under control."¹⁴

Again, in this way Buddhism may be distinguished as a religion and its adherents religious (as opposed to the non-religious man) because they possess the firm conviction that man can overcome his present inadequate condition. The Buddhist has faith that complete freedom is possible, and that faith becomes the ultimate concern which directs his activities.

Renunciation refers to man's capacity to give up or renounce whatever gain or loss might result from exerting that capacity. This leads to nonattachment to the fruits of one's action.

"We saw that as one succeeds in gaining control over nature, over others, and over himself, one inevitably runs the risk of being bound by his own success... One who can manipulate the things of this world is tempted to use his ability to gain more goods, and so falls into bondage to the very ability which could be used by him

¹⁴ *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, pp. 15-6.



as a lever toward self-improvement; the thing that is lacking in him is the right attitude toward wealth, namely, nonattachment to its presence or absence. Likewise, one who by his attractive personality can wield control over other human beings, who is loved by many, is tempted to use this ability for the gratification of his desires; he once again lacks the right attitude of nonattachment to the fruits of his ability. And finally, even one who has mastered himself, who has self-knowledge and self-control, may fall prey to the error of pride, and become self-satisfied and content in his own righteousness. Once again the source of error is a lack of the right attitude, for the proud man is here, perhaps without himself knowing it, forming a picture of himself and gives a false sense of security and contentment- false because it habituates him to ruts which rob him of resiliency in novel situations. The antidote to this is once more nonattachment to the satisfaction he derives from his ability to form this picture.”¹⁵

Although there is a distinction drawn between “good” and “bad” kamma, from the standpoint of complete freedom all kamma and kammic forces must be eliminated in order for complete freedom to occur. Even the adherent who is well on his way on the road to freedom will not reach his destination so long as his actions are directed towards desired results. The habits developed to gain a firmer footage on the path must eventually be dissolved, since they too deny flexibility and spontaneity. A person can become bound just as easily by good habits as by bad ones.

Whatever one does or refrains from doing in a situation is an action. Unless it is an act of renunciation it is bound to breed kamma, bondage (bandha), and suffering (dukkha). For

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 38-9.



Buddhism, the choice of action is not between which action will have consequences which are desirable or not, but rather between acting attached to the fruits of action or acting unattached. The latter choice is the most crucial, since one leads to bondage, while the other, renunciation or nonattachment, leads to freedom. The ultimate value of action does not rest in the fruits of action, i. e., whether there results personal gain or loss, but intrinsically in acting freely, i. e., acting according to one's capacities, unrestrained by habitual forces. Renunciation is the maximum concern for freedom alone.

A necessary condition for renunciation or self-control is insight. It is necessary to have self-knowledge of one's personality make-up and one's capacities in a given situation, and full awareness of the nature of the situation in order to successfully renounce and become free. One must be able to anticipate the results of his actions, as opposed to waiting in anticipation, in order to have full control over his actions. Insight, which replaces ignorance, and renunciation, which replaces thirst and clinging, are both the sufficient conditions for complete freedom.

The man endowed with insight (i. e., what amounts to freedom-to) and self-control (i. e., freedom-from), his behavior is of a nonforceful nature. By nonforcefulness is meant two things. First, it is spontaneous activity because it is free from the kammic forces of ignorance and thirst compelling the person to strive after desired objects; objects which in reality are empty (*suñña*). Spontaneity is the action of one who is at ease, resilient, insightful, and in full control of himself and the situation. This is in contrast to one whose actions are compelled by forces out of his control. Spontaneity is action free from attachment. Second, the man who is completely free, his behavior is nonforceful because it does not reproduce new kamma—, which leads to bondage, etc.



From the proceeding analysis of kamma and renunciation (nekkhamma), one can surmise that the Buddhist conceives of man as one who possesses the sole ability to determine the nature of his personality and behavior. Ignorance, thirst, attachment, habits of mind and action are all of his own accord. Likewise, it is alone who rids himself of these self-imposed forces which rob him of flexibility and spontaneity. It is the individual who causes his own bondage and brings about his own freedom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Changing and Sustaining of Personality

Persistence and change are two aspects of personality theories which are often discussed and each have their proponents. However there are those who believe that personality pattern is fixed whereas others think that changes happen at particular times of life. Our thinking and behaviour have been affected and influenced by these views.

In the following, we propose to find out whether according to Buddhism, our personality pattern can be changed or not. It is however important to first examine the traditional beliefs regarding personality.

Plato recognized that the personality of the person prior to old age influenced his reactions to encroaching senility. “He who is of a calm and happy nature,” he said, “will hardly feel the pressures of old age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition, youth and old age are equally a burden.”¹

Among the Romans, Cicero emphasized the persistence of personality when he wrote in his *De Senectute*, “those with simple desires and good dispositions find old age easy to take. Those who do not show wisdom and virtue in their youth are prone to attribute to old age those infirmities which are actually produced by former irregularities.”²

¹ Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Personality Development*, p. 107.

² Ibid, p. 107.



In the sixteenth century, St. Ignatius stressed the persistence of the personality pattern when he claimed that if he could have the teaching of a child until he was 6 years old, nothing could undo that teaching. Freud indicated that he, too, held this belief when he said that the foundations of personality are laid in the early years of life.³

The acceptance of this traditional belief eliminates any motivation the person or his parents and teachers may have to change his personality, should it be such that it is leading to poor personal and social adjustments. Equally as damaging, its acceptance leads many people, adults as well as children and adolescents, to blame their parents for passing on to them, through their hereditary endowment, personality patterns that lead to poor adjustments and unhappiness. Blame leads to resentments, which, in turn, lead to poor family relationships.

In spite of the popularly held belief that the personality pattern is inherited and therefore persistent, a contradictory belief asserts that changes in personality parallel radical physical changes. The two times in life when personality changes are believed to be inevitable are at puberty and old age.

It is popularly believed that the physical changes at puberty will lead to an improved appearance and that undesirable personality traits will be shed and replaced by desirable ones. The belief is expressed in such statements as "She will be less shy (or less selfish or less boisterous) when she gets a little older." Schonfeld says that many affluent parents train their children to enjoy a happy, carefree childhood and then are shocked when the children grow up to be irresponsible adolescents and adults: "too many of today's affluent adolescents ask a girl to go steady and drop her if they

³ Ibid, p. 107.



find someone else who strikes their fancy. They come late for part-time jobs and drop them without notice, and they rush into marriage with no thought of how they are going to support the marriage. This irresponsibility has often been cultivated in the individual since early childhood. Yet parents and teachers are surprised when it does not miraculously disappear with adolescence.”

Since the physical changes that accompany aging are, for the most part, changes for the worse, the belief has grown up that any personality changes paralleling the physical changes will be for the worse also. The stereotype of the elderly person as physically unattractive and ailing and as rigid, hypersensitive, and generally hard to live with is widely accepted.

Like the layman, many psychologists also believe that personality changes occur. However, they emphasize that changes result not from physical changes per se, as the traditional beliefs imply, but rather from social and environmental conditions, from professional guidance through psychotherapy. How social and environmental conditions can produce personality changes has been described by Davis and Havighurst:

“We do not believe, in short, that the early personality is as irrevocable as the crack of doom. There certainly is no reason for a fatalistic view concerning man’s ability to break the mold of his childhood learning. Admittedly, this learning often sets the pattern for many later responses toward people; even for one’s life-long estimate of oneself. But new situations and new stimuli will change not only a man’s behavior - they will change his belief in himself. Men have been saved from despair, and vice, and from even the deep shadow of insanity by a change in their opportunities, by a chance to work, or to gain social distinction; by



finding someone who loved them, and had faith in their ability and courage; by the birth of a son or daughter, and the new responsibility and hope which it brought.”

Rogers has explained how psychotherapy can bring about personality changes. The changes come gradually as the individual develops a new perception of self and thus adopts a new pattern of behaviour. With changes in behaviour come changes in the attitudes and behaviour of other people toward the individual.⁴

05. Changing of Personality

5. 1. No free will?

The Atthakārī Sutta ⁵ was first inspired by Ajahn Brahmavamso’s remark in 2004 public talks that there is “no free will or personal choice.” *The Dhamma Journal*, publication of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, records Brahmavamso’s remark thus, under the subheading “Seeing beyond the doer”:

“It seems so obvious that one’s self is in control. One takes it for granted that it is one’s self that chooses to listen to music, watch TV, or read this. It appears true to experience that it is one’s self that generates one’s will. Unfortunately, what seems obvious is often untrue.

Neuroscientist Benjamin Libet of the University of California in San Francisco asked volunteers to extend one of their arms and, whenever they felt like it, out of their own free will, to flex their wrist. A clock allowed the subjects to note exactly when they decided

⁴ Ibid, p. 107.

⁵ A. III. 337 ff.



to act, and by fitting electrode to their wrists, the start of the action could be timed. More electrodes on the volunteer [s'] scalps recorded a particular brain wave pattern called 'the readiness potential' [RP], which occurs just before any complex action and is associated with the brain planning its next move. It was found that the decision to act came after the readiness potential!⁶

The inescapable conclusion of this experiment is that what we can observe as 'the decision to act,' what we take to be our own free will, occurs only after the process of action had begun. 'Will' does not initiate the action, but is a by-product of the process.

Such hard evidence is hard to accept. It goes against one's basic assumptions of life. It even evokes fear inside of some who read this to consider the possibility that they may not be in charge, neither of their body nor their mind. It goes so much against the grain of habitual thinking that such strong scientific evidence is not powerful enough to destroy the illusion of will. One needs jhāna to see directly that it is not a self that generates one's will, but an empty process of action, or cause-and-effect."

5. 2. No determinism

A popular definition of kamma is found in the in the Samuddaka Sutta:

"Just as the seeds are sown, so shall the harvest be;
Good comes to the doer of good; evil to the evil-doer—

⁶ Libet, Benjamin (1985), "Unconscious Cerebral Initiative and the Rold of Conscious Will in Voluntary Action". *The Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 1985 8: 529-539.



As one has planted the seed, so shall one feel the fruit.”⁷

This verse or its popular version—“as one sows, so one shall reap”—has often been quoted as a Buddhist article of faith. The interesting point here is that this stanza (gāthā), included in the Sagāthāvagga (the first chapter) of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, actually belongs to the free floating ancient gnostic poetry of India which the Buddhists have preserved.⁸ In other words, this is technically not “Buddha word” (Buddhavacana) but a popular saying. Only what is truly “well-said” (subhāsita)—that which lessens or removes greed, hate and delusion—is regarded as Buddha word.

The background of this popular “sower’s kamma” saying is found in the Samuddaka Sutta,⁹ where a Buddhist myth relates an impending battle between the gods and the asuras (titans). The latter (according to the account) dwelled in the great ocean. Some virtuous seers who dwelled on the ocean shore, fearing that the asuras would destroy their hermitage as had occurred before, requested “a guarantee of safety” (abhaya dakkhiṇa) from Sambara, the asura leader. However, Sambara, who detested the seers for being “the hated devotees of Sakka

⁷ S. I. 277. Yadisaṃ vapate bījaṃ, tādisaṃ harate phalaṃ, kalyāṇakārī kalyāṇaṃ, pāpakārī ca pāpakaṃ, pavuttaṃ vapate bījaṃ, phalaṃ paccanubhossatī ti.

⁸ Winternitz 1933 2: 57 f. Another example of the ancient India gnostic tradition is Ālavaka Sutta (Sn. 1. 10), which is a riddle in the ballad (ākhyāna) form, given by the yakkha Ālavaka to the Buddha who answers them (Sn. 181-192). “Too many cooks spoil the broth” and “Good wine needs no bush” are English gnomes.

⁹ “Asuras,” (asurā), lit “anti-god”, variously trans as “titan”, “demon”. They were once gods in Tāvātimsa but fell from their state through being intoxicated with drinks. Their attempted return to Tāvātimsa resulted in protracted battles with the gods led by Sakka. S. 1. 216 ff.; J. 1. 202-4.; DhA. 1. 272-280.; SnA. 484 f.



(the lord of the devas) (*duṭṭhānaṃ sakka sevināṃ*), replied, “I will give you only fear!” The terrified seers resorted to putting a curse on Sambara:

“Though we have asked for safety, you give us but fear.

Having received this from you, may fear without end be yours!

Just as the seeds are sown, so shall the harvest be;
Good comes to the doer of good; evil to the evil-doer—
As one has planted the seed, so shall one feel its fruit.”¹⁰

It is said that as soon as Sambara fell asleep, he woke up howling as if struck from all sides by a hundred spears. The other auras rushed to comfort him until the break of dawn. Henceforth, his sickened mind trembled; hence his other name, *Vepacitti* (*cittaṃ vepati*).¹¹

The “sower’s kamma,” as such, should be understood in its context as a folk saying. It is not fully reflective of the Buddhist teaching of kamma, especially since such a folk notion may encourage a determinist or fatalist view of kamma. The Buddhist conception of kamma is much more complicated as would be apparent from our study of the *Loṇaphala Sutta*.¹²

5.3. A weak determinism

Early in the history of the modern study of Buddhism, in her much neglected essay, “On the will in Buddhism” (1898), CAF Rhys Davids complains of how “[t]he critics unversed in the study of the Buddhist Canon in the original” have followed “Schopenhauer’s pointing finger” in labeling Buddhism as “Pessimism, Pantheism, Atheism, Nihilism, Quietism, or Apatheia” (1898: 47). Rhys Davids explains that a major way

¹⁰ S. 1. 227.

¹¹ SA. 1. 347.

¹² A. 1. 249-253.



these scholars' squint arises is through wholesale reliance on translations (without checking them out against the original texts): "In respect of the language through which they acquire their knowledge of Buddhist philosophy, they are at the mercy of the translator."¹³

Even in the last century, world-renowned scholars such as historian Arnold Toynbee assert that "inward peace" in Buddhism seems "unattainable" because desires cannot be given up without cultivating the desire to give them up, and that Buddhism enjoins "the suppression of desires that are ordinarily regarded as being altruistic, such as love and pity."¹⁴ However, even today, the problems of language still test those who try to translate the early Buddhist ideas so that today's mind can understand them. This problem is especially acute in connection with our task at hand, namely, that of understanding the nature of the will in early Buddhism. C.A.F. Rhys Davids sums up the problem in these words:

"As only one of several important instances, I would draw attention to the Buddhist attitude in relation to the volitional side of the human mind. It is not possible to equate in Pāli the word 'will,' either in psychological comprehensiveness, or for its train of bad metaphysic. If however, we lop off the metaphysic, and resolve 'will' into the classes of mental states or processes, of which it forms a factor more or less, and which, in its wider or its narrower meaning, it is used to designate,

¹³ Rhys Davids, C.A.F (1898), "On the will in Buddhism." *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 10, 1898: 47-59. For details on this topic, see Naw Kham La, Dhammasami, (2011), pp. 49-73.

¹⁴ An Historian's *Approach to Religion* (London: Oxford University Press), 1956: 64. Quoted by Bruce Matthews 1983: 77, where he mentions other examples.



we shall find in Buddhist terminology abundance of suitable words, and in the philosophical treatises an application of them as discriminative as we find among ourselves, and sometimes even more so.

There is so far no evidence of a reduction of complex volition into simple conation, such as may be found in our more scientific modern textbooks. There is no such developed psychology to be met with as is implied in the strictly psychological use of carefully distinct terms (such as Appetite, Desire, Deliberate Choice), where a coefficient of bare conation is discerned as involved with feeling of a certain sort, or with both intellect and emotion. But we do find in the Piṭakas is a pretty constant discrimination in the employment of terms connoting volition, between psychological import only and ethical or moral implication.”¹⁵

The tide has changed in recent times due to the maturing of modern Buddhist studies. A number of modern scholars have written insightful papers on the question of free will in the Nikāyas.¹⁶ The earliest formulation of the free will question is found in the speculations of the anti-brahmanical eremitical śramaṇa movement¹⁷ of the 6th-5th century BCE of the central Gangetic plain. The sramanas¹⁸ are generally divided into two groups: the kammavādī or kiriyāvādī, who

¹⁵ C.A.F. Rhys Davids, “*On the will in Buddhism*,” 1898: 48 f.

¹⁶ For useful and easy introductions, see Chinda Chandrkaew., “*Buddhist concept of free-will*,” 1973; Luis O Gomez., “*Some aspects of the free-will question in the Nikāyas*,” 1975; Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, 1992: 210-222.

¹⁷ Sramaṇa movement, see e.g. KN Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963: 69-168.

¹⁸ This anglicized word is found in modern *English dictionaries* such as the Wesbsber’s 3rd New International.



claim that there would be retribution for human deeds,¹⁹ and the akiriyāvādī for whom all human effort is fruitless.²⁰

The efficacy of action view (kammavāda) is that our present condition is partly the result of our deeds in previous lives. Those who reject this view, that is, the non-efficacy of action (akiriyāvāda), believe that all deeds, past, present or future, have no effect on the condition of beings. “Thus, in its extreme forms the (akiriyāvādī) would say that there is actually no causal connection between what a living being does and what he is or becomes, in this or in another life.”²¹

In the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, the Buddha himself is declared to be “one who teaches kamma, who teaches (the efficacy of) action” (kammavādī kiriyāvādī).²² The Jains, however, appear to have considered themselves

¹⁹ See, e. g. Vin. 1. 71. (Where erstwhile fire-worshippers are allowed ordination without probation since they are kammavādī).; *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya*, where the Buddha is declared to be “one who teaches kamma, who teaches (the efficacy of) action” (kammavādī kiriyavādī) D. 1. 115; *Aññatitthiya Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya* where Sāriputta declares to the wanderers that the Buddha teaches the efficacy of action. S. II. 33 ff.

²⁰ The locus classicus is *Sāmaññaphala Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya*, on the views of the six heretical teachers (such as Makkhali Gosāla) [D. 1. 52-9]. The notion that actions are fruitless does not necessarily imply a denial of the law of kamma as seen in the threefold classification of non-action (akiriya) in *Titth’āyatana Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya*: our present condition is all due to our past actions; that it is the result of a god’s creation; or that it is by sheer chance. A.1. 173-175.

²¹ Wayman, Alex, 1975. “Discussion of Frederick Streng’s ‘Reflections on the attention given to mental construction in the Indian Buddhist analysis of causality’ and Luis O Gomez’s ‘Some aspects of the free-will question in the Nikāyas.’” *Philosophy East and West*, 25, 1 Jan 1975: 81f.

²² D. 1. 115.



akiriyāvādī.²³ Gomez, in his article, “Some aspects of the free-will question in the Nikāyas,” notes:

“The reason is obvious, to the Buddhist what determined the future was not the act itself but the intention of the act.²⁴ This to the Jain seemed to culminate, by necessity, in moral corruption, for them, they claimed there would be no objective criteria for right and wrong. In a certain sense, they were right in claiming that the Buddhist was not a kriyāvādin; at least we must grant that Buddhism does not represent strict kammavāda, that is, it would not accept a necessary and unqualified relation of cause and effect between an act and its retribution. Evidently the Buddhist would consider certain acts as no retributable.²⁵ Now, this very question is central to the problem of determinism; whether the human condition is or is not necessarily and absolutely determined. The question whether this predetermination is of one’s own doing is ultimately irrelevant if the determination is

²³ H Jacobi, *Jaina Suttras II*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884: 309, 316-319, 385; but the Jain stand is by no means clear. In *Soṇakāyana Sutta* (A. 4. 233), the Brahmin Sikha Moggallāna says that the youth Soṇakāyana accuses the Buddha of akiriyavāda and annihilationism, but Soṇakāyana’s own allegiances are not mentioned. A. II. 232.

²⁴ See H Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras*, 1884: 414 f. the locus classicus for this question is, of course, Upāli Sutta (M. 2. 371 ff). Cf. *Śrī Sūyagaḍāṃga Sutra* (Dvitiyāṃgam) (Sūtrakṛtāga Sūtra, the 2nd Aṅga of the Jain Canon with commentaries in Skt by Sīlaṅgācārya (Śīlāṅka) and (Harṣakula...), Bombay: Nirmayasagara Press, 1879: 323, 927 f. [Gomez’s fn, normalized].

²⁵ See below, the discussion on Loṇaphala Sutta (A. 1. 249-253). See also (Mūla) *Nidāna Sutta* (A. 1. 134-136), esp Yaṃ bhikkhave alobha, kataṃ kammaṃ alobhajaṃ... lobhe vigate evaṃ taṃ kammaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti ucchinnamūlaṃ? Tālāvatthu, kataṃ anabhāvamkataṃ āyatim anuppādadhammaṃ. A. 1. 135.



unqualified.²⁶ The Buddhist texts, therefore, will often offer a view of kammic causation that could best be described as ‘weak’ or ‘modified kiriyāvāda’: the human condition is not totally or absolutely determined by the deeds of the human agent.”²⁷

The fact that all conditioned existence (that is, everything ‘outside’ of nibbāna) keeps to the law of conditionality, fully exemplified in the 12-link formula of dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda), clearly shows that Buddhism teaches determinism, but as Gomez states, this is a “weak” or modified determinism. That is to say, one is not totally determined by one’s deeds—an important fact attested in a number of places in the Canon.²⁸ The main point is that the cycle of dependent arising is reversible, that is, the reverse (paṭiloma) cycle ends what has arisen from the forward (anuloma) cycle.²⁹ The reversibility of the dependent arising is

²⁶ This is clearly the position of some passages in the *Nikāyas*, such as *Devadaha Sutta* (M. 2. 214-228), discussed later, and the text referred to in *Sāmaññphala Sutta* (D. 1. 52-59). But I am not sure that all Buddhist would concur; cf, for example, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and *Pañjikā* 9. 71-73 and the key passage in 6. 30-32. [Gomez’s fn].

²⁷ Gomez, Luis O (1975), “Some Aspects of the Free-will Question in the *Nikāyas*.” *Philosophy East and West* 25, 1 Jan 1975: 82; emphasis added.

²⁸ See *Attakārī Sutta*, A. 6. 38.

²⁹ That Buddhism teaches kamma is a sort of determinism, but it also teaches personal effort (attakārī). As such this Buddhist approach here could, in modern philosophical terms, be called compatibilism. See Freeman, Anthony., “Responsibility without choice: A first-person approach.” Paper delivered at (1) “Towards Science of Consciousness—Tucson 2000” Conference, AZ: Tucson, 10-15 Apr 2000; (2) St Michael’s, Exeter, 13 Sep 2000 (rev). *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7, 102000: 61-67.



clearly evident in the nun Selā's reply when Māra tries to confuse her:³⁰

“[Māra:] By whom is this figure (bimba) made?

Where is the maker of this figure?

Whence has this figure arisen?

Where does the figure cease?

[Selā:] This figure is not made self-made (atta kata),

Nor is this misery (agha) made by another (para kata).

It has come to be dependent on a cause (hetu):

With the cause's breakup it will end.³¹

The Saṃyutta Nikāya Commentary says that “figure” (bimba) refers to individual existence (atta bhāva) and agha too is individual existence because it is a basis for suffering.³²

During the Buddha's time, there are two opposing views as regards suffering: one is that suffering is caused by oneself (attakata), the other is that it is caused by others (parakata). The eternalists (sassatavādī), who hold to the former notion, believe that there is a permanent self (soul) transmigrating from life to life, reaping the fruits of its own deeds. The annihilationists (ucchedavādī), especially the materialists, who hold the latter position, believe that one is annihilated at death and nothing survives, so that one's share of suffering and happiness is due entirely to external conditions. A number of suttas in the Nidāna Saṃyutta discuss this problem, namely, the Acela Kassapa Sutta³³; the Timbaruka Sutta³⁴; the Aññatitthiya Sutta³⁵, and the Bhūmija Sutta.³⁶

³⁰ Gomez however thinks that Selā's stanza has a “deterministic ring in the theory of non-self.” 1975: 86.

³¹ S. I. 134.

³² SA. I. 193.

³³ S. II. 18-22.

³⁴ S. II. 22 f.

³⁵ S. II. 32-37.

³⁶ S. II. 37-41.



In the Sīvaka Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Buddha tells the wanderer Moliya Sīvaka that what one experiences (feels) is not always due to past deeds (niyativāda = determinism), but could be due to various physical causes: bile disorders, phlegm disorders, wind disorders, a combination, weather change (heat), carelessness, assault (accidents and trauma), and the results of one's kamma.

“Now, Sīvaka, when those recluses and Brahmins teach such a teaching, who hold such a view: ‘whatever a person feels, whether it is pleasurable, painful or neutral, all that is due to past deeds’—they deviate from what one should know for oneself, and from the common truth in the world. Therefore, I say that these recluses and Brahmins are wrong.”³⁷

5.4. Not everything is due to kamma

This “common sense” statement of the Buddha simply points to the obvious fact, as attested in the Attakārī Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya, that beings are known to exercise free will in such universal actions as walking about and doing things. This is “the free will of beings” (sattānaṃ atta kāro).³⁸

Another well known text attesting to the “weak” or modified determinism of Buddhism is the Loṇaphala Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya,³⁹ where it is stated,

- 1) (a) Monks, for one who says thus: ‘whatever kamma a person performs, he would experience that same kamma, (that is, he reaps as he has sown) there is no living of the holy life, no opportunity for the right ending of suffering. But, monks, for one who says thus:

³⁷ S. 4. 230 f.

³⁸ A. 3. 338.

³⁹ A. 3. 99.



‘whatever experienceable kamma (one that entails a consequence) that a person does, he would experience the result of that kamma (that is, whatever fruits he reaps, they accord with his kamma)’⁴⁰ there is the living of the holy life, the opportunity for the right ending of suffering.⁴¹

(b) Here, monks, for a certain person who has done only a slight evil kamma, it might take him to hell. Again, monks, for another person that same slight evil kamma is felt right here and now—not in the least does it seem to be abundant at all.⁴²

- 2) (a) Monks, what sort of person who has done only a slight evil kamma, it might take him to hell?

Here, monks, a certain person is of undeveloped body,⁴³ undeveloped moral virtue, undeveloped mind, undeveloped wisdom: he is (mentally) limited (paritta), he has a small⁴⁴ self (app’ātuma)—he dwells small and

⁴⁰ Yathā vedanīyaṃ ayaṃ puriso kammaṃ karoti tathā tathāssa vipakaṃ patisaṃvediyati. “That should be experienced,” vedanīyaṃ, or “that which should be felt or known.”

⁴¹ Henry Clarke Warren, in the early years of Western Buddhist scholarship, gives a very insightful, if somewhat free, trans of this passage “O priests, if any one were to say that a man must reap according to his deeds, in that case, O priests, there is no religious life, nor is any opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of misery. But if anyone says, O priests, that the reward a man reaps accords with his deeds, in that case, O priests, there is religious life, and opportunity is afforded for the entire extinction of misery.” (Buddhism in Translations, 1896: 221).

⁴² Be Nāṇupi khāyati kiṃ bahu-d-ev. Cf. n’atthi añū pi saññā, “not even a minute perception; not the least.” Sn. 802.

⁴³ “Undeveloped in body,” abhivita-kāya, here meaning “resorting to self-torture, not taking care of one’s body or health.”

⁴⁴ “Small self” (app’ātumā) or “insignificant self” (Harvey 1995: 25-56).



suffering.⁴⁵ Such a person, monks, is one who has done only a slight evil kamma, it might take him to hell.

(b) Monks, what sort of person is one who has done that same slight evil kamma that is felt right here and now—not in the least does it seem to be abundant at all? Here, monks, a certain person is of developed body, developed moral virtue, developed mind, developed wisdom: he is (mentally) unlimited (*aparitta*), he has a great self (*mah'attā*)—he dwells immeasurable (*appamāṇa*). Such a person, monks, is one who has done that same slight evil kamma that is felt right here and now—not in the least does it seem to be abundant at all.⁴⁶

Then follows the famous simile of the salt crystal: when a small grain of salt is dropped into the Ganges river, it makes no difference to her waters, but when a similar grain of salt is dropped into a cup of water, it becomes undrinkable due to its salty taste. Even so, one who habitually lives a wholesome life but falls into an occasional moral lapse (the small grain of salt) suffers not its fruit in the hereafter; but the habitual evil-doer suffers the fruit both here and hereafter.

The theme of the *Sīvaka Sutta* is that kamma is not the only cause of bodily suffering. The Commentaries mention the five natural orders (*pāṇca niyāma*), of which kamma is only one. These natural orders govern the physical phenomena within and without a human being as well as his mental processes.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Appa dukkha vihārī*. Comy: *Appakena pi pāpena dukkha vihārī*, “he dwells in suffering because of the little evil” (AA. 2. 361). This phrase is clearly to be contrasted with *appamāṇa vihārī* below.

⁴⁶ A. 3. 249.

⁴⁷ DA. 2. 432; DhsA. 272.



5.5. Implication of moral choice

Kamma is intention: when we act with a wholesome mind, the act is wholesome; when we act with an unwholesome mind, the act is unwholesome. Intention (cetanā), as such, is morally determinative, and an action without intention is not morally charged. This idea was revolutionary in the Buddha's own time but not unique to Buddhism in our own time.

“This is not an idea which is peculiar to Buddhism. The English criminal law, for example, considers both the mental state of the accused and his overt actions. It draws a distinction between the mens rea and actus reus: the latter is the physical action and the former is “the state of mind which must be present in an accused if his overt action is to constitute a crime, and if he is to be held responsible for it.”⁴⁸

However, if motive alone is the measure of rightness and goodness, then such ethics and morality would lack compassion and spirituality. In the early 20th century, Louis de la Vallee Poussin pointed out, following the Abhidharmakosa, for example, the ritual sacrifice of animals is not meritorious merely because Brahmins believe it to be so; nor is euthanasia for aged parents morally right even though it is the custom in certain countries.⁴⁹

“Volition is mental action: it gives rise to two actions, bodily and vocal action. (Bhaṣya): Volition is called mental action; that which arises from volition, namely action which has been willed, is made up of two other actions, bodily and vocal action.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Keown, Damien (1992), *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (Houndsmill & London: Macmillan), p. 222. See also David Walk, *The Oxford Companion to Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

⁴⁹ Poussin, La Morale Bouddhique, Paris: *Nouvelle Librairie Nationale*, 1927: 30 [cf Abhk 4. 68] Qu by Keown 1992: 221.

⁵⁰ Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣyaṃ, 4. 1.



The distinction between intention (cetanā) and action (kamma) is only for ethical consideration, but as we have seen, they are both really one. So too are actions of body, speech and mind part of the same process called a “person.” In this case, we are what we do:⁵¹ we are the result of our kamma, the heirs to our kamma, the owners of our kamma.⁵² Kamma as cetanā (intention, volition) has a broad sense of not only understanding the virtue or the vice of an action, but that one fully is the action—body, mind and heart. Keown gives the following helpful illustration:

“Generosity and the other virtues involve not merely the bare realization that a practice is good, but also the instantiation of the practice. The implementation depends upon a personal commitment which involves more than purely intellectual assent to its goodness. In short, cetanā describes not merely intention but the total posture of the personality, both cognitive and affective.”⁵³

At this point, we need to examine intention and action a little deeper. While it is true that the moral worth of an action depends on its intention—good begets good, evil begets evil—however, this does not mean that the mere absence of an intention frees one from moral accountability. For example, if one sees a child in danger of drowning, but does not help to save him (when one can swim and there is no one else around), claiming that one has no ill intention towards the child, it is clear that one has no compassion at all.

Or, one could, with “good intention,” give money to a poor drug addict who will use it to buy more drugs. Or one could keep the precepts with a wrong motive, such as with the aim of gaining magical powers. As such, intention alone is not

⁵¹ Dh. 165.

⁵² M. 3. 135.

⁵³ Keown, 1992: 213.



the criterion of moral rightness. The Abhidharmakosa give many examples showing that even deeds done with a good intention are wrongful if they are rooted in delusion (moha).⁵⁴

In early Buddhism, intention is no different from the three unwholesome roots (akusala mūla) of greed, hate and delusion and three wholesome roots (kusala mūla) of loving-kindness, generosity and wisdom.⁵⁵ As such, “intention” is not merely a matter of “good intention” or of “no intention” to act (mentally, verbally, bodily), but refers to a state of mind, that is, whether one’s is motivated by greed or by non-greed, by hate or by non-hate, by delusion or by non-delusion. In short, intention is motivation, what moves one to act.

In this case, one has “free will,” that is, one can consciously choose between action and non-action, good and evil. And yet, the extent of free will is not the same in everyone. This limitation is due to one’s personal habits and tendencies. If one is habitually an evil-doer, one has a greater propensity for evil acts. The habitual good person has a greater tendency for good deeds. By this very same fact, one can say that there is after all no such thing as “free will,” since whatever one does is motivated by one’s latent tendencies. Only the saint who has transcended or destroyed his latent tendencies really has free will.

In other words, the unwakened being is really helpless in habitually reacting to thoughts and external stimuli in negative ways. And yet the radiant mind (pabhassara citta) lies at the heart of all sentient beings. Despite one’s seeming helplessness and ignorance, one can still touch this radiant mind, beginning with one’s awareness that there is this spiritual potential. As such, everyone can change for the better. The purpose of the Buddha’s teaching is to provide the motivation and environment for healing and caring, for

⁵⁴ Abhk. 4. 68.

⁵⁵ D. 3. 275; It. 45.



positive change and spiritual liberation. David Loy, in his insightful study of *Aṅgulimāla*, entitled “How to reform a serial killer” (2000), applies this Buddhist insight to our own times by arguing for the need for restorative rather than justice in his discussion of “intention” and kamma:

“One modern approach to kamma is to understand it in terms of what Buddhism calls *saṅkhāras*, our “mental formation,” especially habitual tendencies. These are best understood not as tendencies we have, but as tendencies we are: instead of being “my” habits, their interaction is what constitutes my sense of “me.” But that does not mean that they are ineradicable: unwholesome *saṅkhāras* are to be differentiated from the liberatory possibilities that are available to all of us if we follow the path of replacing them with more wholesome mental tendencies.

The point of this interpretation is that we are punished not for our sins, but by them. People suffer or benefit not for what they have done, but for what they have become, and what we mindfully do is what make us what we are. This conflation makes little sense if kamma is understood dualistically as a kind of moral “dirt” attached to me, but it makes a great deal of sense if I am my habitual intentions, for then the important spiritual issue is the development of those intentions. In that case, my actions and my intentions build/rebuild my character just as food is assimilated to build/rebuild my physical body. If kamma is this psychological truth about how we construct ourselves—about how my sense-of-self is constructed by “my” greed, ill-will, and delusion—then we can no longer accept the juridical presupposition of a completely self-determined subject wholly responsible for its own actions. Again, we can no longer justify punishment as retributive, but must



shift the focus of criminal justice to education and reformation.”⁵⁶

For our present purposes of discussing the nature of free will in Buddhism, we can follow up from Loy’s insights by saying that since we construct ourselves or “selves” through our own actions/intentions, we can therefore ourselves deconstruct them. What prevents us from doing so is a lack of self-knowledge, a lack that is aggravated when we push this personal responsibility onto an external agency by blaming others, or most deleterious of all, by surrendering our will to a superhuman deity, a god, gods, or God.

In summary, it should be said that while early Buddhism does not have a notion of “will” in the Western philosophical sense, it distinguishes between conscious effort and unconscious habitual acts through the three doors of the body, speech and the mind. The ubiquitous teaching on mindfulness (*sati*) simply means that one should put forth a conscious effort in recognizing phenomena as they arise.

The central teaching of the *Bhaddekaratta Sutta* consists in the conscious watching of one’s present action (bodily, verbal and mental), noting them as a doctor would examine a patient, and nursing any unwholesome thought to wholesome health through reflecting on the nature of such actions as expressions of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self:

“Let one not go back after the past, for what is past has passed away, the present state as it arises,⁵⁷ nor harbour

⁵⁶ David Loy, “How to reform a serial killer: The Buddhist approach to restorative justice.” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 7 2000: 156 f.

⁵⁷ Comy: One should contemplate each state as it arises by way of the seven contemplations of insight (i. e., by way of insight into impermanence, suffering, not-self, disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, relinquishmen). MA. 5. 1 f.



fond hope for the future. And the future has not yet come. With insight, see each of them.⁵⁸

In the ultimate analysis, however, we have to say there is really no free will, or there is no need for any will, on the level of the awakened mind, that is, one that fully understands the nature of not-self. Since there is no self, there is none to will, or, put in a positive language: there is none who wills; there is only the willing!

“Only suffering exists, no sufferer is fond; the deeds are, but no doer of the deeds is there; Nibbāna is, but not the person who enters it; the path exists, but no traveler is seen on it.”⁵⁹

5.6. Mastering the sense of bhavaṅga citta (life-continuum)

5.6.1. The Death-thought-process (maranaññā-vīthi)

The death-thought-process at the five doors. According to Abhidhammatthasangaha, a dying man will experience one of the three kinds of objects, i. e., kamma, kammanimitta (sign of kamma) and gatinimitta (sign of destination) through one of the six sense-doors.⁶⁰

After Bhavaṅga is arrested. Then the apprehending at the five doors arises as the general thought-processes, then the impulsion (javana) runs for five moments due to the weakness of the deceased consciousness at that time. After some moments of registering consciousness arises the cease-consciousness by which a man, is declared dead. This is as follows:

⁵⁸ M. 3. 187: Atiitam nānvāgameyya, nappaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṃ; yadatītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ, appattañca anāgataṃ.

⁵⁹ Vism. 513.

⁶⁰ DhsA. P. 321 f; *The Expositor*, vol. II. pp. 407-8.

**Table 1/ Diagram 1****The Death-thought-process at five doors**

L	Life-continuum (bhavaṅga)
Lv	Life-continuum vibration (bhavaṅga-calana)
La	Life-continuum arrest (bhavaṅgupaccheda)
As	Apprehending at five doors (pañcadvārāvajjana)
Fs	Five sense consciousness (pañcaviññāṇa)
Rc	Receiving consciousness (saṃpaṭicchana)
I	Investigating consciousness (santīraṇa)
D	Determining consciousness (voṭṭhapana)
Im	„
Im	„
Im	Impulsion (Javana) [including five]
Im	„
Im	„
Rg	Registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa)
Rg	Registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa)
C	Cuti-citta (cease consciousness)
Pt	Paṭisandhi (relinking consciousness)
L	Life-continuum (bhavaṅga).

After the cease-consciousness arises the relinking consciousness immediately and then it subsides into the life-continuum again.

5.6.2. The Death-thought-process at mind door.

In this case the apprehending at five doors is substituted by the apprehending at mind door. The remaining thought run as the same as the former one. Sometimes, the death consciousness occurs after javanas or after bhavaṅga without tadārammaṇa also. Therefore, there are at least five kinds of death-thought-process in mind-door and five doors.⁶¹

With regard to the doors, Gunaratana in his book, “Rebirth explained” seems to believe that there is only

⁶¹ DhsA. p. 321 f; *The Expositor*, vol. II. pp. 421-2.



death-thought-process at mind-door as he says that, “In the case of a dying thought-process, the stage of sense-door advertents does not generally occur, since the stimulus that arises to disturb the bhavaṅga of the dying man is not as the external stimulus, but internal in nature, being a thought or memory and is capable of being recognized only through the mind channel...”⁶²

Even this opinion is very reasonable. But Ācariya Anurudha does firmly believe that the death-thought-process can occur in both five doors and mind door. In the case of five sense doors, a dying man will receives the three kinds of objects, i. e., “kamma”, “kammanimitta” and “gatinimitta”, while in the case of mind-door he will experience only “kamma in the past.”⁶³

5.6.3. The three kinds of powerful objects of the dying consciousness

Kamma or volitional action which is the first stimulus or object comes to present at mind-door of a dying person. Here “kamma” means some good or bad actions done during the life-time or immediately before his dying moment.

If the dying person had committed one of the five heinous crimes (anantariyakamma) such as matricide, patricide, etc., or developed Jhāna (ecstasies) he would experience such kamma before his demise. They are so powerful for they totally eclipse all other actions and appear very vividly before mind’s eye.⁶⁴ If there is no such a weighty kamma, he may take for his object the kamma done

⁶² Gunaratna, V. F (1980), *Rebirth Explained*, The Wheel Publication No. 167/168/169, (Kandy: BPS), pp. 26-36.

⁶³ Vide B. Medhankur and V. Vaidayasevee, vol. VI. op. cit. p. 36 f.

⁶⁴ PED, op. cit. p. 93.



immediately before death (āsanna-kamma) which may be called “a death proximate kamma.”⁶⁵

Because of this, the Buddhist people use to urge a sickly man to perform the merit (puñña) by inviting monks to teach him the way of bliss and to remind him again and again about the previous kammas. Similarly in the Tibetan tradition, as mentioned in the *Tibetan Books of Death*, teacher (guru) is invited to perform the death ceremony, the purpose of which is, of course, to urge a deceased person to remember or identify the Buddha or Bodhisatavas who will lead him to the blissful existence.⁶⁶

In the absence of the death-proximate kamma the habitual good or bad action (āciṇṇa kamma) such as the healing of the sick man in the case of a pious Bhikkhu or the stealing in the case of a thief, is present. Failing all these some casual trivial good or bad act (kataṭṭā kamma) becomes the object of dying thought-process.⁶⁷

5.6.4. Kamma-nimitta or symbol of action

Sometimes, the kamma itself does not present in such dying thought-process, but only its symbol or something connected with the kamma-performant such as a vision of knife, dying animals in the case of the butcher, a vision of the patient in the case of the physician and a vision of object of worship is the case of the devotee etc., is present at the threshold of the dying thought-process.

⁶⁵ Vide B. Medhankur and V. Vaidayasevee, vol. VI. op. cit. p. 36 f. Ākāsa (space) seems to be an uncompound thing (asaṅkhata dhamma), because the Buddha's sayings have been quoted that “dveme bhikkhave dhammā niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā katame dve? Ākāso ca nibbānañca.” But the source of it was not given and it might be the idea of Sarvāsativādins.

⁶⁶ See details in Songyal Rinpoche, (rev & upd 1994), *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (NY: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc).

⁶⁷ DhsA. P. 325; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 425.



5.6.5. Gati-nimitta or the symbol of existence.

In the absence of the precious two objects the symbol of destiny to the man who will go to the hell, or premonitory vision of destiny may be fire, forest, mountaineous region and to those who will be born in the human realm it may be the mother's womb and to those who will take birth in the heaven, it may be a celestial mansion, etc., at the door of mind of the dying person.

The story of the pig-killer man by name "Cunda",⁶⁸ and that of the pious lay Buddhist man by name "Dhammika upāsaka", as expounded in the commentary of Dhammapada can be brought to illustrate the sign of the sorrowful destiny and the sign of the blissful destiny respectively.⁶⁹

Furthermore a fresh example is given by Gunaratana as follows:

"It is also fairly well known both in Ceylon, (now Sri Lanka), and elsewhere that some dying persons have given utterance to such visions experienced by them. There was a genuine case at Kalutara (Ceylon/Sri Lanka) where a dying girl of twelve cheerfully told her parents standing sorrowfully by her bedside, that a beautiful carriage decked with garlands of beautiful flowers was waiting to take her away..."⁷⁰

One of these three kinds of objects is said to be experienced by not only the cease-consciousness but even by the re-linking consciousness as well as the life-continuum consciousness immediately after death. So the moment of dying consciousness is, a somewhat, critical period which will

⁶⁸ Eugene Watson Burlingame (1st ed 1999), *Buddhist Legends (Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā)*, vols. 1-2, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd), pp. 225-7.

⁶⁹ Vide B. Medhankur and V. Vaidayasevee, vol. VI. op. cit. p. 37.

⁷⁰ Gunaratna, V. F. (1980), p. 36.



determine the next birth as we find in the Vattūpama Sutta,⁷¹ “when the mind is corrupted, the sorrowful existence is to be expected (by a dying person with such a mind).”⁷²

This is said to be the thought-process pertaining to the sensuous sphere (kāma-maraṇā-sañña-vīthi). To those who will be born in the Brahma-world the conventional object (paññatti) instead of these three kinds of objects will present as the symbol of kamma at the threshold of the dying thought-process.⁷³ And so is the formless world (arūpa-loka).

Even then there is no permanent soul transmigrating from this world to another like a man casting off wornout garments and taking new ones...⁷⁴ Buddhism accepts rebirth, that is to say, one is endowed with good and bad volitional actions which spring from the passions and ignorance and is said to undergo rebirth again and again until he attains the final nibbāna.

The circle of birth is based on the life-continuum unconsciousness (bhavaṅga citta) which in the form of flux flows from one point to another uninterruptedly in accordance with the law of kamma. The kamma, capacity, tendency and personality etc., are said to transit from the cease-consciousness to the re-linking consciousness which succeeded it immediately as we find in Abhidhammatthasangaha:

“So to those who have thus got rebirth immediately after the cessation of the relinking consciousness, flows on in the absence of the thought-process uninterruptedly like the stream until the rising of the cease-consciousness. Being as an essential factor of life, this consciousness is known as Bhavaṅga. At the end of the dying moment it arises as the decease-

⁷¹ M. I. 36; DA. I. 50, 123.

⁷² DhsA. p. 327; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 426.

⁷³ DhsA. p. 327; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 426.

⁷⁴ DhsA. p. 328; *The Expositor*, vol. II. p. 428.



consciousness and perishes thereafter relinking consciousness and others, resolving according to circumstance like a wheel that continues.”⁷⁵

5.7. Benefits of knowing the Dhamma at the time of dying

The (Gilāna) Phagga Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya probably records that Phagga is lying in his sickbed. On Ānanda’s suggestion, the Buddha visits and counsels the gravely ill Phagga.⁷⁶ He passes away soon after, having attained arahanthood.⁷⁷

This is a sutta about terminal counseling, of inspiring the gravely ill and dying on how to keep their mind wholesome, even happy, so that their last moments are wholesome, leading to some spiritual attainment, such as stream-winning, or at least a wholesome rebirth. We should not leave such training to the last minute, but we need to constantly keep our minds in habitually wholesome states, so that the last moments of our lives have a wholesome momentum with good fruit (at least, either stream-winning or a happy rebirth.)

5.8. Six advantages of timely listening to the Dhamma

The Buddha says that there are six advantages of timely listening to the Dhamma, of investigating of its meaning.⁷⁸ What are the six?

⁷⁵ Abh. 195-6.

⁷⁶ A. 3. 56/3: 375-383.

⁷⁷ AA. 3: 393.

⁷⁸ A. 3. 379-383. Chayaime ānanda ānisaṃsā kālena dhammasavaṇe, kālena atthūpaparikkhāya.



5.8.1. He listens to the Buddha's teaching and becomes a non-returner

The Buddha pointed out that a person's mind is not freed from the five lower fetters. At the time of his dying, he gets to see the Buddha. The Buddha teaches him the Dhamma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with the spirit and the letter (with meaning and phrasing).⁷⁹ He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

“Having heard the Dhamma teaching, his mind is freed from the five lower fetters. This Ānanda, is the first advantage of timely listening to the Dhamma.”

5.8.2. He listens to a disciple's teaching and becomes a non-returner

Furthermore, Ānanda, a person's mind is not freed from the five lower fetters. At the time of his dying, he does not get to see the Buddha, but he gets to see a disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha's disciple teaches him the Dhamma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with the spirit and the letter (with meaning and phrasing). He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure. “Having heard the Dhamma teaching, his mind is freed from

⁷⁹ This action sequence reflects the basic structure of the Buddha's teaching method: (1) the Dhamma is shown; (2) the listener filled with enthusiasm; (3) they are fired with commitment; and (4) filled with joy. Comys (e.g. DA. 1: 293; UdA. 242; cf. VA. 1: 65; MA. 2: 35) explain that by instruction, the Buddha dispels the listener's delusion; by inspiring him, heedlessness is dispelled; by rousing him, indolence is dispelled; and by gladdening, brings the practice to a conclusion. In short, when we teach Dhamma to benefit others, we should do our best to bring instruction, inspiration, motivation and joy to the listener. These four qualities are, in fact, the sixth or last of the ideal skills of a Dhamma speaker. See LS Cousin, in his review of *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (trans. Ñāṇamoli) in JBE 4 1997: 272, where he gives a slightly different listing of the above. See also Kalupahana., *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, 1992: 65-67. On ācikkhanti deseti, etc., A. 4. 92.



the five lower fetters. This, Ānanda, is the second advantage of timely listening to the Dhamma.”

5.8.3. He investigates the Dhamma and becomes a non-returner

Furthermore, Ānanda, a person’s mind is not freed from the five lower fetters. At the time of his dying, he gets to see neither the Buddha nor the Buddha’s disciple. But, he thinks over, ponders over, turns over in his mind, the Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has learned it.⁸⁰ On account of his thinking over, pondering over, turning over in his mind, the Dhamma as

he has heard it, as he learned it, his mind is freed from the five lower fetters. “This, Ānanda, is the third advantage of investigating the meaning (of the Dhamma).”⁸¹

5.8.4. He listens to the Buddha’s teaching and becomes an Arahant

Furthermore, Ānanda, a person’s mind is not freed from the five lower fetters. And his mind is not freed through the supreme destruction of acquisitions.⁸² At the time of his dying, he gets to see the Buddha. The Buddha teaches him the Dhamma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with the spirit and the letter (with meaning and phrasing). He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete

⁸⁰ A. 3. 379-383 ff. Chayime ānanda ānisaṃsā kālena dhamma savaṇe kālena atthūpaparikkhāya.

⁸¹ Api ca kho yathā sutam yathā pariyattam dhammam cetasā anuvitakketi anuvicāreti manasā’ nupekkhati.

⁸² Anuttare ca kho upadhi saṅkhaye cittam avimuttam hoti. Comy glosses “the supreme destruction of acquisitions” (anuttare upadhi saṅkhaye) as “nibbāna” (A. 3. 393). “Acquisition” = upādhi, meaning “remnant, substrate,” or more correctly, “acquisitions” or “belongings,” attachment to which leads to rebirth is often confused with upādi (clinging,” from upa + ā + dā “to take”).



and pure. “Having heard the Dhamma teaching, his mind is freed through the supreme destruction of acquisitions. This, Ānanda, is the fourth advantage of timely listening to the Dhamma.”

5.8.5. He listens to a disciple’s teaching and becomes an arahant.

Furthermore, Ānanda, a person’s mind is not freed from the five lower fetters. And his mind is not freed through the supreme destruction of acquisitions. At the time of his dying, he does not get to see the Buddha, but he gets to see a disciple of the Buddha. The Buddha’s disciple teaches him the Dhamma, good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, endowed with the spirit and the letter (with meaning and phrasing). He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure. “Having heard the Dhamma teaching, his mind is freed through the supreme destruction of acquisitions. This, Ānanda, is the fifth advantage of timely listening to the Dhamma.”

5.8.6. He investigates the Dhamma and becomes an Arahant

Furthermore, Ānanda, a person’s mind is not freed from five lower fetters. And his mind is not freed through the supreme destruction of acquisition. At the time of his dying, he gets to see neither the Buddha nor the Buddha’s disciple. But, he thinks over, ponders over, turns over in his mind, the Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has learned it. On account of his thinking over, pondering over, turning over in his mind, the Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has learned it, his mind is freed through the supreme destruction of acquisitions. “This, Ānanda, is the sixth advantage of investigating the meaning the Dhamma.”⁸³

⁸³ A. 3. 379-383 ff. Chayime ānanda ānisaṃsā kālena dhamma savaṇe



5.8.7. Related Suttas

The Dhānañjānai Sutta gives an account of how Sāriputta Thera guides the dying Brahmin Dhānañjāni by stages to be reborn in the Brahmā world. At the close of the Sutta, the Buddha rebukes him for leaving the Brahmin in the “lowly Brahmā world” (hīna brahmāloke) when he could have been guided to a higher level.⁸⁴

In the Gilāyana Sutta,⁸⁵ the Buddha instructs Mahānāma how a dying “wise lay follower” (i. e., a streamwinner) could be “‘directed to the cessation of self-identity,’—then, Mahānāma, there is no difference between a lay follower who is thus liberated in mind and a monk who has been liberated in mind for a hundred years, that is, there is no difference between the one liberation and the other”⁸⁶, i. e. he becomes an Arahant.

This clearly shows that there are two routes to awakening: one monastic and the other the lay life. The monastic life properly lived is the best direct “one way” route to spiritual liberation. However, for a lay person who is properly trained in meditation, the indirect route, albeit longer, still reaches the goal. At the moment of dying, there is neither monastic nor lay, except the mind that struggles with a rush of thought moments.

The Nakula Sutta⁸⁷ is a heart-warming example of how a loving wife counsels her husband when he falls sick on the

kālena atthūpaparikkhāya.

⁸⁴ M. II.184 ff.

⁸⁵ S. 5. 408-410.

⁸⁶ S. 5. 410.

⁸⁷ A. 3. 295-298.



verge of dying. Her counseling is so effective that he immediately recovers from his illness.

Such texts belong to a fascinating group of Suttas dealing with Death Studies. They show that it is possible for a skillful person or counsellor to guide a dying person to die well,⁸⁸ have a good rebirth, and even gain spiritual liberation itself.

5. 9. Sustaining of Personality (1)

Vāsanā⁸⁹ unlike Kamma cannot be changed. In 5th century C. E. in his Udānaṭṭhakathā, Commentator Dhammapāla explained vāsanā as a natural tendency which is the result of defilements practiced over a long time. It causes similar behaviours in the one who has removed his defilements to another individual who has not abandoned them. The natural tendency is described as "a mere potency in the continuum of the one who has removed the defilements." However it is not found in the Buddha's continuum because his defilements have been abandoned due to the "perfection of resolution" in the removal of the "knowable-hindrane." As these tendencies continue to exist in the the sāvaka and the pacceka-buddha, "for this reason, it is only the Buddha who is unhindered in knowledge and vision."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ This is the true meaning of *euthanasia*, a Greek word that means "good death."

⁸⁹ Vāsanā is similar to preference in psychology. A preference is a born tendency to be, act, or think in a certain way. While we do change and grow, and may seem to be different at various times in our lives, our basic personality style remains the same. Renee Baron (1998), *What Type Am I?* (USA: Penguin Books), p. 9.

⁹⁰ UdA. 194. Kā panāyaṃ vāsanā nāma? Yaṃ kilesarahitassāpi santāne appahīnakilesānaṃ samācāra-sadisasaṃācārahetubhūtaṃ, anādikālabhāvitehi kilesehi āhitaṃ sāmattiyaṃ mattaṃ, tathārūpā adhimuttīti vadanti. Taṃ panetaṃ abhinīhārasampattiyaṃ ñeyyāvaraṇaappahānavasena yattha kilesā pahīnā, tattha bhagavato santāne natthi. Yattha pana tathā kilesā na pahīnā tattha sāvakaṇaṃ



According to Udānaṭṭhakathā, the relinquishing of ñeyyāvaraṇa results in the cessation of vāsanā.⁹¹ Mahāyāna tradition includes the term jñeya-āvaraṇa, side by side with kleśa-āvaraṇa, albeit once—in the MVS:⁹²

“All four [proper abandonments (samyak-prahāṇa) have the meaning of abandonment (prahāṇa): The former two abandon the kleśa-āvaraṇa. The latter two abandon the jñeya-āvaraṇa; for, when the skillful dharma-s are practiced, ajñāna is abandoned.”

It implies that the objective of spiritual practice is to renounce the two-fold hindrances: hindrance of defilements (kleśa-āvaraṇa) and hindrance of knowledge (jñeya-āvaraṇa). Spiritual perfection is attained with their removal. The term jñeya-āvaraṇa clearly has a cognitive meaning for the Buddha’s omniscience is attained with the overcoming of this hindrance, which is constituted of akliṣṭa ajñāna. According to the Vaibhāṣika, the intrinsic nature (svabhāva) of jñeya-āvaraṇa is akliṣṭa-ajñāna.

Arahats and pratyekabuddhas have two hindrances which prevent them from achieving spiritual perfection like that of the supreme-perfect Buddha. The first one is kleśa-āvaraṇa and the second is referred to as the “liberation-hindrane” (vimokṣa-āvaraṇa). According to MVS, one is said to have “well done what is to be done” when the “liberation-hindrane” is released on the cessation-attainment (nirodha-samāpatti).⁹³

Those who believe that the liberation-hindrane is an inferior ajñāna...explain that when the Buddha

paccekabuddhānañca santāne atthi, tato tathāgatova
anāvaraṇaññānadassano.

⁹¹ Ibid, 194.

⁹² Buddhayasas and Zu Fo Nian, trans, *Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣa-śāstra* (T no. 1545), 724b.

⁹³ Ibid, 780 b.



understood" the knowledge of exhaustion, He had already abandoned all ajñāna-s and produced the jñāna which counteracts them. For this reason He is said to have abandoned the liberation-hindrance."

Samghabhadra asserts that this liberation-hindrance is the same as akliṣṭa-

ajñāna and must be a real entity:

After liberating his citta, the Arhat seeks further liberation from the liberation. "In the liberation which is hindered, there exists an inferior ajñāna which is non-defiled and of the nature of hindering liberation. This is the nature of the liberation-hindrance. When one acquires detachment from a particular sphere (dhātu), one has abandoned it without any remainder, and liberation arises. However, it is only when it no longer is active (sam-ud-ā-√car) that one is said to have been liberated from it..." He finds that this is a valid explanation as some [real] dharma must certainly be there, "whose force is capable of hindering one from being at ease with regard to the meditation. Otherwise, why is he not at ease with regard to the meditation?"⁹⁴

5. 9. 1. Vāsanā in Pāli and Sanskrit Scriptures

Although no formal definition of vāsanā is to be found in the MVS, the Vaibhāṣika have described how it visibly affected arhats,.. It gives us an appreciation of their understanding of this notion, which is essentially the same as in the Pāli ṭīkā.

In the case of the Buddha, The Buddha sometimes uses words that may appear to be tainted with defilements, but his vāsanā has been totally removed. and these are but—"semblance of greed" (rāga-saḍḍā), "semblance of hatred" (dveṣa-saḍḍā), "semblance of delusion" (moha-saḍḍā), "semblance of conceit" (māna-saḍḍā), etc. To explain that

⁹⁴ Ibid, (T no. 1562), 724 b.



these are not, – semblances and not actually defilements – the MVS compilers take pain to relate at length the such episodes, showing that in such cases, the Buddha was actually consciously employing expedients to help the practitioners along. The MVS compilers take considerable pain to tell the

nidāna for each occasion, in order to show how the Buddha consciously uses these semblances, which are not actually defilements, and not cases of vāsanā, as expedient means to help practitioners.

The case of the two yāna-s is quite different. Their involuntary acts resemble defilements and are therefore morally non-defined; due to the conditioning of vāsanā. The two yāna-s are helpless against such “semblance of defilements.” Etienne Lamotte gives several examples for the arhat-s’s vāsanā from Mahāyāna sources. However the following are similar examples described in the MVS.

There is the famous example mentioned in the Pāli *ṭīkā* as well) of Pilindavaccha,⁹⁵ who controlled by his vāsanā, often calls others vaṣala (little man). Once he summoned to the Ganga god: ‘O you vasala! Stop the flow! I want to cross over.’ This is an example of vāsanā of hatred.⁹⁶

Ānanda shows an example of vāsanā of greed when he has a ‘weakness’ for the Śākya—he feels tender toward them. .

When Sāriputta throws away the medicine, he is involuntarily controlled by the vāsanā of conceit.

An example of the vāsanā of delusion is given by Venerable Gavampati who always coughs before eating. "He on eating even knows that he has not digested what has been eaten." Another example is the elephant who through merit became an Arahant, who continued to be able to fill himself up by eating merely one grain measure of food. As an elephant

⁹⁵ Ud. 3. 6.

⁹⁶ Ibid, (T no. 1545), 77a.



who used to carry the Buddha's relic (dhātu) to Kāsamīra he used to have merely one grain measure for his meal. This is a special dhamma acquired by virtue of the vāsanā of his habit of eating as an elephant."⁹⁷

5. 9. 2. Differentiation between defilement (kilesa) and traces (vāsanā)

The Pāli tradition explains, the difference according to the distinction between kilesa and vāsanā. The Theravāda and Sarvastivāda tradition agree essentially on the explanations on this distinction, though the Theravāda connects the notions of vāsanā with that of the undefiled ignorance. Both traditions believe that even after the defilements have been removed, there are subtle traces left behind vāsanā. The voluntary and kammically retributive nature of a defilement differs from vāsanā which is defined as involuntary influences of past habits, being morally neutral and non-retributive. It is believed that the Buddha alone can completely abandon the defilements together with their vāsanā (cf.: na hi bhagavantam ṭhapetvā aññe saha vāsanāya kilese pahātum sakkonti),⁹⁸ which accounts for the Buddha's superior wisdom. The Sarvastivāda say that the Buddha alone has completely removed the non-defiled ignorance, and therefore his vāsanā too is exhausted.

5.10. Sustaining of Personality (2)

As mentioned in chapter (3) the dominant concern of Buddhism was the normal man and helping him to grow and achieve his potential was the focus of its teachings. However, those who had serious problems with themselves and/or society were not ignored, but in this study we deal only with normal man. In the discipline of Buddhist psychology, disposition and personality of beings depend on the difference

⁹⁷ Ibid, (T no. 1545), 77 a.

⁹⁸ *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā*. 1. 219; *Sāratthadīpanī-ṭīkā*. 1. 217.



in their mental gradation, the beings are classified into three groups, namely:⁹⁹

5.10.1. The beings of lower species. Their consciousness is primarily instinctive, due to the fact that their actions were conditioned by lobha, dosa, and moha in their previous existence. Their consciousness is as weak as upekkhā-sahagata santīraṇa, resultant of the previous akusala. It is not possible for them to obtain jhāna.

5.10.2. The idiot, dumb or born-blind. Their consciousness is as instinctive as that of the lower species, of a very feeble nature, due to the fact that their actions were conditioned by very weak kusala hetus in their previous existence. It is as weak as upekkhā-sahagata santīraṇa being the resultant of very weak kusala ñāṇavippayutta citta.

They are called ahetuka-being, because their vipāka-consciousness is devoid of any hetu. They, too, are incapable of obtaining jhāna.

5.10.3. The beings who have got self-sacrifice (alobha) and good-will (adosa) but not a good intelligence (amoha), due to the fact that their actions were conditioned by strong Alobha and Adosa in their previous existence, but not by amoha, are called dvihetuka-beings. They have no amoha in their vipāka citta. They also, therefore, cannot obtain jhāna.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Abh. pp. 173-4; Bhikkhu J. Kashyap. (1954), *The Abhidhamma Philosophy* (Nalanda: Buddhavihar), p.141.

¹⁰⁰ When we search the Nikāyas for references regarding the necessity of jhāna for the attainment of sainthood, we would find no direct statement as to whether we need or do not jhāna for streamwinning. There is certainly no teaching that says that we need jhāna to attain streamwinning. The Suttas mention two sets of preconditions in connection with streamwinning. The first is called “the factors for



The dvihetuka and the ahetuka beings cannot obtain either kiriya or appana javana. Even the beings born as men will not have the types of ñāṇa-sampayutta vipāka consciousness (as they had no ñāṇa-sampayutta kusala citta in their previous life). But they can become tihetuka persons in the next life if they meditate kammaṭṭhāna and follow the virtuous path. Therefore they should endeavor to practice bhāvanā in this life so as to make it a habit in future lives.¹⁰¹

streamwinning” (sotāpattiyaṅga) and the second the four preconditions for the attaining of streamwinning, and its definition is found in the Sotāpattiphala Sutta (S. 5. 410), as follows: “Bhikkhus, these four things when cultivated, often developed, lead to realization of the fruit of streamwinning. What are the four? Association with good persons, hearing the dhamma, wise attention and practice of the dhamma in accordance with the dhamma. These four things when cultivated, often developed, lead to the realization of the fruit of streamwinning (S. 55. 55/5. 410 f; A. 5. 246/2.245). The last item here, that is, the “practice of the dhamma in accordance with the dhamma” (dhammānudhammapaṭipatti) is explained in the Suttas and Aṭṭhakathās as being concerned with “insight meditation” (sukkhavipassaka) (e. g. DA. 2. 556). Two *Suttas*—the *Dhammakathika Sutta* (S. 12.16/2. 18) and the *Naḷakalāpiya Sutta* (S. 12. 67/ 2. 115) - define this practice as aimed at the ending of the factors of dependent arising. The Kathika Sutta (S. 22.115/3.163 f) expounds the practice in terms of ending of the five aggregates; and the Kathika Sutta (S. 35. 155/4. 141) teaches the ending of the six sense-bases. The Saṃyutta Aṭṭhakathā defines dhammānudhammapaṭipanno as “one practising the way that is the reality in accordance with the supramundane truth that is nibbāna” (SA. 2. 34). Understandably, jhāna practice would have to be included in the “practice of the dhamma in accordance with the dhamma” but there is no hint of this at all.

¹⁰¹ In terms of physically disabled, no barrier to spiritual attainment. Basing on the texts, Sanath Nanayakkara points out that the purpose of Buddha’s preventing those who are disabled getting ordination is to stop “asylum-seekers” in the Saṅgha community. Vin. I. 76 ff, 91; S. I I. 279; A. I. 26. For more on this topic, see article “*The Impact of Sicknesses, deformities/Disabilities and Punishments on the Granting of Admission (pabbajjā) and Development of Emancipatory Knowledge (paññā)*” by



5.10.4. The beings whose mind is sufficiently strong and rational, due to the fact that their actions were conditioned by strong *alobha*, *adosa*, and *amoha* in their previous existence, are called *tihetuka*-beings, because their *vipāka*-consciousness is accompanied by all the three good *hetus*. They alone are worthy of *jhāna* and even of the higher states of the supramundane.

5.11. Sustaining of Personality (3)

Five crimes (*ānantarika kamma*) are designated in Buddhism as incurable, grave offences (*atekicchā*) and leading to hell (*nerayikā*), viz., matricide, parricide killing an Arahant; to draw out a Tathāgata's blood with an evil thought; and, causing divisions in the Saṅgha.¹⁰²

Buddhism does not admit the possibility of depriving the life of a Buddha by any one. Divisions in the Saṅgha can be caused only by a monk or nun who is fully ordained with the higher ordination (*upasampadā*). Novices or householders cannot do this. One who has committed one of these crimes is destined for rebirth in the immediate next life in hell (*niraya*) and there is no cure from it unlike other lesser *kamm*s. Of these five the last is the gravest and Devadatta, who caused division in the saṅgha and shed the Buddha's blood is said to be silently festering there for a whole aeon.¹⁰³ In the *Samaññaphala Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* (No. 2), Buddha said that if *Ajātasattu* hadn't killed his father, he would have attained *sotāpanna*hood, a degree of enlightenment. But because he had killed his father he could not attain it.

Now we can see that the Buddhist is not fatalist because he accepts the possibility of changing the result of

Sanath Nanayakkara in *Dhamma-Vinaya* (Maharagama: Sri Lanka Association of Buddhist Studies, 2005), pp. 141-152.

¹⁰² A. V. 129 f.

¹⁰³ Vin. II. 202, 206; A. III. 146.



kamma by human effort. The present existence is not only the effect of past kamma but also the active cause of existence in the future. Man's future depends on his action at the present. By his own effort, man can eradicate the roots of kamma, and thereby prevent kamma from ripening in the future. This efficacy of human effort implies a certain degree of human freedom. The evidence of freedom is from the fact that man feels free to act and exercise his effort, called "initiative" (*ārabbhadhātu*), in various situations. As is mentioned earlier, it is intention (*cetanā*) that the Buddha calls kamma. This intention implies a choice, a selection of what to do.

When we look at habit (*vāsanā*) and conditioning, we can sense how our brain and consciousness create repeated patterns. If we practice tennis enough, we will anticipate our next hit as soon as the ball leaves the other player's racquet. If we practice being angry, the slightest insult will trigger our rage. These patterns are like a rewriteable CD. When they are burned in repeatedly, the pattern becomes the regular response. Modern neuroscience has demonstrated this quite convincingly. Our repeated patterns of thought and action actually change our nervous system. Each time we focus our attention and follow our intentions, our nerves fire, synapses connect, and those neural patterns are strengthened. The neurons literally grow along that direction.

What we practice becomes habit. What may at one time be beneficial can later become a form of imprisonment. We can work with habits, through mindfulness, we can rewire our nervous system. The genesis of this transformation is our intention. Buddha explains that before every act there is an intention, though often the intention is unconscious. We can use recognition, acceptance, investigation of suffering, and non-identification to create new kamma or *vāsanā*. Through mindfulness and non-identification, we can choose a new



intention. We can do this moment by moment, and we can also set long-term intentions to transform our life.

Jack Kornfield says Long-term intention is called dedication.¹⁰⁴ In the monastery we would gather before dawn in the candlelit darkness and the monks would begin the sonorous morning chanting to dedicate our day. The chants reminded us that the path to awakening is possible when we dedicate ourselves to a noble way of life. We would dedicate ourselves to use the support we received for the awakening of compassion for all beings.

Setting a long-term intention is like setting the compass of our heart. No matter how rough the storms, how difficult the terrain, even if we have to backtrack around obstacles, our direction is clear. The fruits of dedication are visible in the best of human endeavours. We can see them in the political leadership of Nelson Mandela and Asoka, in athletes such as Lance Armstrong.

In the case of mentally disabled, we could not change quickly (in this life) but we can purify it in the life to come or next life if we cultivate our wholesome action step by step and little by little.

The Suttas declare that for those who have committed incurable crimes (pañcānantariya), there is no chance of developing spirituality and attaining Nibbāna in this life. It will take time for spiritual development and reaching Nibbāna. In other words, those who committed incurable crime also can develop the personality (mentally). To do that he has to give much time (several life-times). As we discuss above, there is no room for determinism in Buddhism, everything can be changed either in a short-term or long-term process.

¹⁰⁴ Jack Kornfield (2008), *The Wise Heart (Buddhist Psychology for the West)* [Boston: Rider], p. 260.

CHAPTER SIX

Development of Personality

There is a vast array of methods for the development of personality. Our focus here will be on the concept of āhāras and how they help to shape our personality.

Human life begins as a small, dark speck and evolves when there is nourishment, in Pāli āhāra, as a condition paccaya.¹ Through a dependent process of coming-to-be-(bhūta) - which, conventionally speaking, we call being. We shall now look at and analyse more closely this mysterious-e-i-n-g” process.²

All living things or beings, even this world itself, require the condition of nourishment to develop and continue to exist. For example, a constellation requires a sun and certain factors to form part of the universe. The condition for living is nourishment. Both the earth and humans alike demand some elements like oxygen and temperature to continue “being.”³

According to Buddhism, a “human being” is made up of mind and body—both of which need to be sustained-dependently and independently in order to continue living. . Food, clothing, shelter, and medicines maintain the body alive. In the same way, as soon as there is mental consciousness, the mind immediately seeks to get what this human being, the

¹ S. II. 2.

² MA. I. 209; SA. II. 26; DhsA. 153.

³ Oxygenreview, “*The Human Body is About Two-thirds Oxygen*”, 25 July 2011 <<http://www.oxygen-review.com/human-body.html>>



psychophysical (mind-body) organism requires for living and builds strategies for feeding its different wants and needs, whether essential or not.⁴

The Aṅguttara Nikāya⁵ and Khuddaka Nikāya state that,⁶ “All beings subsist on nutriment” (sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā).⁷ Therefore “nutriment” is the most important fact of life which we need to understand.⁸

⁴ According to Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the human beings evolve in accordance with a circle of needs. As to Maslow the needs are fivefold:

- 1) Physiological needs,
- 2) Safety needs,
- 3) Social needs,
- 4) Esteem, and
- 5) Self-actualization.

For the most part, physiological needs are obvious- they are the literal requirements for human survival. These include the most basic needs that are vital to survival, such as the need for water, air, food and sleep. Maslow believed that these needs are the most basic and instinctive needs in the hierarchy because all needs become secondary until these physiological needs are met. Lack of air and food will kill an individual. Once these lower-level (physiological needs, safety needs, and social needs) needs have been met, people can move on to the next level of needs, which are for safety and security. Beyond the routine of needs fulfillment, Maslow envisioned moments of extraordinary experience, known as *Peak Experiences*, which are profound moments of love, understanding, happiness, or rapture, during which a person feels more whole, alive, self-sufficient and yet a part of the world, more aware of truth, justice, harmony, goodness, and so on. Self-actualizing people have many such *Peak Experiences*. For details, see Abraham. H. Maslow (2nd 1970), *Motivation and Personality*, (NY: Harper & Row Publishers), pp. 35-115.

⁵ A. 5. 52.

⁶ Khp. 4/2; KhpA. 76.

⁷ Khp. 4/2; KhpA. 76.

⁸ A. V. 48 f.



In his *The Four Nutriments of Life*,⁹ Nyanaponika Mahā Thera says, “It is the one single fact about life that, above all, deserves to be remembered, contemplated and understood. And, if understood widely and deeply enough, this saying of the Buddha reveals, not only a truth that leads to the root of all existence, but also to its uprooting.” (i. e., in the sense that a palm tree, once uprooted, receives no more nourishment and ceases to continue to survive).” Nyanaponika Thera writes further: “The Buddha proved to be the one who saw to the root of all things, and he saw the root of all things as ‘nourishment.’”¹⁰ In Buddhism four kinds of nutriment are considered edible foods, sense impressions, volitions, and finally consciousness. The first one feeds the body, whereas the rest nourish the mind. Nyanaponika adds that the entire process of nutrition is governed by hunger and whereas the body up to death unceasingly craves for material food, there is the relentless craving of the mind for its own type of nourishment: “for ever-new-sense-impressions—and ever-expanding-universe of ideas.” “The mind hungers ceaselessly for its own kind of nourishment.”¹¹ This “hungering ceaselessly” is also at the root of human personal, mind-body problems—distractions and mental dissatisfactions.

With detachment and objectivity, one would actually be able to observe how the ceaseless wanderings of mental consciousness, and the hungering, is in reality consuming the mind-and-substance and will finally cause the very substance of the physical-mental being to disintegrate through restless worry, ending up in illness. If human beings could see things as they really are, they would eventually understand that the

⁹ Nyanaponika Thera, trans. (1981), *The Four Nutriments of Life* (Wheel Series. Book, No. 105/106), [Kanday: BPS], p. 1.

¹⁰ A. V. 48. See also Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 1.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 1-4.



cause of most of their personal suffering in life is this unchecked and unbridled process of ceaseless hungering.

6.1. The Four Foods Defined

6.1.2. Etymological term

The term “āhāra” comes from the prefix “ā”, the root √har, (=hr) “to bring near”, “to feed”, and the suffix “a”. It literally means feeding, support, food, nutriment, which constitutes the physical, psychological and sociological body, the basis of all actions.¹²

6.1.2. Contextual definition

The Aṭṭhakathās give very detailed analyses of āhāra.¹³ They are called āhāra because “they nourish” (āharanti) their own effects, and that they have craving as their source. Although there are other conditions for beings, these four alone are called “food” because they serve as “special conditions for the personal life-continuity” (ajjhattika santatiyā visesa paccayattā).¹⁴ That is to say, without this special condition, that particular state does not arise.

Material food (kabalīṅkār’āhāra) is basically the kind of solid food that we take to sustain or build our physical body. This is the support for the physical body that is the stage, as it were, for the other three kinds of non-material food.

In the mental body, contact (phass’āhāra) is the special conditions for feeling, and contact as food produces the three

¹² PED, p. 117.

¹³ MA. I. 209; SA. II. 26; Vbh. 401.

¹⁴ MA. I. 209; SA. II. 26; DhsA. 153. See also Vism. 11. 1-3/341. In *Āhāra Sutta* (S. 5. 102-107) & *Abhisāṇḍa Sutta* (S. 5. 391-392) āhāra is used in a broader sense of “special condition” without reference to the four kinds of food.



kinds of feelings, that is, the pleasurable, the painful and the neutral.

Mental volition (mano sañcetan'āhāra) is the special condition for consciousness, and mental volition as food produces the three kinds of existence, that is, the sense-world, the form world, and the formless world.

Consciousness (viññāṇ'āhāra) is the special condition for name-and-form, and consciousness as food produces name-and-form on the occasion of rebirth.¹⁵

In summary, the products of food (what it nourishes) as the special condition are as follows:

- 1) Edible food put into the mouth produces the groups of form with nutritive essence as the eighth (oj'aṭṭhamaka rūpāni, an abhidhamma term for the simplest cluster of material states);
- 2) Contact as food (phass'āhāra) produces the three kinds of feeling (pleasurable, painful and neutral);
- 3) Mental volition as food (mano sañcetanāhāra) produces the three kinds of existence (sense world, form world, formless world), and
- 4) Consciousness as food (viññāṇ'āhāra) produces name-and-form (nāmārūpa) at rebirth.¹⁶

In the Āhāra Sutta¹⁷ and the Abhisāṇḍa Sutta,¹⁸ āhāra is used in a broader sense of “special condition” without reference to the four kinds of food.

¹⁵ D. 3: 228; M. I. 48, 1: 261; S. 2: 13, 48, 98-105. Comy on *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* (M. I. 46 ff) says that consciousness as food, nourishes, by way of conascence (sahajāta), etc., the three formless aggregates (feeling, perception, formations) associated with itself at the moment of rebirth-linking (MA. 1: 211). As such, consciousness arises together both at rebirth and during the course of one's life.

¹⁵ MA. I. 209; SA. II. 26; DhsA. 153. See also Vism. 11. 1-3/341.

¹⁶ MA. 1: 207 ff; SA. 2: 22-27; KhA. 75 ff. See also Vism. 11. 1-3/341.

¹⁷ S. 46. 61/5: 102-107.

¹⁸ S. 55. 31-33/ 5: 391-392.



These two Suttas have important sections dealing with “food,” namely, the *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta*¹⁹ and the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta*²⁰. The term “food” is also briefly mentioned in the *Upādāna parivaṭṭa Sutta*:²¹

“And what, monks, is form? The four great elements²² and forms derived²³ from the four great elements—this is called “form.” With the arising of food, there is the arising of form. With the cessation of food, there is the cessation of form.”²⁴

The *Kāya sutta*²⁵ has this introduction not found in the *Āhāra Sutta*:

“Monks, just as this body is supported by, survives on food, does not survive without food, even so, the five hindrances are supported by food, survive on food, do not survive without food.”

The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* Commentary on the *Āhāra Sutta*, however, gives additional conditions for the “nourishment” of the seven awakening factors (*bhojjhaṅga*) and the “starving” of the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇā*).²⁶

The *Puttamaṃsa Sutta*²⁷ gives a full definition of the four kinds of food, along with four graphic similes:

1) Material food = a son’s flesh;²⁸

¹⁹ M. I. 46 ff.

²⁰ M. I. 295 ff.

²¹ S. III. 58 ff.

²² S. III 58 ff. The four great elements (*cattāro mahā bhūtā*).

²³ On the “derived element,” see *Upādāna parivaṭṭa Sutta*, S. III 58 ff.

²⁴ S. III 58 ff.

²⁵ S. V. 64.

²⁶ These passages can be found, for example, in Soma Thera’s translation of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and Commentaries, *The Way of Mindfulness*. Kandy: BPS, 1998: 174-’90. And also in the *Vism.* 4.54-62/132-134.

²⁷ S. II. 97.

²⁸ According to the *Vinaya*, the following types of meat are not allowable for monastics: human flesh, elephant meat, horse meat, dog meat, snake meat, lion meat and meat of all other wild animals (*Mv.* 6. 23-24 = V. I.



2) Contact as food	= a skinless cow;
3) Mental volition as food	= a fiery coal-pit, and
4) Consciousness as food of the spear. ²⁹	= a man give 300 strokes

Let us now examine these four kinds of food in greater detail.

6. 2. The Four Kinds of Nutriment

6.2.1. Material food

Material food (*kabalīṅkāra'āhāra*) is the special condition (*visesa paccaya*) for the physical body of those beings that subsist on material food,³⁰ of the gross (solid) kind in the case of the physical sense-world, or the subtle in the case of the sense-based celestial worlds. The Commentary says that *kabalīṅkāra'āhāra* is “a term for the nutritive essence (*ojā*) of which boiled rice, etc., is the base (*vatthu*).” Material food, as soon as it is placed in the mouth (in the case of humans), brings forth the groups of form with nutritive essence as the eighth (*oja aṭṭhamaka rūpa*, an Abhidhamma term for the simplest cluster material states).

The word *kabalīṅkāra* (Thai), or *kavalīṅkāra* (BJT) or *kabalīṅkāra* (PTS) or *kabalīkāra* (CSCD), is resolved as *kabala* (morsel, mouthful) + *kāra* (doing, making), and means “made into morsels” (but is used only in combination with *āhāra* as a phrase or a compound).³¹ As such, the compound, *kabalīṅkāra'āhāra* (and its variant forms) means “material food.” The word “material” is broad enough here to encompass the senses “physical” food, as applied to the human and

217-220). Only available meat (*pavatta maṁsa*), i. e., the killing of which the monastic had not seen, heard or suspected was done specially for him or her, is allowable (V. I. 217-172).

²⁹ S. 12. 63/2: 97-100.

³⁰ Abhs. p. 275.

³¹ PED, p. 188.



physical world, while the term “non-physical” or “fine (or subtle)” food as applied to the sense-bound celestial worlds.

The Brahmajāla Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya³² speaks of “the divine, having physical form, of the sense-sphere, partaking of solid food” (*dibbo rūpī mano mayo sabbaṅga paccāṅgī ahīndriyo*), which clearly suggests that the term *kabalīnkāra āhāra* applies to the whole of the sense-world. Moreover, the Puttamamsa Sutta clearly states two kinds of “material food,” that is, the gross (*olārika*) and the fine [subtle] (*sukhuma*) (*kabalīkāro āhāro olāriko vā sukhumo vā*), where “gross” refers to the solid food, such as those of human beings, and “fine” or “subtle” to that of the sense-world divine beings. The beings of higher worlds do not partake of any such food.

6.2.2. Contact as food

In the mental body, contact is the special condition for feeling, and contact as food brings forth the three kinds of feelings, pleasurable, painful and neutral.³³ Contact or sense-impression occurs because we have a physical body nourished by food, “made consisting of the four great elements, procreated by mother and father, nourished on boiled rice and porridge.”

In Buddhist psychological terms, this body comprises of the six sense-faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind), which in conjunction with their respective sense-objects and sense-consciousness, result in sense-contact (*phassa*), from which arises feeling (*vedanā*), which refers to the hedonic tone or affective value of the resultant experience. For example, the meeting of eye, form, and eye-consciousness is called contact.³⁴

³² D. I. 34.

³³ Abhs. p. 275.

³⁴ M. I. 111: *Cakkhuñ-c’ āvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam, tiṇṇam saṅgati phasso.*



Contact, according to dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda), is the principle condition for feeling. Feeling and perception are inseparable.³⁵ Hence, contact produces feelings.

6.2. 3. Mental volition as food

Mental volition is the special condition for consciousness, and mental volition as food produces the three kinds of existence, that is, the sense-world, the form world, and the formless world. The Commentary says that manosañcetanā is identical with cetanā (volition), and here refers to kammic volition (see chapter 4).³⁶ As noted by Gethin, cetanā is closely related to saṅkhāra:³⁷

“The nikāyas define saṅkhāras primarily in terms of will or volition (cetanā); they also describe them as putting together (abhisāṅkharonti) each of the khandhas in turn into something that is put-together (saṅkhata). In this way saṅkhāras are presented as conditioning factors conceived of as active volitional forces. Cetanā is, of course, understood as kamma on the mental level,...”

The formations aggregate (saṅkhārakkhandha) is a comprehensive group comprising a number of volition factors. The most important is volition (cetanā),³⁸ the mental factor that causes us to act by way of body and speech. Mental formations do not include feeling (which forms its own aggregate) but

³⁵ E. g. *Mahānidāna Sutta* (D. II. 55 ff); *Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta* (M. I. 46 ff) & *Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅga Sutta* (S. II. 2 ff).

³⁶ S. II. 36, 57, III. 102; A. III. 415. According to *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, there are connection between phassa and kamma. The Sutta point out that phassa is the cause of kamma (phassa bhikkhave kammānaṃ nidānasambhavo...phassanirodho bhikkhave kammanirodho).

³⁷ Gethin (1985), p. 37.

³⁸ For more details on this topic, see Nalini Devdas (1st ed 2008), *Cetanā and the Dynamics of Volition in Theravāda Buddhism*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass).



includes all the different desires and emotions, including the wholesome and unwholesome roots. They are the psychological roots of unwholesome actions (greed, hatred and delusion), and the roots of wholesome actions (charity, loving-kindness and wisdom). As the second factor of dependent arising, *saṅkhārā* are kammically active volitions responsible, in conjunction with ignorance and craving, for producing rebirth and clinging on to the wheel of existence.

6.2. 4. Consciousness as food

Consciousness is the special condition for name-and-form, and consciousness as food produces name-and-form on the occasion of rebirth. The relationship between consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*), and this relationship is the heart of dependent arising.

When name-and-form is correlated with the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), form is identified with aggregates of physical form (*rūpa*), and name with the three aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and mental formations (*saṅkhāra*). Consciousness (*viññāṇa*), although inseparably linked with the three mental aggregates, is not included here as it is the condition for name-and-form. Hence, the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya* gives this definition of name-and-form:³⁹

“And what, bhikkhus, is name-and-form? Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention. This is called name. And the four great elements and the material form derived from the four great elements. This is

called form. Thus this is name and this is form—this is called name-and-form.”

³⁹ S.II. 3-4.



The Mahānidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya explains the connection between consciousness and name-and-form, and how they lead to existence, in this manner:⁴⁰

It is said: “With consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form.” Ānanda, how consciousness conditions name-and-form should be known in this manner:

“If there were no consciousness to descend into a mother’s womb, would name-and-form take shape in the womb?”

“Certainly not, venerable sir.”

“If, after descending into the mother’s womb, the consciousness were to depart, would name-and-form be generated in this state of being here?”

“Certainly not, venerable sir.”

“If the consciousness of a young boy or a young girl were to be cut off, would name-and-form grow, develop and mature?”

“Certainly not, venerable sir.”

“Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition for name-and-form, that is to say, consciousness.”

6.3. The four functions (āhāra kicca)

As regards these four kinds of nutriment, physical food as nutriment accomplishes the function of nutriment by sustaining, contact by contacting (touching), mental volition by accumulating, consciousness by cognizing.

How? Physical food as nutriment, by sustaining, is for the maintenance of beings by maintaining the body. For this

⁴⁰ D.II. 63.



body, though generated by kamma, is sustained by physical food and stands for ten years or a hundred years up to the end of the life-span. Like what? Like a child which, though given birth by the mother, is nurtured by the milk, etc., given to him to drink by the wet-nurse and thus lives long. Also, as a house is supported by a prop. This too has been said (untraced): “Great king, just as, when a house is collapsing, they prop it up with other timber, and that house, being propped up by other timber, does not collapse, so too this body is supported by nutriment, persists in dependence upon nutriment.”

Thus physical food as nutriment accomplishes the function of nutriment by sustaining. Accomplishing it thus, physical food as nutriment becomes a condition for two material continuities, namely, for that originated by nutriment and that kammically acquired. It is a condition for the kamma-born materiality by becoming its preserver. It is a condition for that originated by nutriment by becoming its producer.

Then contact, by contacting the object which is the basis for pleasure, etc., is “for the maintenance of beings” by causing the occurrence of pleasant feeling, etc. Mental volition, accumulating by way of wholesome and unwholesome kamma, is “for the maintenance of beings” because it provides the root of existence. Consciousness, by



cognizing, is “for the maintenance of beings” by causing the occurrence of mentality-materiality.⁴¹

6.4. Suffering is sustained by four kinds of food

The Atthirāga Sutta⁴² is about how our cyclic lives are prolonged, and how the Arahant breaks this cycle. The consciousness of an unawakened person, who is sustained by the four kinds of food, is compared to an artist and his works. The Saṃyutta Nikāya Commentary explains that the painter or artist represents kamma with its adjuncts (craving and ignorance, and time and destination, etc); the panel, wall or canvas represents saṃsāra with its three realms. As the painter creates a figure on the panel, even so kamma creates a form in the three realms of existence. As the figure created by an unskilled painter is ugly, deformed and disagreeable, even so the kamma created with a mind dissociated from wisdom gives rise to an ugly, deformed and disagreeable figure. But as the figure created by a skilled painter is beautiful and well-formed, even so the kamma created with a mind associated with wisdom gives rise to a beautiful and well-formed figure.⁴³

6.5. The Four Similes

6.5.1. The simile of the only son's flesh.

The simile of the only son's flesh is perhaps the grimmest simile in the whole of Pāli literature,⁴⁴ and is especially so

⁴¹ Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 27-8.

⁴² S. II. 101.

⁴³ SA. 2: 114; Cf. MA. 1. 166.

⁴⁴ It is important to remember that the simile of the only son's flesh is only a simile, that, in all its gruesomeness, tries to evoke in us a sense of urgency (saṃvega), and a feeling of spiritual revulsion (nibbidā), so that we will simply let go of our attachments to the world. The practice is never to be taken literally in any sense. In fact, the monastic rules clearly forbid the taking of human flesh. In other words, cannibalism, even in the



form of theophagy (ritual eating of god's body), is totally foreign to and disallowed in early Buddhism.

In ancient religions, there is a close connection between food and death, poignantly expressed in Greek mythology, according to which Demeter is the goddess of corn (that is, food) and of death as well. In the Dionysian tradition, as recorded in the *Bacchae* ("Worshipers of Bacchus," another name for Dionysus), the Athenian playwright Euripides (c. 485-406 BCE) has the prophet Tiresias observe that two indispensable gifts were made by the gods: Demeter gave grain or bread to sustain life, and Dionysus gave wine to make life bearable.

Next came the son of the virgin, Dionysus,

Bringing the counterpart to bread, wine

And the blessings of life's flowing juices.

His blood, the blood of grape,

Lightens the burden of our mortal misery...

It is his blood we pour out

To offer thanks to the gods. And through him,

We are blessed. (*The Bacchae*, trans M. Cacoyannis, 1982: 18).

Based on such sources, Stephen L. Harris declared that "long before Jesus linked wine and bread as part of the Christian liturgy the two tokens of divine favor were associated in the Dionysian tradition." Harris is referring to the Eucharist, as recorded in the Bible, for example:

"And as they ate, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.'"

Others have expanded on Harris's theory by declaring that an idea of theophagy, or at least of feeding on the life-force of a mystical entity, was characteristic of the central rites of some Graeco-Roman and Near-Eastern mystery religions, and claiming that the acts and ordinances of Jesus and his apostles were "memorialized" in that context. According to them, the Eucharist conveyed the purported mystical benefits of flesh-eating and blood-drinking that were proclaimed by the proponents of animal sacrifices and of cannibalism, and can be seen to translate the vestiges of ancient animal sacrifice or ritualistic cannibalism (or both) into our times. (Mark. 14: 22-24; 21st Century King James Bible).



when contrasted with another simile of the only son (*eka putta*) in the (*Karaṇīya*) *Metta Sutta*,⁴⁵ wherein it is said that loving-kindness should be cultivated in the same way “as a mother would guard her own child, her one and only child, with her own life. That being the case, the simile of the only son’s flesh is even more poignant is arousing revulsion (*nibbidā*) towards material food.

On a practical level, the monastic is admonished to use his almsfood in the way that the couple eat their only son’s flesh: without greed or desire, without pickiness, without gorging themselves, without selfishness, without any delusion about what they are eating, without longing to eat such food again, without hoarding, without pride, without disdain, and without quarrelling.⁴⁶

On a spiritual level, that of mindfulness training,⁴⁷ the simile of the only son’s flesh is perfectly understandable: we need a powerful shake to be woken from our soporific dream-

⁴⁵ Khp. 9 = Sn. 1. 8.

⁴⁶ M. I. 10. The *Atthasālinī* explains that that to eat “for amusement” (*davāya*) means eating like actors, acrobats, (or like village boys, Vism. I. 89/31), i. e., they seek food for the sake of dancing, singing, composing songs, eulogizing (understandably, such people also eat in a playful or sporting manner); “for intoxication” (*madāya*) means eating like kings or the kings’ ministers, to swell his pride and manhood; “for adoring” (*maṇḍanāya*) means eating like women like courtesans, who live by physical beauty, or like court ladies, who eat for the sake of an attractive shape and good complexion; “for beautifying” (*vibhūsanāya*) means eating like wrestlers or boxers for the sake of bulky and tough muscles (DhsA. 402 f). See also Vism. I. 89-94/31-33.

⁴⁷ On one occasion the Buddha, observing King Pasenadi Kosala, who came to see him, breathing heavily and puffing after a heavy meal, uttered this stanza:

“If a man be ever mindful,
if he observe moderation in taking food,
His sufferings will be but slight;



he will grow old slowly, preserving his life” (S. I. 81; *Gradual Sayings*, I. p. 108; *Buddhist Legends [Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā]*, III.76 f)

It is recorded that the King, when he heard this stanza, asked his nephew who was with him to memorize it and repeat it regularly at dinner time. This, it is said, helped the King to moderate his eating-habits and maintain his figure and health. This method of treating obesity emphasizes environmental controls, and involves cue suppression, i. e., reciting the verse and preparing and serving only small quantities of food, which was done gradually; and cue strengthening, i. e., the benefits of eating less, visible effects in the king’s appearance. This is very similar to modern psychological treatment of obesity, which utilizes: (1) cue elimination, e. g., restricting all eating activities to one place, (2) cue suppression, and (3) cue strengthening (Stuart, R. B, “*A Three Dimensional Program for the Treatment of Obesity*,” in Coleman J. op. cit. 513.). Kesten present six healing secrets which reveal that food constitutes a six-part gift analogous to dice: socializing, feelings, mindfulness, appreciation, connection, and optimal food. If we accord the “nutritional dice” its merit we shall be rewarded with the healing secrets of food.

These six secrets are:

- (1) The healing secrets of socializing: by uniting with others through food.
- (2) The healing secrets of feelings: by being aware of feelings before, during, and after eating.
- (3) The healing secrets of mindfulness: by bringing moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness of each aspect of our meals.
- (4) The healing secrets of appreciation: by appreciating food and its origins from the heart.
- (5) The healing secrets of connection: by creating a union with Mother Nature by flavoring food with love, and
- (6) The healing secrets of optimal foods: by eating fresh, whole foods in their natural state as often as possible. (Woo, M, *World Beyond World* [Seoul: CHAM Publishing, 2003]), pp. 1-30; Lee, S. D, The Scientific Basis for the Benefits of Meditation on Health. In *Scientific Approach to Buddhist Study—Human Life Science* (III), 2002. <<http://www.forsang.org/021foodnhealth3/e.html>>).



like life driven on by greed, hatred and delusion. A lighter example is found in the Cūḷataṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, where Moggallāna psychically shakes up the celestial Vejayanta mansion in the heaven of the 33 to awaken the gods there to the lesson on spiritual urgency the Buddha has earlier taught them (Rg. I. 139; Yajur. 3. 19).

6.5.2. The simile of the skinless cow

Just as a cow, seeing the danger of being bitten (devoured) by creatures living in the places it might seek refuge in, would not wish to be honoured or venerated, or to have her back cleaned, or to be massaged, or given warm baths, etc.; even so, a monk, seeing the danger from devouring creatures that are mental defilements rooted in food as contact, becomes desireless towards contact in the three planes of existence.

The simile of the cow brings us to a higher, a non-physical level of food, that of food as contact, that is as sense-impressions and feelings, or in a word, excitement. Nyanaponika puts the human craving for this kind of food in this way:⁴⁸

“Though man is amply aware of the host of impressions that cause painful sensations in him, yet he is quite willing to pay that price for his pleasurable experiences, nay, for almost any sort of ‘experiencing’ which he prefers to no sensation at all, unless the pain it causes comes too close to tolerance level. What is at the psychological root of this situation is man’s hunger for ever new experiences. If that hunger is not temporarily but (sic) regularly satisfied, it leaves him empty, starved and helpless. From that comes man’s wish for change and novelty, and his longing for a close contact with life that for its own sake becomes a

⁴⁸ Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 11.



habituation and makes solitude unbearable for most men.”

This simile is quoted in the Brahmadata Theragāthā, where the elder Brahmadata reflects: “when craving for tastes should arise, remember the simile of the child’s flesh.”⁴⁹

6.5.3. The simile of the fiery coal-pit

The fiery coal-pit represents the saṃsāra of the three planes; the man wishing to live, the foolish worldling attached to saṃsāra; the two strong men, whole and unwholesome kamma. When they seize the man by both arms, and drag him towards the pit, this is like the worldling’s accumulation of kamma; for, the accumulated kamma drags along a rebirth. The pain resulting from falling into the coal-pit is like the suffering of saṃsāra.⁵⁰

Nyanaponika reflects on this simile for mental volition, that is, mental kamma, or what drives many of us beyond the “normal” routine of life, to chase the rainbow’s end or to empower ourselves:⁵¹

“The nutriment volitional thought manifests itself in man’s incessant urge to plan and to aspire, to struggle and conquer, to build and to destroy, to do and to undo, to invent and to discover, to form and to transform, to organize and to create. This urge has sent man into the depth of the ocean and into the vastness of space. It has made him the most vicious of predatory animals and also enabled him to reach the lofty heights of a genius of creative art and thought.”

There is one dimension that such adventurous people may fear to tread, perhaps they think it is “unexciting” or

⁴⁹ Thg. VV. 441-6; ThgA. I. 460 ff.

⁵⁰ Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 11.21.

⁵¹ Ibid, 12.



perhaps they fear that they might lose their familiar virtual world—that is, the mental venture into the *inner space* of meditation and mindfulness. This is the only way to escape the fiery coal-pit.

6.5.4. The simile of the punished thief

The Rāja represents kamma; the criminal, the worldling; the three hundred strokes of the spear, rebirth-consciousness. The time that the rajah gives his command is like the time that the worldling is driven towards rebirth by King Kamma. The pain from being struck by the spear is like the resultant suffering in the course of existence once rebirth has taken place.⁵²

6.6. Full understanding

Similarly, each of the four Sutta passages on food ends with the statement that “when material food is fully understood,” a higher understanding arises leading to awakening. The full understanding occurs on the three levels:⁵³

- 1) The full understanding of the known (ñāta pariññā);
- 2) The full understanding by securitization (tīraṇa pariññā); and
- 3) The full understanding as abandonment (pahāna pariññā).

The Sutta Commentary goes on to explain how this occurs (here paraphrased).⁵⁴

- 1) This material food “form with nutritive essence as the eighth” together with its sense-base is to be understood as follows. Food impinges on the tongue-sensitivity (the sense of taste), which is dependent on the four great elements. Thus, food, tongue-sensitivity, and the four elements constitute

⁵² Ibid, 22.

⁵³ A. V. 488 f; S. II. 11-14, 98-104; M. I. 46 ff.

⁵⁴ S. II. 99-100. See Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 19-23.



the form aggregate. The contact pentad (contact, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness) that has arisen in one who discerns this constitutes the four mental aggregates. In brief, these five are name-and-form (nāma-rūpa). Next he seeks out the conditions for these phenomena and sees dependent arising in the direct (arising) and reverse (ending) order. Thus seeing name-and-form as it really is, material food is fully understood by “the full understanding of the known” (ñāta pariññā).

- 2) Next, name-and-form is scrutinized or contemplated in the light of the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, not-self) to that name-and-form, and explore it by way of the seven contemplations (of impermanence, suffering, not-self, revulsion, dispassion, cessation and relinquishment). Thus, food is fully understood by “the full understanding by securitization” (tīraṇa pariññā).
- 3) The attainment of non-return (anāgāmi), which cuts off desire and lust for name-and-form, refers to “the full understanding as abandonment” (pahāna pariññā).

6.6.1. Benefits of understanding “food.”

The Puttamāṃsa Sutta states the following spiritual benefits of understanding the true nature of the four kinds of food, and the following explanations are culled from the Sutta’s Commentary.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Ibid.



6.6.1.1. Lust for the five cords of sensual pleasures is fully understood.

This statement should be understood in the following manner:⁵⁶

1) By way of the one understanding (*eka pariññā*), namely, that it is the craving that arises at any of the five sense-doors;

2) By way of the comprehensive full understanding (*sabba pariññā*), namely, that lust for any of the five cords of sensual pleasure arises even in regard to a single morsel of food placed in the bowl (for, food arouses desire in all the five senses); and

3) By way of the root full understanding (*mūla pariññā*), namely, that food is the root of all the five types of sensual lust, since sensual desire thrives when we are well fed with material food (*kabalīṅkār'āhāra*).

The statement, “there is no fetter by which the noble disciple would be bound”, means that this teaching takes us only as far as the path of non-return (*Anāgāmī*) (see chapter 8).⁵⁷ However, if we develop insight into the five aggregates by way of the same forms, etc., it is possible to apply it as far as Arahant hood.

This should be understood in the same way as for material food, except that contact (*phassa*) is taken as the starting point for the discernment of the five aggregates. When contact is fully understood, the three kinds of feeling are understood because they are rooted in contact and associated with it. This teaching by way of contact as food brings us as far as Arahant hood (see chapter 8).⁵⁸ In Buddha's own words:

⁵⁶ Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 33-37.

⁵⁷ S. II. 99. *Puna imam lokam āgaccheyya*.

⁵⁸ S. II. 99-100. *Natthi kiñci uttarim karaṇīyanti vadāmi*. Cf. M. I. 23: *Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacari yaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāya*. Cf. M. I. 40: *Eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto*



“Bhikkhus, when contact is fully understood, the three kinds of feeling are fully understood. When the three kinds of feeling are fully understood, there is nothing more that the noble disciple needs to do, I say.”⁵⁹

6.6.1.3. The three kinds of craving are fully understood

The three kinds of craving are craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, and craving for non-existence. They are fully understood because craving (*taṇhā*) is the root of mental volition (*mano sañcetanā*). Here this full understanding brings us as far as the realization of Arahant hood, too (see chapter 8). The Commentary says that lust (*rāga*), delight (*nandī*) and greed (*lobha*) are synonyms for craving (*taṇhā*).⁶⁰ *Puttamamsa Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya* adds:

“Bhikkhus, when mental volitions as food is fully understood, the three kinds of craving are fully understood. When the three kinds of craving are understood, there is nothing more that the noble disciple needs to do, I say.”⁶¹

6.6. 1.4. Name-and-form is fully understood

In the last passage of the *Puttamamsa Sutta*, we read: “When the food that is consciousness is fully understood, name-and-form is fully understood. When name-and-form is understood,

viharanto nacirass’ eva yass’ atthāya kulaputtā sammadeva agāasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti tadanuttaraṃ brahmacriyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññāya sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi. Cf. M. I. 4: Khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇa-bhavasamyojano sammadaññā vimutto. Cf. M. I. 167: Akuppā me vimutti, ayam-antimā jāti, natthi dāni punabhavo.

⁵⁹ S. II. 99.

⁶⁰ S. II. 99-100.

⁶¹ S. II. 99.



there is nothing more that the noble disciple needs to do, I say.”⁶² It means that when consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is fully understood, name-and-form is fully understood, because it is rooted in consciousness and arises along with it. By way of consciousness, this teaching brings one as far as Arahant hood, too (see chapter 8).⁶³

6.6. 1. 5. Mindfulness regarding food

In a series of grim, even gruesome, similes, the *Puttamamsa Sutta*⁶⁴ tries to evoke in us the sense of urgency (*saṃvega*), and the feeling of revulsion (*nibbidā*), so that we would simply let go of our attachments to the world. In the first teaching, the Buddha admonishes us that “material food should be seen” as an only son’s flesh. The *Visuddhimagga* explains that material food should be regarded as similar to an only son’s flesh by way of the tenthfold repulsiveness regarding, thus:

- 1) Going (*gamanato*), that is, one has to look for food. In the case of the renunciant, “he has to leave the ascetics’ forest, uncrowded, blissfully secluded, endowed with shade and water, clean, cool and delightful; he has to forsake the noble one’s delight in solitude, and must set out for the village to find food, just as a jackal for the charnel ground.”⁶⁵
- 2) Seeking (*pariyesanato*), that is, the renunciant has to wander “like a destitute man” (*kapaṇa manussena viya*), bowl in hand, bearing the changes in the seasons, and not always receiving almsfood,

⁶² S. II. 100.

⁶³ S. II. 99-100.

⁶⁴ S. II. 97 ff.

⁶⁵ *Vism.* 11. 6-10. Such instructions are for monastic practice, but a lay person may adapt them for his own exercise. On the jackal simile, cf *Chapāṇā Sutta*, S. 4. 198-210.



sometimes even berated, ignored or even chased away.⁶⁶

- 3) Using (paribhogato), that is, the good appearance of the food disappears once it is chewed up in the mouth, becoming “like a dog’s meal in a dog’s trough,” becoming a nauseating mass, which one swallows simply because it is out of sight.⁶⁷
- 4) Secreting (āsayato), that is, swallowed food becomes mixed with secretion, such as bile, phlegm, pus and blood, and the taste become unpleasant accordingly.⁶⁸
- 5) Receptacle (nidhānato), that is, the belly is a receptacle like “a cesspit unwashed” since day one.⁶⁹
- 6) The undigested (aparipakkato), that is, the half-digested food remains for a time in the belly, “smothered by a layer of phlegm, covered with froth and bubbles produced by digestion through being fermented by metabolic heat.”⁷⁰
- 7) The digested (paripakkato), that is, when the food is fully digested it gives off froth and bubbles, turning into dung, like brown clay squeezed in a tube, and into urine filling the bladder.⁷¹
- 8) Fruit (phalato), that is, that the food does to the eater: it brings forth “various dead things” (nānā kuṇapa), such as head hair, body hair, nails, teeth and skin; but when improperly digested (or

⁶⁶ Vism. 11. 11-13.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 11.14-16.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 11.17.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 11. 18.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 11. 19.

⁷¹ Ibid, 11. 20.



uncooked), may bring on various kinds of ailments and diseases.⁷²

- 9) Outflow (nissandato), that is, when swallowed, the food enters by one door, after which it flows out through many, for example, as “eye-dung from the eye, ear-dung from the ear”;⁷³ furthermore, we may eat in company, but the flow in due course flows out as dung, which we excrete alone.⁷⁴
- 10) Smearing (sammakkhanato), that is, when one eats, one soils one’s hands, lips, tongue and palate, and even after washing them, the smell often lingers on; and digested food turns into tartar smearing the teeth, and turns into spittle, phlegm, and so on, into eye-dung, ear-dung, snot, urine, dung, and so on, respectively soiling the eyes, the ears, the nose, and the lower passages, and these soiled doors are never thoroughly clean even though we often wash them everyday.⁷⁵

In the Saṃyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā, a tenth aspect is drop—that of its being “the fruit,” that it, the repulsive parts of the body produced by food.⁷⁶

6.7. The Arising and Cessation of Nutriment

The Moliyaphagguna Sutta is a discourse on how the four foods sustain and proliferates rebirth through dependent arising, and how this cycle is broken through dependent ending. A more elaborate explanation this process, using the simile of seeds, is given in the Bīja Sutta of Saṃyutta

⁷² Ibid, 11. 21.

⁷³ Sn. 197.

⁷⁴ Vism. 11. 22-23.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 11. 6-26.

⁷⁶ SA. 2: 2: 105 f.



Nikāya.⁷⁷ The dependent arising sequence as given in the Moliyaphagguna Sutta begins thus:

“Consciousness as food → future rebirth → the six sense-spheres → contact (sense-stimulation).

Here, “consciousness as food” plays the role of the “consciousness” cause link (nidāna), and this consciousness is defined in the (Paṭiccasamuppāda) Vibhaṅga Sutta as the six types of consciousness, each arising at their respective sense-faculties. Harvey, based on his interpretation of the Bīja Sutta, concludes that consciousness as food.

“Must thus be the equivalent of these (the six sense-faculties), with the root-like discernment (consciousness) of (the Bīja Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya) being a form which does not occur in the processing of sensory or mental objects, just as bhavaṅga does not. The root-like nature of this discernment (consciousness) would also make it like bhavaṅga, for this not only precedes but also makes possible the ‘process of cittas’ which arises in the sensory channels: it is like the root from which they grow.”

The Bhava Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya,⁷⁸ too, compares consciousness to a seed. This distinction is a very important and useful one, and has earlier been pointed out by a number of scholars. The term viññāṇa is used in early Buddhism in at least two important senses, that is, the two basic conscious processes—namely, the functions of dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda)—discovered by the Buddha, that is, as cognitive consciousness and as existential consciousness. The first—cognitive consciousness—centering around viññāṇa and nāma-rūpa, shows how our senses work and how our lives are

⁷⁷ S. III. 54 ff; Cf. A. V. 212 f.

⁷⁸ A. I. 223 ff.



sustained down to the moment. The second function of dependent arising—that of existential consciousness—centering around *taṇhā* (craving) and *upādāna* (clinging or fuel), is to show the true nature of what we call an “individual,” going through various lives, and it shows this by stating that consciousness arises conditioned by ignorance and formations. In simple terms, the former is our present-life flow of consciousness, while the latter is the rebirth-consciousness.

The Commentary explains that the name *Moliya* was given to Phagguna in lay life because he wore his hair in a huge topnot (*moḷi* or *cūḷa*), and the nickname remained with him after he joined the order. The *Kakacūpama Sutta* opens with the Buddha admonishing him for being excessively socializing with the nuns. The *Kaḷāra Sutta* records that the Kshatriya *Kaḷāra* reports to *Sāriputta* that *Moliyaphagguna* had returned to the lay life.

Throughout the *Sutta*, Phagguna only asks the Buddha the following questions: “...who consumes...?”; “...who touches?”; “who feels?”; “...who craves?”; and “...who clings?”. All these questions are pregnant with an implicit self-view. The Commentary says that Phagguna believed that he understood the three other kinds of food, but as regards consciousness he had conceived the notion that there was a “being” (*satta*) that depends on consciousness as food:

“Why does he omit the other three? Because they are more obvious conditions of effects. He could see anyone one eating food. He could easily understand contact as food, such as, by looking at a partridge, a quail, a peacock, or a hen, being raised by its mother’s contact. And he sees mental volition as food, as when a turtle lays her eggs in the sand above the highwater mark.”⁷⁹

⁷⁹ SA. 2: 29.



He is however unfamiliar with the workings of consciousness, and falls back on his own opinions.

For each of Phagguna's invalid questions, the Buddha rephrases it. Thus, when Phagguna asks, "Who consumes...?" The Buddha rephrases it as "What is the food that is consciousness for?" (*kim paccayā nu kho... phasso ti*). The Commentary explains that this means: "For what state (*katamassa dhammassa*) is consciousness as food a condition (*paccaya*)?"

According to Nyanaponika:⁸⁰

"The term *dhamma*, in the sense of an impersonal factor of existence, is here contrasted with the questioner's assumption of a being or person performing the respective function. By re-formulating the question, the Buddha wants to point out that there is no reason for assuming that the nutriment consciousness 'feeds' or conditions any separate person hovering behind it; but that consciousness constitutes just one link in a chain of processes indicated by the Buddha in the following."

Bodhi adds that in the valid question, *Kissa nu kho...viññāṇ'āhāro ti*, the Buddha replaces the personal pronoun *ko*, "fraught with substantialist connotations," with the impersonal *kissa*, genitive singular of the stem *ki-*,⁸¹ and also the dative of *ko* (who) and *kim* (what, which), but the context requires neuter gender.⁸²

⁸⁰ Nyanaponika Thera 1981: 45.

⁸¹ See Geiger, *Pāli Grammar*, § 111.1. Bodhi adds that "Although all eds read here *kissa nu kho bhante viññāṇ'āhāro*, the sense seems to require that we add *paccayo* at the end. [SA] glosses: *Bhante ayaṃ viññāṇ'āhāro katamassa dhammassa paccayo?* *Paccayo* does in fact occur in the reply."

⁸² See S: W. 2: 9 n 2.



In connection with consciousness as food, the Bhava Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya applies another simile, thus,⁸³

“Kamma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving is the moisture... to become established in a low realm (a middling realm) (a subtle realm). Thus there is the production of further rebirth.”

“This implies,” says Bodhi, “that it is the stream of consciousness coming from the preceding existence, at the moment of conception, the initial rebirth-consciousness, which in turn brings forth (or “nourishes”) the concomitant name-and-form.” As already seen above, the Bīja Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, too, compares consciousness to a seed.⁸⁴

The Buddha patiently corrects Phagguna’s wrong views, explaining the dependent arising formula, two limbs (or connections) at a time, until the limb of existence (bhava). The Commentary at this point asks,

“Why does not the monk continue to ask: ‘who becomes?’ Because as one holding wrong views, he believe that ‘a being become, has come to be,’ and the Buddha’s answer would contradict his belief. Hence, he does not question further. Furthermore, after being contradicted so many times, he is convinced, and the Buddha, too, continued the discourse without a pause to prevent him from asking further invalid questions. The Buddha ends the exposition here, thinking: ‘however much questions, he will not be satisfied. He is just asking empty questions.’”⁸⁵

The Buddha then continues the teaching with dependent ending, beginning thus: “But, Phagguna, with the

⁸³ A. I. 223 f: Kammaṃ khettaṃ viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ taṇhā sineho... hīnāya (majjhimāya) (paṇitāya) dhā-tuyā viññāṇaṃ patiṭṭhitaṃ. Evaṃ āyatim punabbhavābhibbatti hoti.

⁸⁴ S. V. 212 f; III. 54 f.

⁸⁵ SA. 2: 31.



remainderless fading away and cessation of the sixfold sense-base for contact there is the cessation of contact.” The Commentary notes,

“Here the Buddha takes up that very point from where he started the exposition: ‘conditioned by the sixfold sense-base, there is contact,’ and here he now turns round the exposition (to the dependent ending).

In this discourse, there is one link (of cause and fruit) between consciousness and mind-and-form; one link (of fruit and cause) between feeling and craving, and one link (of cause and fruit) between the process of existence and birth.”⁸⁶

The Saṃyutta Sub-Commentary adds here that:

“Since, in the words of the discourse, ‘the food that is consciousness is a condition for the future arising of a renewed existence,’ is taken as a condition in a former existence of a future existence, and as being a principle cause (*mūla kāraṇa*), therefore the Commentary says that ‘there is a link (of cause and fruit) between consciousness and mind-and-form.’ Hence it should be understood that by the term consciousness, also the ‘kamma-forming consciousness (*abhisankhāra viññāṇa*) is implied” (i. e., apart from being resultant rebirth-consciousness).”⁸⁷

In sum, looking back to the Buddha’s similes for the four nutriments, we are struck by the fact that all four evoke pictures of extreme suffering and danger. They depict quite unusual situations of greatest agony. Considering the fact that the daily process of nutrition, physical and mental, is such a very humdrum function in life, those extraordinary similes are very surprising and even deeply disturbing. And they

⁸⁶ SA. 2: 31.

⁸⁷ SAT: Be. 2: 35.



obviously were meant to be disquieting. They are meant to break through the unthinking complacency in which these so common functions of life are performed and viewed: eating, perceiving, willing, and cognizing.

The contemplations on the four nutriments, as presented in these pages, cut at the very roots of the attachment to life. To pursue these contemplations radically and methodically will be a grave step, advisable only for those who are determined to strive for the final cessation of craving and, therefore, are willing to face all consequences which that path of practice may bring for the direction of their present life and thought. In Buddha's own words,⁸⁸

“Monks, when a monk becomes entirely dispassionate towards one thing, when his lust for it entirely fades away, when he is entirely liberated from it, when he sees the complete ending of it, then he is one who, after fully comprehending the Goal, makes an end of suffering here and now.

What one thing? ‘All beings subsist by nutriment.’ When a monk becomes entirely dispassionate towards this one thing (nutriment), when his lust for it entirely fades away, when he is entirely liberated from it, and when he sees the complete ending of it, then, O monks, he is one who, after fully comprehending the Goal, makes an end of suffering here and now.”

This means that the craving for nourishment, when it is finally uprooted, will bring the suffering of existence to an end.

⁸⁸ A. V. 48 f.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Possibility of Development Perfect Personality

Maslow promoted the theory that human beings are born with a will to protect their health, and to tend towards self-actualization.¹ The Buddha had a similar perspective. The Moliyaphagguna Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya² teaches that spiritual development can be attained by all. Nibbāna in this very life is also accessible to laymen, although there are only few examples cited in the scriptures. In the following, we propose to closely examine the operation of this process.

7. 1. Lay Persons on the Path of Awakening

There is a trend amongst some scholars of early Buddhism, especially those before the 21st century, to maintain a sharp distinction between the monastic members and the lay followers. Jeffrey Samuels, in his insightful, remarks says:

“The distinction between these two communities is most often based on their religious activities and obligations. While the monastics are often identified as preservers of Buddhist doctrine and practice, the responsibilities and concerns of the laity are believed to be limited to the accumulation of merit through

¹ Jess Feist & Gregory J. Feist (7th ed 2009), *Theories of Personality* (New Delhi: McGraw-Hill), p. 299.

² S. II. 13-4.



supporting the monastics with food, shelter and clothing.”³

He goes on to give over a page of examples of illustrious scholars who hold similar notions: Nalinaksha Dutt,⁴ Max Weber,⁵ Etienne Lamotte,⁶ Akira Hirakawa,⁷ George Bond,⁸ and Gananath Obeyesekere;⁹ and in his footnotes mentions Edward Conze¹⁰ and Louis de la Vallée Poussin.¹¹

On the other hand, Samuels notes that “While the dominant view of early Buddhism still maintains a sharp distinction between the monastic order and the laity, some scholars have begun to challenge that perception” (1995: 232). Gregory Schopen, for example, in his work on early donative

³ Samuels 1999: 231.

⁴ Nalinaksha Dutt., “Place of Laity in Early Buddhism,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 21: 163, 173, 182 f.

⁵ Max Weber, *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, trans. HH. Gerth and D. Martindale. (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), p. 214.

⁶ Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the origin of the Saka era*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin. (Louvain and Paris: Peeters Press, 1988), p. 62.

⁷ Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sākyamuni to early Mahāyāna*, trans. Paul Groner. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 61 f, 107.

⁸ George Bond (1988), *The Buddhism Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious tradition, reinterpretation and response* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), pp. 23, 25, 27.

⁹ G. Obeyesekere, “Theodicy, Sin and Salvation in a Sociology of Buddhism,” In E Leach (ed), *Dialectic in Practical Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968): 28.

¹⁰ E. Conze (1962), *Buddhist Thought in India: Three phases of Buddhist philosophy* (London: Allen and Unwin), p. 32.

¹¹ L de la Vallée Poussin (1917), *The Way to Nirvana: Six lectures on ancient Buddhism as a discipline of salvation* (Repr Sri Satguru Publications), p. 150 f.



inscriptions in India, questions this view by showing how a significant number of people who had donated to sacred sites and were involved in merit-making activity were monks and nuns, including monks and nuns who were doctrinal specialists. Schopen concludes that:

“None of this accords very well, if at all, with received views on the matter, with the view that maintain that there was a sharp distinction between the kinds of religious activities undertaken by monks and the kinds of religious activities undertaken by laymen, and with the view that cult and religious giving were essentially and overwhelmingly lay concerns in the Indian Buddhist context.”¹²

Further to Samuels’ list, one might add Peter Masefield’s *Divine Revelation in Pāli Buddhism*¹³ which opens with a long chapter on “The Spiritual Division of the Buddhist World”, wherein he has “sought to show that during the Nikāya period the criterion of spirituality was always whether one were a Sāvaka,¹⁴ never whether one were a monk.”¹⁵

In this chapter, I have summarized the salient points of Jeffrey Samuels’ paper, “*Views of householders and lay disciples in the Sutta Piṭaka: A reconsideration of the lay/monastic opposition*”,¹⁶ and also made a note of Bodhi’s

¹² Schopen 1997: 30.

¹³ Peter Masefield (1st ed 1986), *Divine Revelation in Pāli Buddhism* (London: Allen & Unwin), 1-36.

¹⁴ BDic on Sāvaka: “Hearer,” i. e. “Disciple,” refers, in a restricted sense (then mostly ariya-sāvaka, “noble disciple”), only to the 8 kinds of noble disciples (ariya-puggala, qv).” In other words, a Sāvaka is a saint or “noble person” (ariya-puggala): a streamwinner, a once-returner, a non-returner, or an arahant. Such saints can be either ordained or lay.

¹⁵ Peter Masefield 1986: 21.

¹⁶ Jeffrey Samuels, “Views of householders and lay disciples in the Sutta Piṭaka: A reconsideration of the lay/monastic opposition,” *Religion* 29 1999: 231-241. See also G. A. Somaratne, *Intermediate Existence and the*



“The Jhānas and the Lay Disciple.”¹⁷ Samuels endeavours to show that:

“The portrayal of the laity in these early texts is not limited to merely providing the monks and nuns with food, shelter and clothing. Alongside references in the Pāli canon that depict the laity’s primary role as supporters of the monastics are a plethora of references in which householders and lay disciples are portrayed as practitioners of the Buddha’s dhamma, proceeding along on the path of enlightenment.”¹⁸

The central aim of Bodhi’s paper is to discuss “the question whether or not jhāna is necessary to attain the ‘paths and fruits’”¹⁹ in answering the question, Bodhi shows the vital spiritual lives and attainments of the laity that are on par with the monastic saints.

“In pursuing this question I intend to pick up an important but generally neglected clue the suttas lay at our doorstep. This is the fact many of the Buddha’s followers who attained the first three stages of awakening, from stream-entry through non-returning, were lay people.”²⁰

Higher Fetters in the Pāli Nikāyas,” *Journal of the Pāli Text*, Vol. XXV, 1999, pp. 121-54.

¹⁷ Bodhi, “The Jhānas and the Lay Disciple,” in *Buddhist Studies in honour of Professor Lily de Silva*. Ed. P. D. Premasiri. (Peradeniya: University of Peradeniya), 2001: 36-64.

¹⁸ Schopen 1997: 232.

¹⁹ Bodhi 2001: 37.

²⁰ Bodhi 2001: 38; Cf. Schopen 1999: 236 f.



Schopen, however, goes a step further and lists evidence from the suttas “that lay people can achieve the fourth fruit—arahantship.”²¹

7. 2. The Laity’s lack

A close examination of the passages in the Pāli Canon, especially the Sutta and Vinaya, referring to householders and lay people reveal two apparently opposing views:

- 1) That the laity primarily functioned to serve and support the monks and nuns; and
- 2) That the laity were able to progress along the spiritual path by listening to the Dhamma and practicing certain forms of meditation.²²

A classic example of (1) where the laity are monastic supporters, and where the monastic spiritual life (“the fruits of recluseship,” *sāmaññaphala*) is acclaimed as the superior path is found in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*, where it is declared that:

“A householder or householder’s son, hearing the Dhamma, gains faith²³ in the Tathāgata and reflects:

²¹ Schopen 1995: 237.

²² An interesting reading here is Peter Masefield (1986), *Divine Revelation in Pāli Buddhism* (London, George Allen and Unwin).

²³ “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlakasaddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith [M. 2. 170]; (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravatisaddhā*), faith founded on seeing [M. 1. 320]; also called *aveccappasāda* [S. 2. 69]. “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” [V. 2. 243, 3. 163 and Comy]. Gethin speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (E.g. ERE: Faith and Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963: 378): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith in its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards



The household life is stifling, a dusty path.²⁴ The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practice the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell. What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?

So after some time he abandons all his wealth and relatives, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.”²⁵

The last stanza of the Muni Sutta²⁶ clearly declares the disparity between the lay life and the renunciant’s life:

“As a blue-necked crested peacock that goes through the air, attains not to the speed of a swan,
Even so, the householder equals not the monk,
The lonely sage meditating in the forest.”²⁷

The Sutta Nipāta is an exceptional anthology of very early Buddhist texts reflecting an incipient period when the monastic community comprised mostly of wandering ascetics or *eremites*, especially during the first decade of the ministry. Apparently, as the early monastics became more settled as

something or somebody... the conception of saddhā in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001: 207; my emphases).

²⁴ Sambādho gharavāso rajāpatho. There is a wordplay on sambādha, “crowded, stifling, narrow, full of hindrances.” The word sambādha also refers to the male organ (V. 1. 216, 2. 134) or the female organ (V. 4. 259; Sn. 609; J. 1. 61, 4. 260).

²⁵ This passage is stock, found in many places: D. 1. 63, 100, 124, 147, 157, 171, 181, 206, 214, 232, 250; M. 1. 179, 267, 344, 412, 521, 2. 38, 162, 226, 3. 134; S. 2. 219, 5. 350; A. 2. 208. A dramatic example of this attitude is found in *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta*, M. 2. 55-61.

²⁶ Sn. 221.

²⁷ Ibid.



coenobites with the donation of more parks and monasteries to the Order, the lay community grew and teachings were given to them more frequently and in greater depth.²⁸

7.3. Teaching the masses

The Buddha's purpose in arising in this world is to teach the Dhamma for the upliftment and liberation of beings from spiritual ignorance and suffering.²⁹ Contemplating on lotus in a pond, the Buddha notices that some of the lotus buds are still immersed in the muddy waters while others have risen well

²⁸ For a study of the eremite-coenobite (wandering-to-settled life) transition of the early monastics, see S. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), esp, pp. 53-57. (ch 3).

²⁹ This purpose is fully declared in Udumbarika Sīhanāda Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya: "But, Nigrodha, I tell you this: Let an intelligent man come to me, who is honest, trustworthy, upright, and I will instruct him, I will teach him Dhamma. If he practices what he is taught, then, within seven years,... let alone seven years... even in seven days he can attain the goal. Nigrodha, you may think, "The recluse Gotama says this out of desire to win disciples." But you should not think so. Let whoever is your teacher remain as your teacher. Nigrodha, you may think, "The recluse Gotama says this out of desire to make us fall from our rules." ... Let your rules remain as your rules. Nigrodha, you may think, "The recluse Gotama says this out of desire to make us fall from our livelihood... Let your livelihood remain as your livelihood. Nigrodha, you may think, "The recluse Gotama says this with the desire to establish us in the unwholesome things along with teachings considered unwholesome." ... Let what you consider unwholesome continue to be so considered. Nigrodha, you may think, "The recluse Gotama says this with the desire to separate us from the wholesome things along with teachings considered wholesome."... Let what you consider wholesome continue to be so considered—I do not speak for any of these reasons. There are, Nigrodha, unwholesome things that have not been abandoned, defiled, conducive to rebirth, fearful, productive of painful results in future, associated with birth, decay and death. It is for the abandonment of these things that I teach Dhamma. If you practice accordingly, these defiled things will be abandoned... and by your own insight and realization, you will attain the fullness of wisdom." D. 3. 56 f. Cf. V. 1. 20.



above the waters. Still others are obscurely trying to reach the light, close to opening, just floating on the surface. Surveying the world with his divine eye, the Buddha sees that human beings fall into three categories: (1) those who have sunk completely into error, (2) those who have already reached the Truth or are ready for the Truth, and (3) those who still float uncertainly between error and truth.

The first kind of lotus—drowned in the dark and murky waters—represents those with much dust in their eyes, with dull faculties, with bad qualities, difficult to teach, not seeing blame and fear in the otherworld. For such beings, there is little hope, at least for the time being, of bringing them out of the darkness of their ignorance and delusion. They are like the poor field that would be cultivated only after the better ones have been cultivated.

Then there is the second, in-between, group (the lotus bobbing up and down on the water level), hesitating between the true and the false, wavering between good and evil. They would either be saved or be lost, depending on whether or not they hear the Dhamma. To mix the metaphors in a helpful way, we can take this second imagery as referring to the moderate field waiting for cultivation by the wise farmer, and to the rich field, heavy with crop, merely waiting for harvest and celebration.

The third group (the lotuses standing high above the waters and opened in the sunlight) is the best audience since they have good roots, that is, enjoying the fruit of their past good kamma. They are those with very little dust or no dust in their eyes, with keen faculties, with good qualities, easy to teach, seeing blame and fear in the otherworld. This too may refer to the rich field, especially those who at once awaken upon hearing the Teaching.

It is for the sake of the rich field, for the love of the medium fields and not forgetting the poor fields that the



Buddha resolves “to set the Wheel of Truth in motion.” In aspiring to declare the Dhamma to all, the Buddha sees the world as a single mission field, not as an artificially stratified society, divided by race, religion and status.

The Buddha’s decision to openly teach the Dhamma is a revolutionary action in the history of Indian religion, indeed, in the history of religion, making it the world’s first missionary religion. In his book, *Gotama Buddha*, Nakamura remarks:

“In India at that time it was rare for religious teachers to instruct the people at large. Philosophers in the Upaniṣads are depicted as teaching only a limited group of students: their own children or perhaps people with high qualifications.³⁰ It was Gotama who broke down such customary restrictions on teaching; to do so, however, required resolution and courage, which he may have gained by means of such psychological phenomena as quelling Māra and hearing Brahmā’s encouragement.”³¹

7. 4. The parable of the fields

A good teacher knows his students. The Buddha’s remarkable teaching skill is well illustrated in the *Desanā Sutta* of *Samyutta Nikāya*³², where he gives the parable of the fields:

“Now what do you think, headman? Suppose a farmer here has three fields, one excellent, one moderate, and one poor, hard, salty, of bad soil. Now what do you think, headman? When that farmer wants to sow his seeds, which field would he sow first: the excellent field, the moderate field, or the one that is poor...?”

³⁰ Cf. Yājñavalkya (*Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* IV, 3, 33); Satyakāma (*Chāndogyā Up* IV, 10); Raikva (*Chāndogyā Up* IV, 2, 3) Prajāpati (*Chāndogyā Up* VIII, 7 f.); Yama (*Kaṭhā Up* I, 21 f.).

³¹ Nakamura, 2000: 235.

³² S. IV. 314 f.



“The farmer, Lord, wishing to sow his seeds, would first sow the excellent field, and having done so he would sow the moderate one. Having done so, he might or might not sow the field that is poor... Why so? Because in any case it might do for cattle-food.”

“Well, headman, just like the excellent field are my monks and nuns, I teach the Dhamma that is good in its beginning, good in its middle and good in its ending, both in spirit and in letter. I make known to them the holy life that is wholly perfect and pure. Why is that? Because, headman, these people abide with me for their island, with me for their cave and shelter, with me for stronghold, with me for their refuge.”

“Then, headman, just like the moderate field are my laymen followers and laywomen followers, I teach them Dhamma that is good... I make known to them the holy life... Why is that? Because, headman, these people abide with me for their island... for their refuge.”

“Then, headman, just like that field that is poor, hard, salty, of bad soil, are the wandering ascetics and Brahmins that hold other views than mine. To them also I teach Dhamma that is good... I make known to them the holy life... Why so? Because if it be that they understand but a single sentence of it, that would be their benefit and happiness for a long time to come.”³³

The parable of the fields point to effective spiritual management and investment. Those who are able and ready are taught the Dhamma first since they are the best students and heirs of the Dhamma. As such, they are the ones who would propagate the Teaching and ensure its long life and maximum benefit for the world. The secret of the success of

³³ S. 4. 315-317.



the spread of the Buddha word is not by mass evangelism, but rather that the Buddha chooses his audience wisely, giving priority to them according to their readiness (*upanissaya*) to understand what he teaches.

7. 5. The graduated discourses

Although texts like the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* extol renunciation and recluseship, there are many other texts that record teachings appropriate for the laity. The most common of such a teaching is the graduated discourse (*ānupubbīkathā*), that is, “a talk on giving, on moral virtue, on the heavens, on the danger, degradation and impurity in sensual pleasures and the benefits of renunciation.”³⁴ In the *Udāyi Sutta*, the Buddha advises Ānanda that when teaching the laity, the Dhamma teacher should give such a graduated discourse.³⁵

There are also numerous other Pāli suttas dealing with giving and moral virtue taught to lay people. Those suttas that show the importance of giving include the following suttas:

Apaṇṇaka Sutta (M. I. 401 f, I. 403),
Udaya Sutta (S. I. 173 f),
Devahita Sutta (S. I. 174 f),
Aputtaka Sutta (S. I. 89-91),
Puggala Sutta (S. I. 93-96), and
The Aṅguttara Nikāya.³⁶

³⁴ D. I. 148, 2. 41, 43, 44; M. I. 379 f, 2. 145; A. 4. 186, 209. This is the first of the five conditions for a Dhamma teacher, viz: (1) he should teach Dhamma by giving a graduated discourse; (2) he should give a well-reasoned discourse; (3) he should teach out of compassion; (4) he should not teach for the sake of worldly profit; (5) he should teach Dhamma without hurting (*anupahacca*) himself or others (i. e. without exalting himself and belittling others. A. 3. 184.

³⁵ A. 5. 159.

³⁶ E. g. A. II. 65, 391, III. 39, 49, 336, 4. 62, 230.



Those suttas where the Buddha speaks on moral virtue include the following:

Sonadaṇḍa Sutta (D. I. 111-126),
 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (D. II. 72-68),
 Apanṇaka Sutta (M. I. 400-412),
 Pacchābhūmaka Sutta = Asibandhakaputta Sutta (S. 4. 311-314),
 Veḷudvāreyya Sutta (S. 5. 352-356),
 Puggala Sutta (S. I. 93-96),
 Pañcaverabhaya Sutta (S. II. 68-70), and
 The Aṅguttara Nikāya.³⁷

Besides discussing the five precepts, the Buddha also exhorts his lay audience to cultivate the ten wholesome courses of action (dasa kusala kammaṭṭhā),³⁸ for example, in the Mahāvaccagotta Sutta³⁹ and Esukāri Sutta.⁴⁰ The rewards arising from giving and moral virtue not only include a favourable rebirth in the heavens but are also conducive to the attaining of stream-winning, once-return and non-return. Such

³⁷ E. g. A. I. 56, 57, 62, III. 203 ff, 247.

³⁸ The 10 wholesome course of action: (1) having given up killing, he shows compassion to all living beings; (2) having given up taking the not-given, he does not take the not-given by way of theft; (3) having given up sexual misconduct, he does not transgress proper moral conduct; (4) having given up false speech, (5) having given up slander, he speaks words conducive to concord; (6) having given up harsh speech, he speaks words appropriate and pleasant to the masses; (7) having given up frivolous chatter, he speaks at the right time, what is true, connected to the spiritual goal, on the Dhamma, on the Vinaya, words worth treasuring; (8) he is without covetousness; (9) his mind is free from ill will, and (10) he is one of right view, and realizes super-knowledge for himself.

(1)-(3) are bodily actions (kāyakamma); (4)-(7) are verbal actions (vacīkamma); (8)-(10) are mental actions (manokamma). For details, see (Kusalākusala) *Saṅcetanika Sutta*, A. 5. 292-297.

³⁹ M. I. 489 f.

⁴⁰ M. II. 179 f.



ideas are often are often found in the accounts of the Vimānavatthu of the Khuddaka Nikāya.

The full benefit of the graduated discourse is clearly evident in the (Vesālika) Ugga Sutta,⁴¹ where it forms the second of the Vesālī layman Uggā's wonderful marvelous qualities,⁴² of which he himself declares before the Buddha in this lion-roar:

“With a faithful heart, venerable sir, I then waited upon the Blessed One. The Blessed One then gave me a graduated discourse, namely, a talk on generosity [giving], on moral virtue, on the heavens, on the danger, degradation and impurity in sensual pleasures and the benefits of renunciation. When he knew that my mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances,

⁴¹ On Ugga of Vesālī (A. 8. 21) and Ugga of Hatthigāma (A. 8. 22).

⁴² Ugga's 8 remarkable qualities, in brief, are:

- (1) on his first seeing the Buddha, faith arose in him;
- (2) he waited upon the Buddha, full of faith, and on listening to the graduated discourse attained non-return, thereupon taking upon himself the rule of celibacy;
- (3) he released his 4 wives from their marital obligations;
- (4) he distributed his wealth impartially amongst the virtuous;
- (5) he always attended upon a monk with respect;
- (6) he listened with respect to a monk teaching the Dhamma;
- (7) devas would visit him proclaiming the virtue of the Dhamma, and in response to them he shows no arrogance;
- (8) he had abandoned the 5 lower fetters, i. e., he is a non-returner (A. 4. 208-212): cf Uttarā Nandamātā at (9) below.

The 10 fetters are: (1) personality view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), (2) persistent doubt (vicikicchā), (3) attachment to rules and rites (sīlabbataparāmāsa), (4) sensual lust (kāmarāga), (5) repulsion (paṭigha), (6) greed for form existence (rūparāga), (7) greed for formless existence (arūparāga), (8) conceit (māna), (9) restlessness (uddhacca), (10) ignorance (avijjā) [S. 5. 61; A. 5. 17; Vbh. 377]. In some places, no. 5 (paṭigha) is replaced by ill will (vyāpāda). The first 5 are the lower fetters (orambhāgiya), and the rest, the higher fetters (uddhambhāgiya).



uplifted and clear [confident], he expounded to me the Dhamma teaching unique to the Buddha,⁴³ namely, suffering, its arising, its ending, and the path.

Just as a clean cloth, free from any stain, would take dye truly well, even so, while I sat there, the spotless eye of the Dhamma arose in me, thus: ‘All that is subject to arising is subject to ceasing.’⁴⁴

Then, venerable sir, having thus seen the Dhamma, attained to the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma, I crossed beyond doubt, cast off uncertainty, gained fearless confidence, independent of others, dwell in the Teacher’s Teaching.⁴⁵

On that very occasion, I went for refuge to the Buddha, to the Dhamma and to the Saṅgha, and I took upon myself the rules of training with celibacy as the fifth.”⁴⁶

From the Uggā Sutta,⁴⁷ it is clear that the Buddha also teaches the four noble truths to the laity. This same conversion process is found in the following lay disciples:

Pokkharasāti in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta (D. I. 110);
Kūṭadanta in the Kūṭadanta Sutta (D. I. 148);
Upāli in the Upāli Sutta 9 (M. I. 379 f);
Brahmāyu in the Brahmāyu Sutta (M. II. 145), and
General Sīha in the Sīha Sutta (A. 4. 186).

⁴³ “The Dhamma teaching unique to the Buddha” (sāmukkaṃsikā dhammadesanā). Sāmukkaṃsikā, lit “originally discovered (by the Buddha).”

⁴⁴ This is stock passage referring to the attainment of Stream-winning (DA. I. 278; MA. III. 92; AA. 4. 102; UdA. 283; ThgA. I. 235).

⁴⁵ Up to this point, as at D. I. 148, II. 41, 43, 44; M. I. 379 f, II. 145; A. 4. 186, 209.

⁴⁶ A. 4. 209 f.

⁴⁷ A. 4. 209 f.



In the Mahāpadāna Sutta,⁴⁸ the Buddha of the past, Vipassī, similarly converts the laymen, prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa the chaplain's son,⁴⁹ and a congregation of 84,000.⁵⁰

The Yakkha Saṃyutta has an interesting sutta that relates how non-humans can become stream-winners. The Punabbasu Sutta⁵¹ is about a Yakkhini (or ogress) Punabbasumātā⁵² and her son Punabbasu both became stream-winners merely by listening to the Buddha expounding on the four noble truths.⁵³

7. 6. Beyond the graduated discourses

While it is true that generosity, moral virtues and other topics of the graduated discourse are commonly taught to lay people, there are also many instances in the suttas where they receive the same profound discourses as monastics do. In the Maṇḍapeyya Kathā⁵⁴ of the Paṭisambhidāmagga of the Khuddaka Nikāya, the recipients of “the fine extract of the teaching” (maṇḍadesanā), that is, the 37 factors of awakening,⁵⁵ are the monks, the nuns, the male lay followers, female followers, deities, humans and others.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ D. Sutta No. 14.

⁴⁹ D. II. 41.

⁵⁰ D. II. 43.

⁵¹ S. Sutta. No. 10. 7.

⁵² The Dīgha Comy says that she was a peta “with a celestial mansion” (vemānikapeta) [DA. 509].

⁵³ S. I. 210; SA. I. 311.

⁵⁴ Pm. 10. 4.

⁵⁵ Bodhipakkhiyadhammā. The 37 factors of awakening are: the 4 foundations of mindfulness, the 4 right efforts, the 4 roads to spiritual power, the 5 spiritual faculties, the 5 spiritual powers, the 7 awakening factors, the noble eightfold path (Vbh. 249). Here, the Paṭisambhidāmagga passage has the 4 noble truths at the head of the list.

⁵⁶ Pm. II. 86/10. 3-4.



Similarly, in the Nagara Sutta,⁵⁷ the Buddha, after expounding insight into dependent arising (paṭiccasamuppāda) and the eightfold path, concludes by declaring that this “ancient path” (the noble eightfold path) discovered and traveled by the Buddha has been explained to the monks, the nuns, the male lay followers and female lay followers and that “this holy life has become successful and prosperous, widespread, popular, reached the masses, well proclaimed amongst devas and humans.”⁵⁸

The Acchariya Sutta⁵⁹ makes an important statement on the ability of all the four companies to overcome their defilements and spiritually change through hearing the Dhamma:

“There are people who delight in attachment (ālayarāma) (to sense-pleasures)...

There are people who delight in conceit (mānārāmā) (in terms of superiority complex, equality complex, inferiority complex)...

There are people who delight in excitement (anupasamarāmā) (lack of mental calm)...

There are people who have fallen into ignorance (avijjāgatā)...

But when the Dhamma is taught by the Tathāgata for the abolition of attachment... conceit... excitement... ignorance, people wish to listen to it, give ear to it, turn their minds to it.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ S. 2. 104 f.

⁵⁸ S. II. 104-107, 5. 262. Idam... brahmacariyaṃ iddhaṃ c’eva phitañ ca vitthāritaṃ ca bahujaññaṃ puthu-bhūtaṃ yāvad eva manussehi supakāsitaṃ.

⁵⁹ A. 4. 128.

⁶⁰ A. II. 131f.



What is even more remarkable is a short discourse, the Rāsiya Sutta,⁶¹ where the Buddha's teaching to Rāsiya the headman is practically identical to the opening section of the first discourse, the Dhammacakkappavattana sutta,⁶² that is, the avoiding of the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification for the middle way, and the noble eightfold path. At the end of the long anthology of teachings given to Rāsiya, he takes refuge in the Three Jewels without any mention of his attainment.⁶³

A number of other lay followers were taught advanced topics such as the five aggregates, not-self and even dependent arising. The Nakulapitā Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya records how when the old and infirm Nakulapitā asks the Buddha for a brief teaching, he is admonished thus: "My body may be sick but my mind will not be sick." Later, Sāriputta elaborates this terse teaching in terms of the five aggregates, that is, one should not think that "I am" any of them or that any of them is "mine."⁶⁴ Similarly, the Soṇa Sutta⁶⁵ records how the Buddha teaches Soṇa the householder's son of Rājagaha, not to harbour conceit on the basis of the five aggregates.⁶⁶

Moliyaphagguna Sutta:⁶⁷ to Phagguna (who wears a top-knot) on the four kinds of food (āhāra) in connection with dependent arising; Acelakassapa Sutta:⁶⁸ to the naked ascetic Kassapa on suffering and the middle way in connection with dependent arising; in due course, he joins the Order and becomes an Arahant. Timbaruka Sutta:⁶⁹ to the wanderer

⁶¹ S. IV. 234 f.

⁶² S. V. 421.

⁶³ S. 4. 330 f.

⁶⁴ S. 3. 1-5.

⁶⁵ S. 3. 48 f.

⁶⁶ S. 3. 48-50.

⁶⁷ S. II. 12-14.

⁶⁸ S. II. 18-22.

⁶⁹ S. II. 22-23.



Timbaruka on the arising of pleasure and pain. Pañcabherabhaya Sutta:⁷⁰ to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder on the five things that are hated and feared (that is, the pains that follow one here and hereafter due to transgression of the precepts) and on the limbs of stream-winning,⁷¹ and closing with an exposition of dependent arising. Aññatra Brāhmaṇa Sutta:⁷² on who feels the result of an action, the answer of dependent arising. (Sabba) Jāṇussoṇī Sutta:⁷³ on whether “all” exists or not, answered by way of dependent arising. Lokāyatika Sutta:⁷⁴ a materialist (lokāyatika) questions the Buddha on the nature of existence, the answer of which is given by way of dependent arising. In all these cases, except that of Acela Kassapa (who becomes an Arahant), the interlocutors take refuge at the end of the discourse.

7. 7. The lay follower as meditator

All the important suttas on meditation such as the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna,⁷⁵ the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta⁷⁶ and the Ānāpānasati Sutta⁷⁷ are addressed to monks. Understandably, this is because they were the ones who were close to the Buddha or the best field for sowing the Dhamma seeds. It is interesting to note that the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (and the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta), along with other profound suttas, such as the Mahā

⁷⁰ S. II. 68-71.

⁷¹ “The limbs of stream-winning” (sotāpannassa aṅgāni) [D. III. 227], i. e., the qualities of one who has attained stream-winning, namely, wise faith in the Buddha, in the Dhamma, in the Saṅgha, and “the virtues dear to the noble ones.” For a shorter statement on the limbs of a streamwinner, see Ogadha Sutta (S. 5. 343 f).

⁷² S. II. 75 f.

⁷³ S. II. 76 f.

⁷⁴ S. II. 77.

⁷⁵ D. Sutta No. 22.

⁷⁶ M. Sutta No. 10.

⁷⁷ M. Sutta No. 118.



Nidāna Sutta⁷⁸ and the Āneñjasappāya Sutta,⁷⁹ are all taught in the park outside the town of Kammāsadamma of the Kuru tribe. Buddhaghosa says that the people there were of great wisdom and the food there was nutritious, and as a compliment to these virtues, the Buddha delivered these discourses there.⁸⁰

The cultivation of the four focuses of mindfulness (cattāro satipaṭṭhānā) is often associated with monastics. However, there are a number of passages that show lay people practicing it.⁸¹ In the Kandaraka Sutta,⁸² for example, the Buddha points out to Kandaraka the wanderer and Pessa the elephant trainer's son that the monks dwell practicing the four focuses of mindfulness.⁸³ Pessa then declares:

⁷⁸ M. Sutta No. 15; S. 2. 92 f.

⁷⁹ M. Sutta No. 106.

⁸⁰ SA. II. 89. It should be noted that although the suttas generally depict the Buddha as addressing monks, it is highly probable that nuns, laymen, and laywomen are also present in the congregation. Otherwise, other members of the audience (if any) are not mentioned, unlike in the Mahāyāna sutras where the audience is often mentioned in some detail, e. g., "Thus have I heard. Once the Buddha was staying on Gṛdhrakūṭa near Rājagṛha with a large assembly of monks number twelve thousand. There were 80,000 bodhisattvas-mahāsattvas. Besides all the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, there were gods, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras and mahoragas. There were great wheel-turning monarchs, lesser wheel-turning monarchs, and kings of the gold wheel, of the silver wheel, and other wheels. And also kings and princes, ministers and people, men and women, and the fabulously wealthy, each surrounded by a 100,000 myriad followers..." (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, ch. 1).

⁸¹ The so-called Satipaṭṭhāna method of meditation is commonly taught to lay Buddhists of the Theravāda even today, esp following the Myanmar teachers.

⁸² M. Sutta No. 51.

⁸³ Satipaṭṭhāna is best resolved as sati + upaṭṭhāna (lit "placed near"), following the old Skt name Smṛty-upasthāna Sūtra. The Pāli sati originally means "memory," but in Buddhist usage, also denotes "present awareness." TW Rhys Davids brilliantly renders it as "mindfulness" (1910) which has stuck ever since (D: RD 2: 327 et al & Introd). The Skt



“It is wonderful, venerable sir! It is marvelous, venerable sir! How well these four focusses of mindfulness have been made known by the Blessed One for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of physical and mental pain, for gaining right way, for the realization of nibbāna.

From time to time, venerable sir, we, the white-clad lay people, too, dwell with our minds well established in these four focusses of mindfulness.

Here, venerable sir, having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, we dwell exertive, fully aware, mindful, contemplating the body in the body... feeling in the feelings... the mind in the mind... mind-objects in the mind-object.”⁸⁴

Besides this passage, there are others showing that lay disciples who are skilled in the attaining of jhāna. In the Mahā Sudassana Sutta,⁸⁵ king Sudassana (the Buddha’s past life as a king ruling from the city of Kusāvatī),⁸⁶ could not only attain the four jhānas but also dwell in the four divine abodes

smṛti adopted by BHS is used in brahminical religion and philosophy to mean “oral tradition.” DA explains the connection of the four focusses of mindfulness to the five aggregates as follows: the contemplation of body is concerned with the aggregate of form (rūpakkhandha); the contemplation of feelings is concerned with the aggregate of feeling (vedanākkhandha); the contemplation on mind is concerned with aggregate of consciousness (viññāṇakkhandha); and the contemplation of mind-objects is concerned with the aggregates of perception (saññākkhandha) and of mental formations (saṅkhārakkhandha).

⁸⁴ M. I. 345.

⁸⁵ D. Sutta No. 17.

⁸⁶ Kusāvatī, the royal city of Mahā Sudassana, was the ancient name of Kusinārā (D. II. 146).



(brahmavihāra) of lovingkindness, compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity.⁸⁷

In the Acela Sutta,⁸⁸ when Acela Kassapa (the naked ascetic) tells his friend Citta the householder that in his 30 years as a naked ascetic he has not gained any spiritual attainment, Citta replies that in his 30 years as a lay disciple, he is able to enter into the four jhānas and to remain above sensual lust—in fact, he is a non-returner.⁸⁹

In the Nandamātā Sutta,⁹⁰ Uttarā Nandamātā declares to Sāriputta the seven marvels⁹¹ that comprise her spiritual attainments. Of these, the last two are most significant, namely, that she could abide in the four jhānas for as long as she wishes, and that she has overcome the five lower fetters, that is, she is a non-returner.⁹²

One of the interesting records of a layman's experience of jhāna is found in the Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa Sutta.⁹³ The Buddha, by way of a catechism, instructs the Brahmin

⁸⁷ D. II. 186.

⁸⁸ S. 2. 18 f.

⁸⁹ S. 4. 300-302.

⁹⁰ A. IV. 63 ff.

⁹¹ The 7 marvels of Uttarā Nandamātā are:

- (1) that she could communicate with powerful devas (such as Vessavaṇa);
- (2) that she remained mentally undisturbed when the king slew her only son Nanda;
- (3) that when her late husband, reborn as a yakka, appeared in true form before her, she remained mentally undisturbed;
- (4) that from the day she married her husband she never had any evil thought against him, much less evil deeds;
- (5) that from the day she professed to be a lay disciple, she never had intentionally broken any precept;
- (6) that she could abide in the 4 jhānas for as long as she wished;
- (7) that she had overcome the 5 lower fetters, i. e., she had become a non-returner: cf Uggā (5) above.

⁹² A. 4. 66 f.

⁹³ S. V. 271 f.



Uṇṇābha on the five physical sense-faculties and the purpose of mindfulness.⁹⁴ In due course, the sutta giving no details of any meditation instruction, the Buddha declares of Uṇṇābha:

“So, too, monks, the Brahmin Uṇṇābha has gained faith in the Tathāgata that is settled, deeply rooted, established, firm. It cannot be removed by any ascetic or Brahmin or deva or māra or brahmā or by anyone in the world. If, monks, the Brahmin Uṇṇābha were to die at this time, there is no fetter bound by which he might again come to this world.”⁹⁵

The last sentence is the usual way of declaring one to be a non-returner. Strangely, however, the Commentary says that this was stated to indicate that he stood in the position of a “jhāna non-returner,” meaning that he was a streamwinner who had abandoned the five mental hindrances by the first jhāna. If he were to die without having fallen from jhāna, he would be reborn in a higher world and attain final nibbāna there. If he were to be the jhāna, his destiny would be undetermined. However, he did not lose it; so his destiny was determined. As such, the Buddha made this declaration to point out that he was a “jhāna non-returner.”⁹⁶

7.8. Laymen and Retreats

The Paṭisambhidāmagga contains a discussion of the “power of the pervasive concentration” (samādhivipphārā iddhi), that

⁹⁴ The same catechism is also found in Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M. I. 295). “Though the five faculties are usually identified with the physical sense organs, here they seem to correspond to the five kinds of sense consciousness, for the physical sense faculties cannot properly be said to experience (paccañubhoti) an objective domain (visaya) or resort (gocara). Their function is only to serve as the media through which consciousness cognizes objects.”

⁹⁵ S. 5. 217-219.

⁹⁶ SA. III. 246.



is, the ability to attain the four form jhānas (rūpajjhāna) and the four formless attainments (arūpasamāpatti).

The Pīti Sutta⁹⁷ is a remarkably warm discourse on the Buddha's exhorting the laity to observe solitary retreat (paviveka), a common practice for the Buddha himself and the monastics. One day when Anāthapiṇḍika comes accompanied by 500 lay disciples to make offerings of the four requisites (robes, almfood, lodging and medicine for the sick), the Buddha compliments them for their devotion and generosity, but advises them also to train themselves in "the joy of solitary retreat" (paviveka pīta). Sāriputta then responds by stating these five benefits of keeping solitary retreat:

- (1) physical pain and mental pain connected with sensual desire do not arise during that time;
- (2) physical pleasure and mental pleasure connected with sensual desire do not arise during that time;
- (3) physical pain and mental pain connected with the unwholesome do not arise during that time;
- (4) physical pleasure and mental pleasure connected with the unwholesome do not arise during that time, and
- (5) physical pain and mental pain connected with the wholesome do not arise during that time.

The Buddha then approves of Sāriputta's word.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ A. 5. 176.

⁹⁸ A. III. 206-208.



7. 9. The Sainthood of the Lay Disciple

7.9.1. Three kinds of lay saints

Ācariya Buddhaghosa says there were 500 lay ānāgamins in Rājagaha.⁹⁹ So far, we have seen that lay followers are able to attain to the spiritual levels of streamwinner, once-returners, and non-returner.¹⁰⁰ These three levels constitute the first three types of saints (ariyā): the streamwinner, the once-returner and the non-returner (in ascending order of spiritual attainment). In the case of the streamwinner, he has uprooted the first three mental fetters (saṃyojanā), namely:

- (1) personality view (sakkāya diṭṭhi),
- (2) spiritual doubt (vicikicchā), and
- (3) attachment to rules and rites (sīlabbataparāmāsa).

The once-returner, too, has destroyed the first three fetter and diminished his unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion. The non-returner has destroyed all the five lower fetters, that is, the first three and:

- (4) sensual lust (kāmarāga), and
- (5) repulsion (paṭigha).

And one becomes an Arahant with the destruction of the five higher fetters, that is:

- (6) greed for form existence (rūparāga),
- (7) greed for formless existence (arūparāga),
- (8) conceit (māna),
- (9) restlessness (uddhacca), and

⁹⁹ DA. III. 833.

¹⁰⁰ Examples of laymen once-returners are Purāṇa, the father of Migasālā, and Isidatta, her uncle, both of whom are reborn in Tusita (A. III. 348). In *Dhammacetiya Sutta* (M. II. 124) and *Thapataya Sutta* (S. 5. 348-352) both are “chamberlains” or keepers of the women’s quarters (thapataya; Skt sthapataya) of king Pasenadī. Comy to *Thapataya Sutta* says that at the time (in the *Thapataya Sutta*) Isidatta was a once-returner, Purāṇa a streamwinner content with his own wife (i. e., one who is chaste but not celibate) [SA. III. 278]. King Suddhodana also became a sakadāgāmī (J. I. 90; cf. DhA. III. 164 f).



(10) ignorance (avijjā).

One then attains final knowledge early in this very life, or if he does not attain final knowledge early in this very life, then he attains final knowledge at the time of death.

The first Arahant is, of course, the Buddha himself, but he is not the only one. This is clearly stated in the *Mahā Vacchagotta Sutta*,¹⁰¹ where the Buddha answers the wanderer Vacchagotta's question:

(a) [Apart from the Blessed One himself,] Vaccha, there are not only one hundred, or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more, monks... far more nuns, my disciples, who, right here and now, having realized for themselves through direct knowledge, after attaining it, dwell in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom¹⁰² that are influx-free (āśava) (that is, they are Arahants).¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ M. Sutta No. 73.

¹⁰² "The influx-free liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom," *anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ*. In the highest sense, "liberation of mind" (*cetovimutti*) refers to the fruition of Arahantship (*arahattaphala*), esp the concentration associated with it. In a more restricted sense, it refers to the jhānic mind in the 4 boundless states (*appamañña*), i. e., the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*). One who is "liberated by wisdom" (*paññāvimutta*) "may not have personally attained the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*), but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed" (M. I. 478). All Arahants are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the 8 liberations (*aṭṭhavimokkha*), which include the 4 formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called "liberated both ways" (*ubhatobhāgavimutta*), i. e., liberated from the physical body by means of the formless jhānas, and from all defilements by the path of Arahantship. Arahants like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are "liberated both ways." The differences between the two types of liberation are given in *Mahānidāna Sutta* (D. II. 70 f) and *Kīṭāgiri Sutta* (M. I. 477 f). See A. I. 60. For full list of the 8 liberations, see *Mahānidāna Sutta* (D. II. 70 f). See also M. III. 103.



- (b) [Apart from the Blessed One, the monks and the nuns,] Vaccha, there are not only one hundred, or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more laymen followers... far more white-clad laywomen followers, leading the holy life who, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, will be reborn spontaneously (reappear as non-returners in *Suddhāvāsa*)¹⁰⁴ and there attain final nibbāna without ever returning from that world.
- (c) [Apart from the Blessed One, the monks, the nuns, the white-clad laymen, and the white-clad laywomen, living the holy life,] Vaccha, there are not only one hundred, or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more white-clad laymen followers,... white-clad laywomen followers, my disciples, enjoying sensual pleasures, the doers of my teaching, the heeders of my advice, crossed over doubt, gone beyond uncertainty, won fearless confidence, who, independent of others, dwell in the Teacher's Teaching (as once-returners and streamwinners).

¹⁰³ *Āsavānaṃ khāyā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭhe'va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharatī ti.* Cf. *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, M. III. 80.

¹⁰⁴ *Suddh'āvāsa* or "pure abodes" are a group of 5 heavens in the formless realm populated only by non-returners, and where they attain Arahant hood and nibbāna. The 5 pure abodes, i. e., their inhabitants and respective lifespans, are: These worlds are *Āviha* ("Non-declining," 1000 MK), *Ātappa* ("Unworried," 2000 MK), *Sudassā* ("Clearly visible," 4000 MK), *Sudassī* ("Clear-visioned," 8000 MK) and *Akaṇiṭṭhā* ("Highest," 16000 MK) [D. III. 237; M. III. 103; Vbh. 425; Pug. 42-46]. MK = *Mahākappa*, that is, a full cycle of a world-period or cycle of the universe (V. III. 4; D. III. 51, 111; It. 99; D. I. 14; A. II. 142).



- (d) [Vacchotta:] “Master’s Teaching, if only Master Gotama were accomplished in this Dhamma, but no monks... no nuns... no laymen living the holy life... no laywomen living the holy life... no laymen enjoying sensual pleasure... no laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures were accomplished in the Dhamma, then the holy life would be deficient in that respect.
- (e) But because there are monks... nuns... laymen living the holy life... laywomen living the holy life... laymen enjoying sensual pleasure... laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures, accomplished in the Dhamma, then the holy life is complete in that respect.
- (f) Master Gotama, just as the river Ganges inclines towards the ocean, slopes towards the ocean, flows into the ocean, merges with the ocean, even so, the Master Gotama’s assembly with its renunciants and householders, inclines towards nibbāna, slopes towards nibbāna, flows towards nibbāna, merges with nibbāna.¹⁰⁵

What is most significant here in regard to lay sainthood is the statement that white-clad male and female lay disciples enjoying sensual pleasures (kāma**bhogī**) are declared to be “the doers of my teaching, the heeders of my advice, crossed over doubt, gone beyond uncertainty, won fearless confidence, who, independent of others, dwell in the Teacher’s Teaching.”¹⁰⁶ This clearly means that the Buddha’s Teaching is not meant merely for monastics and Arahants, but for anyone who is able to follow the Teaching, even if they are those “enjoying sensual pleasures.”

¹⁰⁵ M. I. 492 f.

¹⁰⁶ Sāsanakārā ovādapatikārā tiṇṇavicikicchā vigatakathaṅkathā vesārajappattā aparappaccayā satthusāsane viharanti.



7. 9.2. Why no mention of lay Arahants?

It is also interesting to note that where Arahants are mentioned, no lay disciples are said (in the Mahāvaccagotta Sutta) to have attained to that state. Similarly, the Naḷakapāna Sutta¹⁰⁷ seems to present the idea that only monastics attain Arahamthood. In this sutta, the Buddha points out to Anurudha the states attained by certain deceased disciples. First, the Buddha points out the destinies of the deceased monks and nuns, thus:

- (1) The monk or nun “was established in final knowledge (aññā)” [i. e., become an Arahant].
- (2) He or she, “with the destruction of the five lower fetters, has reappeared spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes) and there will attain final nibbāna without returning from that world” [i. e., become a non-returner].
- (3) He or she, “with the destruction of the five lower fetters and with the diminishing of greed, hate and delusion, has become a once-returner, returning only once to this world,¹⁰⁸ are of liberation, destined for awakening.”

Only statements (2) and (3) are made where the deceased laymen and laywomen are mentioned. In other words, the lay disciples are mentioned only as having become non-returners, once-returners and streamwinners. Similarly, in

¹⁰⁷ M. Sutta No. 68.

¹⁰⁸ M. I. 464-468. Avinīpāta, alt tr “not fated for birth in a suffering state”; opp of vinīpāta, “the world of suffering,” another name for the 4 woeful courses (duggati) or the 4 lower worlds (apāya) [Vism. 13. 92 f]. sometimes the 5 courses (pañcagati) [D. III. 234; A. 11. 68] are mentioned: the hell (niraya), the animal kingdom (tirachānayani), the ghost realm (pittivisaya), the human world (manussa) and the heavenly world (deva). Of these, the first three are woeful, with the asura-demons (asurakāya) as the fourth woeful course. The remaining two are “happy courses” (sugati).



the (Kapilavatthu) Sakka Sutta,¹⁰⁹ the Buddha declares that even if one were to dwell only a night and a day properly observing the precept day (uposatha), one would spend thousands of years of utter happiness, and would become a once-returner or a non-returner, or “with absolute certainty” (apaṇṇakam), become a streamwinner.¹¹⁰

The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta¹¹¹ records that during the Buddha’s last journey, he sojourned at Nādikā. While he was there, Ānanda asks him about the spiritual destiny of various disciples. The list of lay disciples mentioned by the Buddha is as follows:

Non-returners:	The laymen Kakudha, Kālīṅga, Nikāṭa, Kaṭṭissaba, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda and Subhadda amongst a total of over 50 such lay followers.
Once-returners:	The layman Sudatta, amongst a total of over 90 such lay followers.
Stream-winners:	The layman Sujātā, amongst a total of over 500 such lay followers. ¹¹²
The Janavasabha Sutta ¹¹³ mentions:	
Once-returners:	Magadha followers [Number not mentioned].
Streamwinners:	Over 2,400 Magadha followers. ¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ A. V. 86 f.

¹¹⁰ A. 5. 83-86.

¹¹¹ D. Sutta No. 16.

¹¹² D. II. 92-94.

¹¹³ D. Sutta No. 18.

¹¹⁴ D. II. 217 f.



It is interesting that here, too, no lay disciples are mentioned as having attained to Arahantood. Even if such omissions are common throughout the Canon, it is wrong to say that no lay disciples have become Arahants or even that the path of Arahantood is not for the lay disciples: for, as we shall presently see, this is clearly not the case. In other words, such a negative claim is at best based only on an argument from silence. In fact, there are at least two good reasons why the lay Arahant is not given the limelight in the early Canon.

Firstly, as evident from the parable of the fields (3), the Buddha, like a wise farmer, would obviously first attend to the most fertile, namely, the monastics who have dedicated their lives to wisdom and awakening. However, the laity is very close second kind of field which could also give good yield. The second reason, the most vital one, as stated earlier (3), is that *the secret of the success of the spread of the Buddha Dhamma is not that the Buddha preached to the masses, not by mass evangelism, but rather that he chooses his audience wisely, giving priority to them according to their readiness (upanissaya) to understand and practice what he has taught.*

In other words, it would clearly be more advantageous for Buddhism as a missionary religion (that is, conducive for the long life of the Teaching) to have a greater number of enlightened renunciants as fulltime practitioners, exemplars and teachers rather than a big number of lay Arahants who cannot be as committed to spiritual work as the renunciant can. At the end of this study, we shall look at the second reason why lay Arahants are not as numerous as renunciant Arahants.

7.10. Lay Arahants

7.10.1. The Mahāvaccagotta Sutta is not alone in declaring the sainthood of the laity. There are a significant number of suttas that speak of the spiritual attainments of lay disciples.



The Soṇa Sutta,¹¹⁵ for example, records how the Buddha teaches Soṇa the householder's son of Rājagaha, by way of a *Socratic Dialogue*,¹¹⁶ that on the basis of the five aggregates, one should never harbour conceit (māna) by thinking "I am better than..." or "I am equal to (as good as)..." or "I am inferior to..." because the aggregates are all "impermanent, suffering, subject to change." Any kind of aggregate whatever—"whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near"¹¹⁷—all should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus: "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self."¹¹⁸ Such teachings, usually given to monastics, are also here taught to lay

¹¹⁵ S. 3. 48 f.

¹¹⁶ *Socratic dialogue* is a genre of prose literary works developed in Greece at the turn of the fourth century BC, preserved today in the dialogues of Plato and the Socratic works of Xenophon - either dramatic or narrative - in which characters discuss moral and philosophical problems, illustrating a version of the Socratic method. See Jowett, B. M.A. (1911)., *The Dialogues of Plato: Translated into English, with analyses and Introductions*, Vol.I. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).

¹¹⁷ Yam kiñci... atītānāgatapaccupannam ajjhattam vā bahiddhā vā olārikam vā sukhumam vā hīnam vā paṇītam vā yam dūre vā santike vā... (S. 22. 48/III. 47). This classification of the aggregates is explained in detail in Vibhaṅga and briefly in Visuddhimagga: "internal" = physical sense-organs; "external" = physical sense-objects; "gross" = that which impinges (physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire); "subtle" = that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness,, and water); "far" = subtle objects ("difficult to penetrate"); "near" = gross objects ("easy to penetrate") [Vbh 1-13; Vism 14. 73/450 f; Abhs 6.7]. "Whether or not the details of the Vibhaṅga exposition are accepted as valid for the nikāyas, it seem clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each khandha is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy" (Gethin 1986: 41).

¹¹⁸ See *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, Mh. § 6, VV. 38-47.



followers. At the end of the discourse, So□a the householder's son becomes an Arahant.¹¹⁹

In the short (Upāsaka) Mahānāma Sutta,¹²⁰ the Buddha gives one of the most comprehensive definitions of a lay follower (upāsaka), in answer to a question by Mahānāma. A lay follower is:

- (1) one who has gone for refuge (saraṇaṃ gato) in the Three Jewels;
- (2) one who is accomplished in virtue (sīla sampanno), that is, who keeps to the five precepts;
- (3) one who is accomplished in faith (saddhā sampanno), that is, faith in the awakening of the Buddha;
- (4) one who is accomplished in charity (cāga sampanno), and
- (5) one who is accomplished in wisdom (paññā sampanno).¹²¹

The last factor is especially interesting, and is stated here in full thus:

“Here, Mahānāma, a lay follower is wise, possessing wisdom directed to arising and passing away, noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering.”¹²²

“In this passage,” observes Samuels, “there is neither a portrayal of a layperson's life as being replete with hindrances nor an assertion that a lay follower (upāsaka) must become a monastic.”¹²³ In fact, the last passage can be taken as a

¹¹⁹ S. III. 48-50.

¹²⁰ S. V. 395 f.

¹²¹ S. 5. 395.

¹²² S. 5. 395.

¹²³ These 5 qualities are all integral to a lay follower, and they are not separate “types” of lay followers, as Samuels 1999: 237 seems to take them.



definition of awakening (bodhi), that is, the complete destruction of suffering.

7.10.2. Lay Arahants

The names of many lay Arahants are mentioned in the Suttas. The Vajjiyamahita Sutta¹²⁴ records how Vajjiyamāhita, a householder of Campā, a faithful and wise lay follower refutes the wrong views of a group of wanderers that the Buddha is biased against asceticism and is a nihilist. In the Chakka Nipāta (the book of sixes) of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Vajjimāhita is included in the roll of names of lay disciples “have seen the deathless” (amataddasa),¹²⁵ that is, awakened as an Arahant.

The Chakka Nipāta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya has a series of twenty-one suttas called Amataddasa Sutta,¹²⁶ each mentioning a lay disciple “who have seen the deathless” (amataddasa) through having attained the following six virtues:

- (1) wise faith in the Buddha (buddhe aveccappasāda);
- (2) wise faith in the Dhamma (dhamme aveccappasāda);
- (3) wise faith in the Sangha (saṅghe aveccappasāda);
- (4) noble moral virtue (of the saints) (ariya sīla);
- (5) noble wisdom (of the saints) (ariya ñāṇa);
- (6) noble liberation (of the saints) (ariya vimutti).

It is clear that these six virtues are an extended version of the four limbs of streamwinning (sotāpanassa aṅgāni). The full amataddasa list of awakened lay followers thus spiritually endowed (that is, they are Arahants) are as follow:

- (1) Tapussa the householder.
- (2) Bhallika the householder.

¹²⁴ A. 5. 189-192.

¹²⁵ A. III. 451.

¹²⁶ A. III. 451 (new ed).



- (3) Sudatta, that is, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder.¹²⁷
- (4) Citta the householder of Macchikasaṇḍa.
- (5) Hatthaka Ālavaka (of Ālavī).
- (6) Mahānāma the Sakya.
- (7) Ugga the householder of Vesālī.
- (8) Uggata the householder.
- (9) Sūra Ambaṭṭha.
- (10) Jīvaka Komārabhacca (the doctor).
- (11) Nakulapitā the householder.
- (12) Tavakaṇṇika the householder.
- (13) Pūraṇa the householder.
- (14) Isidatta the householder.
- (15) Sandhāna the householder.
- (16) Vijaya the householder.
- (17) Vajjiyamāhita the householder.
- (18) Meṇḍaka the householder.
- (19) Vāseṭṭha the lay disciple.
- (20) Ariṭṭha the lay disciple and
- (21) Sāragga the lay disciple.¹²⁸

In early Buddhism, lay Arahants form an integral part of the noble community of disciples (ariyasāvaka saṅgha), comprising the whole spiritual community of saints who are monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. The Buddha is very clear about his mission from the very start, as evident from this passage in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta¹²⁹ where the Buddha declares that he would not pass away until all the fourfold spiritual assembly of accomplished disciples are established. Such lay saints have practiced the Teaching, mastered and penetrated it, and go on to declare the Dhamma for the benefit

¹²⁷ In *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta*, M. III. 258-263, Anāthapiṇḍika is said to have been reborn in Tusita. It is likely that he attained Arahantship there in due course.

¹²⁸ A. III. 450 f; A. 6. 119-120 (new ed).

¹²⁹ D.II. 112-114.



of others. They have all known the Dhamma and they make the Dhamma known.

7.11. The Gilāyana Sutta

The Gilāyana Sutta¹³⁰ is an important text dealing with lay Arahant hood. Mahānāma the Sakya asks about how a “wise lay follower”¹³¹ should counsel another “wise lay follower” who is seriously ill or dying. The Buddha replies that they should be given the four assurances (assāsaniyā dhammā), that is, the four of stream-winning, namely, wise faith in the Three Jewels and moral virtue praised by the saints. Then he should be instructed to let go of thinking about parents, about wife and children, and about sense-pleasures. He should then let go of even desire for celestial sense-pleasure:

“But, friend, even the Brahmā world is impermanent, uncertain,¹³² trapped in self-identity.”¹³³ Reverened,¹³⁴

¹³⁰ S. V. 408 f.

¹³¹ Sapañña upāsaka, Comy glosses as “a streamwinner” (SA. III. 291). In practice, however, this could refer to any capable person wishing to counsel the sick or dying who has a reasonably clear mind.

¹³² “Uncertain,” adhuva, more usu addhuva, “not fixed, not permanent, uncertain, doubtful.”

¹³³ “Trapped in self-identity,” sakkāya pariyāpanno, lit “included in self-identity”; alt tr “enmeshed in self-identity.” Childers (DPL): “included, contained, belonging to.” As in Sīha Sutta (S. 22. 78) where the devas who regard themselves as permanent, stable and eternal are really “impermanent, unstable, not eternal, trapped in self-identity” (S. III. 85). The Comy there explains the expression as “included within the five aggregates.” Thus when the Buddha teaches them the Dhamma sealed with the three characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, not-self), exposing the faults in the round of existence, the fear of knowledge enters them (SA. II. 288).

¹³⁴ “Reverend,” āyasmā, like bhante (venerable sir), is usu used in addressing monks but is here used for lay followers. The Buddha’s instruction is given in the 3rd person, using āyasmā for the dying “wise lay followers.” However, keeping to modern English idiom, I have rendered it as “reverend, you” as applicable.



it would be good if your mind let go of the Brahmā world and you direct¹³⁵ our mind to the cessation of self-identity.¹³⁶

If he says thus, ‘My mind has turned away from the Brahmā world and is directed to the cessation of self-identity,’—then, Mahanāma, *there is no difference between a lay follower who is thus liberated in mind and a monk who has been liberated in mind for a hundred years,*¹³⁷ that is, there is no difference between the one liberation and the other.”¹³⁸

The closing paragraph is very significant in that, in terms of spiritual liberation, the dying layman who has directed his mind to the cessation of self-identity (becoming one who is liberated in mind) is not different from a monk who has been liberated in mind for a hundred years.” This means that the layman dies an Arahant.

7.12. The fourfold assembly

The possibility of the laity becoming saints, including becoming Arahants, is not an afterthought of the Buddha, nor are lay Arahants some kind of appendage to the monastic Saṅgha of saints. From the very beginning, the Buddha had thought of the lay saints as being part of the fourfold noble community of saints (ariyaśaṅgha). This is clearly evident

¹³⁵ “Direct,” upsaṃharāhi, i. e., “draw or collect (your mind) towards.”

¹³⁶ “Cessation of self-identity,” sakkāyanirodha, i. e., nibbāna. This instruction is to direct the dying person’s mind away from rebirth in the Brahmā world towards the attainment of nibbāna.

¹³⁷ We follow the Thai Pāli here.

¹³⁸ S. 5. 408-410. “Between the one liberation and the other,” vimuttiyā vimuttiṃ, as at A. III. 34 in ref to Arahant hood. Comy says that when one liberation is compared to the other, there is no difference to be found (SA. III. 292). In effect, this is a statement that the dying layman has become an Arahant.



from a number of suttas, such as the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta.¹³⁹ The sutta records that during the Buddha's last days, once when he was alone, Māra, the personification of Death, appeared to him and invited him to pass away. The Buddha replied to Māra in the very same words that he had used when Māra appeared to him under the Goatherd's Banyan Tree during the fifth week after the Awakening (after Brahmā had invited the Buddha to teach the Dhamma)¹⁴⁰ that he will not pass away until there are the fourfold community of saint disciples (sāvaka):

[At the Cāpāla Shrine.]

“Ānanda, once, when I had just attained the supreme self-awakening, I stayed under the Goatherd's Banyan Tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at Uruvelā. Then Māra the Evil One came to me, stood at one side and said: ‘May the Blessed One now attain final nibbāna, may the Well-farer now attain final nibbāna. Now is the time for the Blessed One's final nibbāna.’

Then I said to Māra: ‘Evil One, I will not enter final nibbāna until I have monk disciples¹⁴¹ who are

¹³⁹ M. Sutta No. 16.

¹⁴⁰ See *Sattavassa Sutta*, S. I. 122-124. See also J. I. 78.

¹⁴¹ Bhikkhū... sāvaka, D: W renders this as “monks and disciples,” but it seems out of context. I take it as a tadpuruṣa (P tappurisa cpd: see Warder, *Introduction to Pāli*, 1974: 77 f), or more exactly a “split tadpuruṣa,” i. e., as bhikkhusāvaka, and also bhikkhunīsāvikā, upāsakāsāvakā and upāsikāsāvikā. Following this, EM Hare's alt tr is “till my monks <nuns, laymen, laywomen> shall be disciples...” (A: H. 4. 207 f ad A. 4. 310 f). If we accept Walshe's tr, then “monks” (bhikkhū) here would refer to the “worldings,” that is, those still outside the path to awakening, while “disciples” (sāvaka) refers to those monks on the path, that is, one of the eight types of saints. This categorization similarly applies to the other three pairs of “followers and disciples.” However, I think the context here refers only to the 4 types of noble saints (ariyasāvaka)—i. e., the sainthood of the monastic and the lay—and not to the worldly Saṅgha nor unawakened lay assembly.



accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dhamma, trained in accordance with the Dhamma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dhamma, who will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, make it clear, until they shall be able by means of the Dhamma to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dhamma in all its wonder.”

‘Evil One, I will not enter final nibbāna until I have nun disciples who are accomplished... ‘Evil One, I will not enter final nibbāna until I have laymen disciples who are accomplished... ‘Evil One, I will not enter final nibbāna until I have laywomen disciples who are accomplished, trained, skilled, learned, bearers of the Dhamma, trained in accordance with the Dhamma, correctly trained and walking the path of the Dhamma, who will pass on what they have gained from their Teacher, teach it, declare it, establish it, expound it, analyse it, make it clear, until they shall be able by means of the Dhamma to refute false teachings that have arisen, and teach the Dhamma in all its wonder.’”¹⁴²

Jeffrey Samuels, in his paper, “Views of householders and lay disciples in the Sutta Piṭaka” (1999: 237),¹⁴³ observes that the above passage, found almost verbatim in the *Bhūmicāla Sutta*, adds a crucial term—*pattayogakkhema*¹⁴⁴—to the qualification of the four kinds of disciples, that is:

¹⁴² D. II. 112-114; Cf. D. II. 104-106. “The Dhamma in all its wonders,” *sappāṭihāriya dhamma*.

¹⁴³ Samuels however does not give the reference to *Bhūmicāla Sutta*, A. 4. 310-237.

¹⁴⁴ Yoga here, like ogha (flood), is a syn for āsava, lit “inflow, outflow” and comes from ā-savati “flows towards” (i. e., either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously trans as taints (“deadly



D. 16. 3: viyattā vinītā visāradā bahussutā
dhammadharā...

A. 8. 70: viyattā vinītā visāradā pattayogakkhemā
bahussutā dhammadharā...fully translated, it
reads “accomplished, trained, skilled, attained
to the security from the yoke, learned, bearers
of the Dhamma.” This important phrase, patta
yogakkhema -referring to the attainment to the
perfect peace of nibbāna—is found in the
Bhūmicāla Sutta ¹⁴⁵ but not in the
Mahāparinibbāna Sutta where the identical
passage is found. It is possible that in the
process of the compiling of the Mahāprnibbāna
Sutta, this important reference might have been
omitted (rather than it being added into the
Bhūmicāla Sutta).

7.13. Is one gone forth the foremost in recluseship?

There are a number of other important passages that imply the attainment of nibbāna by the laity. In such passages, we find the interesting term ñāya, which has a range of meanings, as evident from the Pāli-English Dictionary:

- 1) method, truth, system, later = logic:
ñayagantha book on logic (Dāṭhv 3. 41);

taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four āsava: the influx of (1) sense-desire [kāmāsava], (2) desire for eternal existence (bhavāsava), (3) wrong views [diṭṭhāsava], (4) ignorance (avijjāsava) [D. 16. 2. 4; Pm. 1. 442, 561; Dhs §§ 1096-1100; Vbh. § 937]. The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D. III. 216; M. I. 55, III. 41; A. III. 59, 67, 6. 63). The destruction of these āsava is equivalent to Arahant hood.

¹⁴⁵ A. 4. 310 f.



- 2) fitness, right manner, propriety, right conduct, often applied to the “right path” (ariyamagga = ariyañāya, V. I. 10; D. III. 120; S. 5. 19, 141, 167 f, 185; A. II. 95, 5. 194; Dh. I. 249; used in apposition with dhamma and kusala D. II. 151; M. II. 181, 197; is replaced herein by sacca S. I. 240; = nibbāna at Vism. 219, 524; ñāyapaṭipanna, walking in the right path, S. 5. 343; A. II. 56, III. 212, 286, 5. 183.

The Buddhist Dictionary (3rd ed, 1972) adds that ñāya is:

- 3) “right method,” often used as a name for the noble eightfold path, e. g., in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, D. 22; M. 10.
4) Nibbāna (“Nibbāna is called the true way, ñāyo vuccati nibbānaṃ) [Vism 7. 92/219].

The Paṭipadā Sutta (S. 42. 24), example, says:

“Monks, whether for a lay person or for one gone forth, I praise the right way. Whether it is a lay person or one gone forth who is practising rightly, because of undertaking the right way of practice, he attains the true way (ñāya),¹⁴⁶ the wholesome Dhamma. And what, monks, is that right way? It is the noble eightfold path... This, monks, is called the right way.

Monks, whether for a lay person or for one gone forth, I praise the right way. Whether it is a lay person or one gone forth who is practising rightly, because of undertaking the right way of practice, he attains the true way, the wholesome Dhamma.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Although Comy (e. g., SA. II. 73) tries to relate ñāya to ñāṇa, it is actually derived from ni + i.

¹⁴⁷ S. 5. 18 f. Gihino vā’haṃ bhikkhave pabbajitassa vā sammāpaṭipadam vaṇṇemi. Gihi vā bhikkhave pabbajito vā sammāpaṭipanno sammāpaṭipattādhikaraṇhetu ārādhako hoti ñāyaṃ dhammaṃ kusalaṃ.



The Commentary glosses “the true way” (*ñāyaṃ dhammaṃ*) as “the noble path,” i. e., the noble eightfold path (*ariyamagga dhammaṃ*).¹⁴⁸ The *Pañcabherabhaya Sutta* addressed to *Anāthapiṇḍika* on the fruits of streamwinning, defines *ñāya* as “skillful considering of dependent arising (*paṭtaccasamuppāda*).”¹⁴⁹ The Commentary gives both meanings, that is, as “the noble eightfold path” and as “dependent arising”.¹⁵⁰ In other words, in the *Paṭipadā Sutta*, *ñāya* means “the way to *nibbāna*.”

The importance of the *Paṭipadā Sutta*¹⁵¹ is attested by the fact that it is the basis for a “dilemma” in the *Milindapañha*.¹⁵² The gist of the dilemma is given here:

[*Milinda*:]

If, venerable *Nāgasena*, a white-clad householder, enjoying sense-pleasures, dwelling in a lodging crowded with wife and children, accustomed to Benares sandalwood, using garlands, perfumes and unguents, handling gold and silver (money), his hair in a top-knot adorned with a variety of jewels and ornaments, is practising the true way... the energetic action (*tapokamma*) is fruitless, going forth is useless, keeping to the monastic rules of training is fruitless, undertaking the resolve practices (*dhutaṅga*) is vain.

Katamā ca bhikkhave sammāpaṭipadā seyyāthidaṃ sammādiṭṭhi... sammāsamādhī. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave sammāpaṭipadā. Gihino vā'haṃ bhikkhave pabbajitassa vā sammāpaṭipadaṃ vaṇṇemi. Gihi vā bhikkhave pabbajito vā sammāpaṭipanno sammāpaṭipattādhikaraṇahetu ārādhako hoti ñāya dhammaṃ kusalaṃ. (A. I. 69).

¹⁴⁸ SA. III. 132.

¹⁴⁹ S. II. 70.

¹⁵⁰ SA. II. 73.

¹⁵¹ S. 3. 42 f.

¹⁵² Mil. 242-244.



What is the good of building up suffering in these ways? Is not happiness then to be won simply through happiness?

[Nāgasena:]

Going forth, sire, has many special qualities. It is not possible to count them. All that is to be done, sire, by one who has gone forth takes effect quickly and without delay. Why? One who has gone forth has few wishes, aloof, alone, assertive, without desire, homeless, endowed with moral virtue, living an austere life, skilled in the energetic practices.”¹⁵³

These numerous qualities of the renunciant saints are connoted in the parable of “the city of the Dhamma.”¹⁵⁴ But Nāgasena makes no mention of the lay followers’ ability at attaining sainthood. Later on, however, he concedes that the laity can attain nibbāna, but the groundwork has been done in previous lives:

“Those householders, sire, living in a house, enjoying sense-pleasures, who realize the peace and highest goal nibbāna, have all in former births completed the training, and had finished all the stages of the thirteen energetic practices. Their conduct and progress having thus been purified, they now, even as householders, realize the peace and highest goal of nibbāna.”¹⁵⁵

7.14. Destiny of the lay Arahant

In the Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta,¹⁵⁶ when Vacchagotta asks, “Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without

¹⁵³ Mil. 242-244.

¹⁵⁴ Mil. 341-347.

¹⁵⁵ Mil. 352.

¹⁵⁶ M. Sutta No. 71.



abandoning the householder's fetters,¹⁵⁷ when the body has broken up, makes an end of suffering?" The Buddha answers that *there is none*.¹⁵⁸ Here, "householder's fetters" (gihisaṃyojana) refers to attachment to the requisites of a householder (such as land, ornaments, wealth, grain, etc., says the Mahā Tīkā).

The Majjhima Commentary says that even laymen, on becoming Arahants, have destroyed all attachment to worldly things and thus *either went forth as monks or passed away immediately after their attainment* and also mentions Santati the privy councillor, Uggasena the treasurer's son, and the boy Vītasoka as examples of layman Arahants.¹⁵⁹ This point about the lay Arahant's destiny is discussed in the Milindapañha:

"There are two destinies for a householder who has attained Arahant hood: either, that very day, he goes forth or he attains final nibbāna."¹⁶⁰

This well known statement is only found in the Commentaries (e. g., MA. III. 196) but is untraced in the Canon.

The Milindapañha explains that the lay disciple, upon attaining to Arahant hood, either ordains that very day or will enter final nibbāna. This, Nāgasena argues, is not the defect of Arahant hood *but the defect of being a layperson*, just as in the case of someone who has a stomach disorder, "it is not the

¹⁵⁷ The Kathāvatthu says that the householder's fetters are such that one "would indulge in sexual relations, cause sexual relations to arise, indulge in a house crowded with children, seek to enjoy sandalwood from Kāsī, wear garlands, use perfumes and unguents, accept gold and silver (money), acquire goats and sheep, poultry and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares, partridges, quails, peacocks and pheasants, wear attractive turbans, wear white garments with long tunics, be a house-dweller all his life." (Kvu. 267 f).

¹⁵⁸ M. I. 483.

¹⁵⁹ MA. III. 196.

¹⁶⁰ Mil. 264, cf. 164.



defect in the food, but the defect of the stomach.”¹⁶¹ Two famous canonical examples of lay Arahants are Yasa and Dārucīriya. Yasa joined the Order¹⁶² but Bāhiya died shortly after attainment.¹⁶³

My own understanding of this interesting situation—that layman Arahants must join the order or die within a day—is a dramatic way of saying that on ordaining, they are bound by the Vinaya, so that they have to go on almsround, keep healthy, teach the others and be an example to them. In other words, one of the purposes of the Vinaya is that the monastics live on for the sake of the teaching.

7. 15. The monastic-lay divide

Jeffrey Samuels, in his paper, “Views of householders and lay disciples in the Sutta Piṭaka” (1999), tries to show that in the Buddhism of the Buddha’s time, there were almost no difference in the spiritual practices between the monastics and the lay, that the laity attained to sainthood just like the monastics (albeit in lesser but significant number), and that the monastic-lay divide is less distinct then than it is today. He goes on to question the cause of the strong disparity today between the ordained community and the lay followers.

“While these two categories appear distinct and separate to us today, these two categories might have been more indistinct and less meaningful during the period represented in the Pāli canon. For instance, in some of the passages highlighted, the lay community, like the monastic community, is shown to be given profound teachings, to have practiced various forms of

¹⁶¹ Mil. 265.

¹⁶² Vin. I. 17.

¹⁶³ On Yasa, see V. I. 15-20; DhA. I. 72. On Bāhiya Dārucīriya, see U. 1. 10/6-9; Ap. II. 475 ff; AA. I. 282; DhA. II. 209 ff; UA. 77 ff; cf Dh. 142.



Buddhist meditation and to have reached the highest goal of the tradition—enlightenment.

If the two communities are less distinct in the period of the Pāli canon, then it might be fruitful to question when and under what circumstances did the sharp distinction first arise. It is possible that the early centuries of Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its posturing about the superiority of its own path because it includes the laity, may have prompted the Theravāda tradition to define itself against the Mahāyāna school by posturing a distinct opposition between the lay and the monastic communities?”¹⁶⁴

As Samuels himself admits, this question merits a separate in-depth study. However, a few closing remarks here are in order. Historically, it should be noted that the Mahāyāna (which first developed in India, before or around the 2nd century CE) had no contact whatsoever with the Theravāda.¹⁶⁵ As regards the distinct monastic-lay divide existing today, an important reason for it is the strong tendency amongst Buddhists today to be teacher-centred rather than teaching-centred. In other words, most lay Buddhists today are more familiar with the particular (even idiosyncratic) teachings and persons of particular Gurus, Nāyaka Thero, Ajahns, Sayadaws, Sao Sara and teachers rather than with the canonical teachings themselves. While the nominal Buddhist today generally has very little useful knowledge of Buddhist scripture, the lay practitioner has littler more than a pious respect for the Canon, taking their respective gurus as the final spiritual authority.

In the realities of religious economics, there are great advantages in the contemporary monastic-lay divide. The monastics have become religious virtuosi, ritual specialists,

¹⁶⁴ Samuels 1999: 238 f.

¹⁶⁵ See for example Walpola Rahula, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull*, (London: Gordon Fraser), 1978: 72.



entrepreneurs (seṭṭhi) and the new royalty attracting generous donations, high fees and pious perks from a materialistic lay clientele in an urbanized society. Otherwise, the predominant form of Buddhism of a community is often defined by the setthics predominating in that community. In this scenario, where charisma replaces canon, the monk has become priest, and the laity clients.

The Buddha's Teachings began with the awakening of an insightful man in search of spiritual liberation, found it, and who, out of his wisdom and compassion, proclaimed his awakening to the world through a spiritually accomplished community of monastic and lay practitioners. The laity supported the renunciants with their basic supports of almsfood, clothing, shelter and medicine so that the renunciants could devote themselves to speedily win awakening. A significant number of the laity, too, worked towards awakening, even if the majority did good works storing up their merits for a future that would attract more conducive conditions for awakening.

In the final analysis, it is vital to remember that every monastic and saint was a lay person before. The Buddha himself never once said that Arahant hood could be attained only by the renunciant. On the contrary, the *Kathāvatthu*, for example, dealing with the question on whether a layperson may become an Arahant, states that the *Uttarāpathakas* answer affirmatively, mentioning Yasa the layman, Uttiya the householder and Setu the Brahmin youth as examples of lay Arahants,¹⁶⁶ and its Commentary¹⁶⁷ quotes the Buddha word in the *Dhammapada*:

“Though well adorned [finely clad], if he fares in calmness,

¹⁶⁶ Kvu. I. 268.

¹⁶⁷ KvuA. 4. 1/73.



At peace, tamed, self-controlled, living the holy life,
 Having put down the rod towards all beings—
 He is a Brahmin, he is a recluse, he is a monk.¹⁶⁸

Psychologically speaking, there is no distinguish
 between layman and Bhikkhu in terms of spiritual
 development.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Alaṅkato ce pi samam careyya, santo danto niyato brahmcārī, sabbesu
 bhūtesu nidhāya daṇḍam, so brāhmaṇo so samaṇo so bhikkhu. Dh. 142;
 Kvu. 157 f.

¹⁶⁹ E. g., S. IV. 302 ff. Cf. S.I.86, 194.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Perfection of Development of Personality

The Arahant is the prototypic saint and from the perspective of most Western personality theories, seems too good to exist for he or she lacks many characteristics intrinsic in human nature; however, the gradual transformation on the road to Arahantship can be undertaken by anyone as discussed in chapter seven.¹ Rune Johansson states that the idea that Arahantship was a super human degree of perfection is incorrect "... and if we are not mistaken, the idea of an Absolute Ideal is a European invention."² It must be accepted that the Arahant theory which grew and evolved from its early beginnings cannot in its entirety be viable for modern man. It demands too much of an individual and makes hardly any allowances for family and job responsibilities. However some of the facets of this jewel of emancipation can be achieved, for every aspect of life can have a transcendent dimension to it. Man becomes Brahman like as he becomes more developed, and according to the way made possible by practicing the four brahmavihārās.³ This would lead to the ending of psychological states causing greed, hatred, aggression, etc.

¹ A. 5. 159.

² Johansson, R, *The Psychology of Nirvāna*, p. 130.

³ D. I. 250-252.



8.1. How to truly know a person's personality

In the Jaṭila Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya,⁴ there is a record of a conversation held between Buddha and King Pasenadi of Kosala. They are sitting together when some adherents of other sects go by: seven matted hair ascetics, seven Nigaṇṭhas (Jains), seven naked ascetics, seven of the single vestment class (ekasāṭaka), and seven Wanderers. When they have passed, King Pasenadi asks Buddha whether any of them are Arahants or are on the way to Arahantship. The Buddha replies that the character of another can be known thus:

- 1) Through living with another, his moral virtue (sīla) [of body, speech, and mind] is known;
- 2) Through dealings⁵ with another, his honesty (soceyya) is known;
- 3) Through adversities, another's fortitude [strength] (thāma) is known;
- 4) Through discussing with another, his wisdom (paññā) is known.⁶

That is, only through careful observation over time by one who is attentive and wise.⁷

8.2. Types of Saints

The Kīṭāgiri Sutta mentions seven kinds of saints,⁸ but the better known list is that of the eight noble individuals (aṭṭha ariya puggala),⁹ listed here according to their attainment:¹⁰

⁴ S. I. 77 ff = Ud. 65. This passage recurs at A. III. 391, where Buddha, as recorded, tells a householder that it is hard for him, who is a layman, to know who are Arahants, and who are on the way to Arahantship. See also A. IV. 281 for this stock phrase.

⁵ "Dealings," saṃvohāra, or business.

⁶ S. I. 78 f; Ud. 65 f.; discussed in detail in the *Thānāni Sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya*. 4. 192, 2. 187-190.

⁷ S. I. 73 f; Ud. 6. 2/ 65 f; discussed in detail in the *Thānāni Sutta*, A. I I. 187-190.



- 1) The path of stream-winning (sotāpatti magga),
- 2) The fruition of stream-winning (sotāpatti phala),
- 3) The path of once-return (sakadāgāmi magga),
- 4) The fruition of once-return (sakadāgāmi phala),
- 5) The path of non-return (anāgāmi magga),
- 6) The fruition of non-return (anāgāmi phala),
- 7) The path of arahanthood (arahatta magga), and
- 8) The fruition of arahanthood (arahatta phala).

In short, there are four kinds of noble individual: the stream-winner (sotāpanna), the once-returner (sakadāgāmī), the non-returner (anāgāmī) and the arahant (arahata). According to the Abhidhamma, the “path” (magga)-or more fully, the supramundane path (lok’uttara magga)- is a name for the moment of entering into one of the four stages of sainthood, produced by insight wisdom (vipassanā) into the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self of existence.¹¹ The goal here is nibbāna, liberation from suffering.

⁸ This well know list of the 7 holy persons is found elsewhere in the Canon: *Saṅgīti Sutta*, D. 3: 254; *Kūṭāgiri Sutta*, M. 70; *Bhaddāli Sutta*, M. 1: 439 f; *Saviṭṭha Sutta*, A. 1: 118-120; *Āhuneyyā Puggalā Sutta*, A. 4: 10 f. See also Pm. 2: 52; Pug. 10, 30-36, 73; Vism. 659. On (6-7), see Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2001: 128-133, 135-137, 347.

⁹ MA. 1: 167.; ThgA. 206.; Or, more commonly, aṭṭha purisa puggala (D. 2: 94, 3: 5, 227.; M. 1: 37.; S. 1. 220, 2. 69, 4. 272, 304, 5. 429.; A. 1. 208, 222, 2. 34, 56, 3. 36, 212, 286, 4. 407, 5. 183, 330.; It. 88.

¹⁰ In A. 9. 10/4. 373 & 10. 16/5: 23, the lineage-winner (gotra bhū), referring both to the person and to the state (change of lineage), is mentioned as the 9th noble individual. He is one experiencing the lightning-like consciousness between the state of a worldling and that of a stream-winner; def at Pug. 12, 13, and Vism. 138, Pm. 1: 66-68.; also at Tikap. 154 f, 165, 324, etc.; VvA. 155. on the late Abhidhamma use of gotra bhū, see Abhs. 4. 21/114.

¹¹ MA. 3. 269 f; i. e., the four types of saints (streamwinner, once-returner, non-returner and arahant) and their respective two stages of “to be” (path) and “become” (fruit). They are as such called “the eight noble individuals” (aṭṭha ariyapuggalā). D. 3. 255; A. 4. 291; Pug. 73.



By “fruition” (phala) is meant those moments of consciousness that follow immediately as the result of the path, and which in certain circumstances may repeat for innumerable times during one’s life-time.¹² Here are brief definitions of the four noble individuals¹³ in connection with the ten mental fetters (dasa saṃyojanā).

8.2.1. The Stream-winner (Sotāpanna)

The first stage is the Sotāpanna stage of the Stream Winner.¹⁴ A Stream-Winner is no longer a Puthujjana (ordinary being),

¹² For a comprehensive comparative table of “Persons according to strength of *indriyas* in descending order,” see Gethin 2001: 127 (Table 2).

¹³ In the *Itivuttaka* (It. 96), there are only three types mentioned, the Worldling, the Non-returner, and the Arahant. Rhys Davids (PED, sv *anāgāmī*) suggested that it is probable that already in the Nikāya period, the older, wider meaning was falling into disuse. Most of the *Abhidhamma* and the *Aṭṭhakathās*, moreover, deal only with the explanation of the fetters, and ignoring the four stages of sainthood.

¹⁴ According to *Visuddhimagga* (Vism. 19. 27/605) and *Abhidhammāvatāra* (Abhdv. 119), there are two kinds of streamwinner, that is streamwinner and lesser streamwinner (*cūḷa sotāpanna* or *cullaka sotāpanna*). If one thinks that even becoming a streamwinner in this life is difficult, if not impossible, then one could become a “lesser streamwinner”. *Cūḷa-sotāpanna* is the one who possessed the knowledge of purification by crossing beyond doubt (*kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi*) of the seven purifications. The seven purifications (*satta visuddhi*) are: (1) purification of moral virtue [*sīlavisuddhi*], (2) purification of mind [*citta visuddhi*], (3) purification of view [*diṭṭhi visuddhi*], (4) purification by crossing over doubt [*kaṅkhāitarāṇa visuddhi*], (5) purification by the knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path [*maggāmagga ñānadassana visuddhi*], (6) purification by the knowledge and vision of progress [*paṭipadā ñānadassana visuddhi*], and (7) purification by knowledge and vision (*ñānadassana visuddhi*) (M. I. 147-149; Vism. 1-710). The term *cūḷa-sotāpanna* or *cullasotāpanna* is a commentarial one, and is not found in the Canon. However, the notion of a “lesser streamwinner” is found in the *Anicca-cakkhu Sutta* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (S.III. 225). *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (A. I. 233) and *Puggalapaññatti* (Pug. 37-9) also presented another diction among three types of *sotāpanna*. There are (1) “single



but an Ariya or Noble One. This stage results from the elimination of the first three fetters of Self-Illusion, Doubts and Wrongful Rites and Rituals.¹⁵ Each of these fetters addresses the substance of one's thoughts, words and deeds as they reflect the Putthujjana or the ordinary being. Self-Illusion as a concept is a belief in one's self as a permanent unchanging entity. To the individual possessed of the false conviction that they are an unchanging entity, there is no need to change, no concern of difference, no understanding of a reality outside of one's own view. Self-Illusion, also known as Delusion, acts as a foundation whose function is not to support one's perceptions in a manner that is divorced from reality. Self-delusion acts as a fetter in the same manner as the sensation of solid ground masks one's awareness of the molten lava that is hidden beneath. Self-delusion or Delusion of Self (sakkāyadiṭṭhi) is the self universe where one has chosen to exist. As a fetter, self-delusion excludes any possible awareness of true reality. In the presence of self-delusion, the universe is a self-fulfilling prophecy that is continuously strengthened through the simple expedient of compounded experience. Thus, each incident reinforces the self-delusion to make it stronger, harder, and more resistant to removal. Self-delusion becomes the motivational imperative to perceive, decide, and act in ways consistent with the delusion itself.¹⁶

Doubts (vicikicchā) refer to one's response in relationship to having had the truth intrude upon one's self deluded reality. Whether this is as the awareness of expectations having gone awry, or the seemingly inexplicable occurrence of disease or disaster, or the everyday reality that the actions and motivations of others are incomprehensible -

seeded" (ekabīja), (2) "passing from family to family" (kolaṅkola), and (3) one with seven births at the most" (sattakkhattuparama).

¹⁵ Abh. IX, par. 68.

¹⁶ See details in M. Sutta No. 44; S. III. 1 ff; Dhs. 1003.



all of these examples are tied together in one's doubtful response. "It can't be explained," "there's no rhyme or reason," "there are forces beyond anyone's understanding,"—these are the manifestations of doubt that attribute the unexplained to the trash heap of the unexplainable. It constitutes the active attitude of denying all incidents, circumstances, and actions that do not reflect one's own reality. Doubt exists as a firm belief that one's own self delusion is the standard by which one should judge existence and hence, everything not consistent with one's self delusion is to be ignored, distrusted, or actively destroyed. As a fetter, doubt is the motivator for the thoughts, words, and deeds that begin with not noticing, grow to not liking, flower in active avoidance, and is perfected in activities designed to destroy the source of the intrusion. Overcoming this fetter provides the opportunity for decisions founded on a standard other than "this is consistent with me and that is not." It is the opportunity to reassess with greater awareness, to use an alternative standard in place of the deluded standard, and to choose based on wholesomeness over habit.¹⁷

Rites and Rituals (*sīlabbatapāramāsa*) refer to the thoughts, words, and deeds that instead of representing choices that arise from objective assessments and seek to be consistent with wholesome principles are, in fact, manifestations of prepackaged templates that prescribe one's response to all situations. As templates, they have been designed as one's "knee-jerk" reactions to all possible incidents. Just as one regularly responds in anger to any interruption, this response constitutes a rite and a ritual by virtue of its reflexive initiation, its patterned manifestations, and its overall goal to deny or exclude. As a fetter, Rites and Rituals complete the triad of being unaware on the basis of self delusion, of being intolerant on the basis of doubting the truth that is being presented, and

¹⁷ E. g. M. Sutta No. 2; Dhs. 1216; Vism. 471.



now of being rigidly programmed to respond only in certain ways. Its destruction allows for the expression of flexibility and appropriateness that defines upāya—the skill in means to make uniquely wholesome decisions for each and every incident.¹⁸

Overall, the Sotāpanna has worked to eliminate the barriers to further practice. The ordinary being is handicapped by narrowness of view (self-delusion), intolerance of the unexplained (doubt), and a rigidly predictable response to all situations (rites and rituals). For one to enter the stream of consciousness that recognizes the reality of ever-changing states of mind (suffering), that sees each incident as one of endless new opportunities (impermanence), and ultimately acts in order to change and improve one's self (not self)—these three fetters must give way.

A Sotāpanna begins to make the effort to not commit evil.¹⁹ He follows the teaching of the Buddha, Dhamma and the Saṅgha to learn what is wrong and what is right.²⁰ This knowledge is necessary to progress on the path of purity. One can only stop committing evil when one knows what evil is. “A Sotāpanna has unshakable confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Saṅgha. He neither violates the five precepts nor commits the heinous crimes.”²¹ Free from birth in woeful

¹⁸ Vbh. 367. Modern psychology recognizes some sort of “animal” nature in us. This is our tendency (or even instinct)—often enough at any cost—to look for the pleasurable, the beautiful, the permanent and the familiar. We get caught in a cyclic rut of collecting such desirable experiences without really enjoying any of them. Since they are not satisfying, we keep wanting more and more of them! This is the “acquisitive” fetter of sense-desire. The solution here is to live and enjoy the present moment—the now.

¹⁹ S. II. 68; A. IV. 405.

²⁰ See S. II. 68; V. 356-7, 345; & A. IV. 405.

²¹ S. II. 68; A. IV. 405.



states, he is ever destined for enlightenment.”²² The destiny of a Sotāpanna to Nibbāna is not pre-determined or guaranteed as a Sotāpanna must practice to diligently remove all ten fetter to be worthy of Arahantship. “Herein, developing the path of stream-attainment, eradicating false views and doubts, and escaping from going to woeful states, one becomes a Stream-Winner who is born seven times at most.”²³

Because doubts and the practice of wrongful rituals have been eliminated, a Sotāpanna has faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Doubt and confusion are replaced with the faith and equanimity of knowing the ultimate truth. Worries about life and concerns about one’s circumstances disappear because one takes refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Since one has destroyed self-illusion, one realizes that one’s existence is based on dependent origination and the integration of the five aggregates. Existence is explained in the Universal Law of Kamma, so now the Sotāpanna understands cause and effect²⁴ and stops acting out of habit. Habitual thinking are “knee-jerk” reactions that root one in Saṃsāra. The Sotāpanna is the Ariya, Noble One, because “He also has the four limbs of the streamwinner, which are (a) faith in the Buddha, (b) faith in the Dhamma, (c) faith in the Saṅgha, (d) and the virtues. Further, he has some understanding of causality and the causal origin of things.”²⁵

²² S. II. 68; V. 356-7, 345; & A. IV. 405. See also Nārada Thera (rev 1979), *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society), p. 425.

²³ Abh. IX, par. 68; S. II. 70: Khīṇanirayomhi khīṇatiracchānayaniyo khīṇapettivisayo khīṇāpāyadug- gativinipāto sotāpanno ‘ham asmi avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano ti.

²⁴ A. III. 441. See also S. II. 69. Hetu c’assa sudiṭṭho, hetusamuppannā ca dhammā.

²⁵ Nathan Katz, 1982: 86.



The Sotāpanna's understanding of causality pierces through the ordinary ways in the mundane world. Now, the Sotāpanna sees the world based on kamma—the past conditions the present, and the present conditions the future. Rituals become meaningless for they do not address the inner thoughts, specifically the javana thought moments where moral and immoral kamma are determined. To begin to reduce immoral thoughts and to cultivate moral thoughts, the Sotāpanna learns to control his thinking. Without self control, one easily falls back to one's old fetters instead of continuing on the *Path of Purification*. "The Sotāpanna has begun the development of the five faculties which are (1) the controlling power of faith or conviction, (2) the controlling faculty of energy, (3) the controlling power of mindfulness, (4) the controlling power of meditation, (5) and the controlling power of wisdom or insight."²⁶

The controlling power of faith²⁷ or conviction keeps one in line with the Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅga. The path to Nibbāna can be filled with numerous displeasurable experiences. As one feels the result of past kamma, one's faith may be shaken. For example, after the Buddha changed Aṅgulimāla's evil ways of cutting off people's fingers. Aṅgulimāla had to face his weighty kamma. Everywhere he went, people hit him with sticks and threw stones at him. Although he faced much pain, Aṅgulimāla kept his faith in the Dhamma and did not fall back to his evil ways. The power of faith and conviction keeps one steady no matter what kammic fruition develops. Controlling faculty of energy keeps one determined to practice continuously moment to moment even when one feels tired and wants to give up. The fetters can be strong. Much energy is required to overcome them and to prevent their return. The controlling power of

²⁶ Nathan Katz, 1982: 87.

²⁷ S. V. 193-200.



mindfulness helps one to be aware of one's ordinary ways of reacting with unwholesomeness. Mindfulness is the inner awareness which hears one's thoughts especially during the javana phase of the 17 thought moments. The controlling power of meditation helps one untangle the knots of unwholesome thinking. Meditation helps one to eradicate random thinking and to focus the mind to be one-pointed in the state of peaceful equanimity. Lastly, the controlling power of wisdom or insight provides the virtuous view that obliterates ignorance, the original cause of conditioned existence in Saṃsāra. "In the mundane consciousness kamma is predominant, while in the supramundane paññā or wisdom is predominant."²⁸

Once the first three fetters have been destroyed and faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha have been cultivated, the Sotāpanna controls the five faculties to reduce the unwholesomeness from immoral thoughts and actions. Displeasurable vipāka kamma is reduced. Thoughts shift from immoral to moral as the Sotāpanna follows a noble path to Nibbāna. The noble path is described in the Four Noble Truths²⁹ with the Fourth Truth being the Eightfold Noble Path, "The stream represents the Noble Eightfold Path."³⁰ Thus, a stream winner is one who practices the Eightfold Path in one's daily life to do what is right and to not do what is wrong. Right thoughts and right actions come from moral roots which result in pleasurable vipāka kamma. The Sotāpanna enters the stream by taking responsibility for his kamma with the simple formula of "As we sow, we reap somewhere and sometime in this life or in a future birth. What we reap today is what we have sown either in the present or in the past."³¹ The Sotāpanna's efforts

²⁸ Nārada Thera, 1979: 70.

²⁹ S. III 2013.

³⁰ A. II. 89.

³¹ Nārada Thera, 1979: 255.



are to sow only moral seeds that grow and return as good fruitions.

8.2.2. The Once-returner (Sakadāgāmī)

The second stage of once-returner³² is both a level of accomplishment as well as a level of realization. From the standpoint of the ten fetters, the second stage continues the process of removing one's fetters and advancing one towards liberation. In this stage, fetters four and five (sense desires "kāmarāga" and hatred "vyāpāda or paṭigha") are weakened.³³ From the standpoint of realization however, this stage marks beginning efforts to place one's new found flexibility to practical usefulness. Sense desires being actively weakened denote a lessened reliance on ordinary perception and a greater appreciation and acceptance of wider and deeper and hence, truer point of view. Hatred being lessened denotes a diminution of outwardly unwholesome and harmful activities. Based on the foundation of having removed the first three fetters then, this stage begins the process of outwardly expressing the destruction of self-delusion, doubt, and rites and

³² The *Paramatthajotikā*, in its commentary on the *Ratana Sutta*, gives three kinds of once-returners "according as they have attained their fruitions in the Sense World, or in the Form World or in the Formless World" (KhA. 182). And these, in turn, are multiplied by the four kinds of Paths (D. 3. 229), making a total of 24. The *Pāramatthamañjūsā* (the *Visuddhimagga* Sub-Commentary) give five classes of Once-returners, namely: (1) one attaining the state of once-return in this world and passing away into nibbāna in this world, (2) one attaining... in this world and passing away into nibbāna in the heavenly world, (3) one attaining... in the heavenly world and passing away into nibbāna in the heavenly world, (4) one attaining...in this heavenly world and passing away into nibbāna in this world, and (5) one attaining...in this world, is reborn in the heavenly world; on completing the heavenly life-span, gains rebirth in this world where he finally passes away (Visuddhi Ṭīkā 3/655, Thai Ed).

³³ Abh. IX, par. 69.



ritual. Having realized that one is not the center of the universe, alternative ways to look at something become acceptable. Having realized that the unknown can be known through effort and practice, options not previously available are allowable. And having divorced one's self from rigid and stultifying rites and rituals, one's newly chosen activities may now be outwardly expressed. Weakening sense desire allows the cultivation of awareness. Weakening hatred permits loving kindness and compassion to be expressed.

“Developing the path of once-returning, and purifying lust, hatred, and ignorance, one becomes a Once-Returner, returning to this world only once.”³⁴ These two fetters of sense desires and hatred run deep into one's mind and body. Sense desires are ingrained in the body's sense doors and fused together with the mind. Tightly interwoven with mind and body, the fetter of sense desires requires constant effort and practice to reduce.

Hatred is another fetter that requires constant effort and practice because of its explosive and powerful force. Hatred is mean, cruel, and destructive and it prevents any type of loving kindness and compassion. For example, prejudice is a form of hatred based on perceived differences among people. Merely judging another person by their skin colour can lead to hatred. The hatred is manifested instantaneously. Also, hatred can occur in subtle ways such as a disapproving glance of the eyes, a tense movement of the hand, or a tightening of the jaw. These subtle ways all still represent the fetter of hatred.

Because these two fetters are deeply imbedded in one's nature, the stage of Sakadāgāmī is attained by overcoming a major portion of each fetter, but not necessarily the entire fetter. A Sakadāgāmī still slightly harbors thoughts of lust (desire) and anger.³⁵ Sometimes, he is referred to as “Ekabījī”

³⁴ A. I. 233.

³⁵ S. 3. 1 ff; Dhs. 1003. See also M. Sutta No. 44.



which means “one seeder, just one more.”³⁶ One more round of rebirth is necessary to completely eradicate these two fetters.³⁷

8.2.3. The Non-returner (Anāgāmī)

In this third stage of Anāgāmī,³⁸ the practitioner has entirely removed the fourth and fifth fetters of sense desires (kāmarāga) and hatred (paṭigha).³⁹ “Developing the path of never-returning, and totally eradicating sensual desires and hatred, one becomes a Never-Returner, not returning to this (sentient) state.”⁴⁰ Awareness has been expanded sufficiently to avoid the blinding narrowness of a deluded point of view. Compassion and loving kindness have been so consistently expressed that there is only the motivation to express wholesomeness so that thoughts of dislike no longer arise. Moreover, this stage marks one’s liberation from generating new vipāka kamma in the realms of the kāmaloka (sense world). Being no longer bound by one’s limiting sense desires, one is no longer bound by the kamma that is generated through the actions of one’s senses. Being no longer bound by hatred, all actions express one’s depth of compassion and loving kindness. In the absence of both, the vipāka kamma that is the resultant of actions derived from sense desires and hatred is no

³⁶ A. I. 233; Pug. 37-9.

³⁷ Abh. IX, par. 69.

³⁸ The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (A. I. 233; 4. 14, 70, 380; 5. 120) and the *Puggalapaññatti* (Pug. 42-6), however, gives a list of five kinds of anāgāmīs: (1) one who reaches nibbāna within the first half of the life (antarapariniḥṣāyī), (2) one who reaches nibbāna after crossing half the life-time (upahaccapariniḥṣāyī), (3) one who reaches nibbāna without exertion (asaṅkhārapariniḥṣāyī), (4) one who reaches nibbāna with exertion (sasāṅkhārapariniḥṣāyī), and (5) one who goes upstream to the Akaniṭṭha devas (uddhamasoto akaniṭṭhagāmī).

³⁹ S. 3. 1 ff; Dhs. 1003. Abh. IX, par. 70. See also M. Sutta No. 44.

⁴⁰ Abhsv, I, par. 31; Nārada Thera, 1979: 424.



longer created. One is freed from returning to the world of sense desire (kamāloka) and may progress to higher realms or planes of existence.

In this stage, morality (based upon wholesomeness) continues to manifest itself through one's thoughts, words, and deeds. Thought no longer bound by unwholesomeness, one remains bound by moral (wholesome) actions.

The stage of the Anāgāmī emphasizes the point that the fully enlightened being does not act out of a choice between wholesome or unwholesome, but is an individual whose every action is the simple expression of the true nature of reality. Those who achieve this third stage have, through effort and determination, excluded unwholesomeness as a viable option. However, the choice remains to manifest either wholesome or unwholesome actions. Such a choice denotes the practitioner who continues to weigh decisions based on external standards of wholesomeness or unwholesomeness. The fully enlightened individual, a being totally consistent with true reality, is simply manifesting that reality to others. The choice is on how that should be manifest in a given incident, not whether or not it should be made manifest. Thus, though the vipāka kamma of sense desires and hatred are no longer created by decisive kamma, the vipāka kamma of wholesome actions continue to bind one to Saṃsāra. Although the realm that one returns to is beyond the realms of sense desires, one remains within the cycles of birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth.

The Anāgāmī has overcome the first five fetters known as the lower fetters, "thereafter he neither returns to this world nor is he born in the celestial realms, since he has rooted out the desire for sensual gratification. After death he is reborn in the Pure Abodes (Suddhāvāsa), an environment exclusively reserved for Anāgāmīs and Arahants."⁴¹ Although the Anāgāmī no longer creates unwholesome resultant kamma, he

⁴¹ Nārada Thera, 1979: 432.



still creates wholesome resultant kamma or good kamma. He has removed all his immoral thoughts and has replaced them with moral ones. His moral thoughts which produce moral actions and words, still bind him to the higher spheres because he is still not beyond immoral and moral kamma. “While he is not subject to future rebirths in kāmaloṇa (sense sphere), he will still be reborn in one of the higher loka (sphere).”⁴²

8.2.4. The Arahant (Arahata)

The fourth stage of enlightenment is Arahant.⁴³ The word “Arahant” comes from the root (arh), meaning “to be worthy, to deserve.”⁴⁴ This final stage is not attained suddenly or easily for it requires one to walk the path of purification consistently

⁴² Abh. IX, par. 70; Nathan Katz., 1982: 89.

⁴³ The Pāli Canon does not give any other classification as regards the Arahants. Later works like the *Visuddhimagga*, its Sub-commentary (*Paramatthamañjusa*) and the *Paramatthajotikā*, suggest various kinds of Arahants. A twofold classification of Arahants is found in the *Khuddakpāṭha Aṭṭhakathā* and *Visuddhimagga*: (1) the dry insight arahant (sukkhavipassaka), that is, one who, without ever having attained any of the meditation jhānas, has realized by the support of mere insight (vipassanā) one or several of the supermundane paths; (2) the calmness vehicle arahant (samathayānika), that is, one who has not only reached insight but also one or the other of the jhānas (KhA. 178, 183; MA. 3. 209; Vism. 587, 666). The *Visuddhimagga* (Vism. 23: 58) classified Arahants into five categories, namely: (1) one liberated by wisdom (paññāvimutta), (2) one liberated both ways, that is, by wisdom and of the mind (ubhatobhāgavimutta), (3) one with the threefold knowledge (tevijjā), (4) one with the sixfold super-knowledge (chalābhiññā), and (5) one who has attained the analytic skills (paṭisambhidāpatta). Each of these five types of arahants are further divided into sub-categories based on the three doors of deliverances (vimokkhamukkha), namely, the signless (or conditionless) deliverance (animittavimokkha), the directionless (or desireless) deliverances (apaṇihitavimokkha) and voidness deliverance (saññāvimokkha). The explanation of the seven kinds of noble disciples is also found in *Kūṭāgiri Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya* (M. 1. 477 ff).

⁴⁴ Nathan Katz, 1982: 1.



without faltering. The Arahant is the Worthy One because he has annihilated the ten fetters. “Developing the path of the worthy, and totally eradicating all defilements, one becomes a Worthy One, who is free from corruptions, and who is fit to receive the highest offerings in this world.”⁴⁵ Having destroyed the ten fetters and their associated defilements, intoxicants, and cankers, the Arahant is no longer subject to future rebirths. “The Arahant is one who is *parikkhīṇa-bhava-saṃyojano* (has cut off the fetter of rebirth), which is crucial for the Theravāda notion of the Arahant”.⁴⁶ The fetters of rebirth that one must overcome to attain Arahanship are the last five fetters known as the higher fetters that have been destroyed by one who is at the Arahant stage. The five higher fetters are:⁴⁷

6. Attachment to form sphere (*rūparāga*),
7. Attachment to formless sphere (*arūparāga*),
8. Conceit (*māna*),
9. Restlessness (*uddhacca*), and
10. Ignorance (*avijjā*).

The Stream-Winner has removed the fetters of self-delusion, doubt, and an affinity for rites and rituals which, taken together, constitute the barriers to seeing the truth of impermanence. The Once-Returner has weakened and the Never-Returner has eliminated those sense-desires and hatreds that distort perception and morally tainted actions that, taken together, serve to the truth of suffering. While the Arahant has successfully removed those higher fetters that delimit a sense of self from the truth of non-self, in removing the higher fetters of attachment to form and formlessness, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance, one is eliminating that which separates one's conception of self as an entity unto itself. It is similar to a lighthouse believing that it alone is the source of light without

⁴⁵ Nārada Thera, 1979: 424.

⁴⁶ Nathan Katz, 1982: 4.

⁴⁷ S. 3. 1 ff; Dhs. 1003. See also M. Sutta No. 44.



the contribution of the materials that were necessary to build it, the fog and the dark which provide it with purpose, the land on which it stands, and the supplies that are necessary to maintain it. Such a lighthouse, such a concept of self, no matter how beneficial to others remains separated from the interconnectedness of true reality.

One reaches the stage of Arahant when one eliminates the five final fetters. One eliminates attachments to outwardly manifest circumstances by eliminating one's attachment to form and formlessness (fetter 6 and 7). One eliminates a belief in one's self as a separate reality by the elimination of conceit (fetter 8). One eliminates the continuous activity of comparing between one's concept of self and the truth of interconnected reality by the elimination of restlessness (fetter 9). Finally, one eliminates limitations that form a dividing line that separates the concept of self from true reality by eliminating the fetter of ignorance (fetter 10). For having seen the truth of impermanence, suffering, and no self, the nature of true reality is revealed to the Arahant.

“The Arahant realizes that what was to be accomplished has been done. A heavy burden of sorrow has finally been relinquished, and all forms of craving and all shades of ignorance are totally annihilated.”⁴⁸ There are many reasons for the heavy burden of sorrow that the Arahant relinquishes. First, while ascending through wrongful thoughts, words, and actions have hurt others. One recognizes that in previous rebirths, one mistreated others due to greed, hatred, and delusion. One did not care if one hurt others in order to satisfy one's craving. Once one realizes the errors in one's ways, one feels sorrow for the people one has hurt and one decides to stop one's immoral unwholesomeness. Secondly, one feels a sense of woe from being trapped in the cycle of Samsāra. Going round and round, propelled by cause and

⁴⁸ Nārada Thera, 1979: 432.



effect makes one feel sorrow for such a mundane existence filled with suffering (as stated in the First Noble Truth). Constantly besieged by displeasurable kamma leaves one feeling sorrow about one's existence. Thirdly, one feels sorrow for others who do not see the truth of ultimate reality that all objects are impermanent and that they have no individual self because they are all compositions of aggregate parts. One feels sorrow to see others hurting themselves by their own ignorance and creating unwholesome kamma. Although one has a solution to suffering with the Four Noble Truths, one cannot make others listen and accept the Four Noble Truths to show them the path out of suffering. Having attained the stage of Arahant, one relinquishes all these forms of sorrow because one has resolved each cause. The Arahant does not hurt others because there are not traces of fetters or evils to even have such a volition. The Arahant is also free from the cycles of Saṃsāra because no more kammic fruitions are planted. Lastly, the Arahant does not feel sorrow for others still trapped because the Arahant actively tries to teach and help others. Each person must progress through the stages, and so the Arahant skillfully teaches others to help them take their next step towards Arahantship.

The last fetter to be annihilated is ignorance for it is the most pervasive and also very difficult to discover. The Arahant uses wisdom to remove the veil of ignorance. Since ignorance is the very first condition that begets the remaining 11 conditions, the wheel of dependent origination is no longer set in motion. "When ignorance is destroyed and turned into knowingness, all causality is shattered as in the case of Buddhas and Arahants."⁴⁹ When all causality is shattered, all effects are eliminated so that vipāka kamma comes to an end. "Arahants do not accumulate fresh kamma that has any reproductive power, since they have eradicated all fetters that

⁴⁹ Nārada There, 1979: 360.



bind oneself to existence.”⁵⁰ Without the influence of the fetters, an Arahant is beyond what is viewed as moral and immoral. His actions are simply *kiriya* or ineffective action that have no future effect. “Good deeds of Buddhas and Arahants are called *kiriya* (ineffective action) because *kamma* (causally effective) is not accumulated by them as they have gone beyond both good and evil.”⁵¹

Although an Arahant is at the level of *kiriya*, an Arahant still experiences good and bad effects of past *kamma* created before one became an Arahant. As an Arahant, additional *kamma* is not incurred: however, one is still subject to the *kamma* caused in the past during pre-Arahant period.⁵² As an Arahant, when the good and bad effects of past *kamma* occur, one does not reach with one’s old habitual responses. In the past, one may have felt depressed, angry, unhappy, or displeased when faced with the bad fruitions of *kamma*. One’s negative actions in response to *kamma* only resulted in yet more *vipāka kamma*, further trapping one in this cycle. But now as an Arahant, one realizes that one is responsible for one’s past deeds and therefore one faces the bad effects of one’s *kamma* with equanimity—the cycle stops here.⁵³

The *Alagaddūpama Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* provides a good analogy for a description of the Arahant:

“Such a monk is said to have lifted the barrier, and he is said to have filled the moat, and he is said to have pulled up the pillar, and he is said to have withdrawn the bolts, and he is said to be a pure one, the flag laid low, the burden dropped, without fetters.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 41.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 22.

⁵² E.g. *Avatāphaladāyakattheraapadānaṃ, Avatāphalavagga, Apadāna* (CSCD).

⁵³ Abh. IX, par. 71.

⁵⁴ M. I. 141. See also Nathan Katz, 1982: 7. For more on this topic, see Johansson, R, *The Psychology of Nirvāna*, pp.116-130.



Table. 4. Supra-mundane stages, fetters and rebirths (according to the Sutta Piṭaka)

Stage's Fruit	Abandoned fetters	Rebirth(s) Until suffering's end
Stream-enterer	1. identity-view 2. doubt 3. ritual attachments	Up to seven times as a human or in a heaven
Once-returner		Once more as human
Non-returner		Once more in a pure abode
Arahant	4. sensual desire. 5. ill will 6. material-rebirth lust 7. immaterial-rebirth lust 8. conceit 9. restlessness 10. ignorance	Higher Fetters none

Source: Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi (2001), *Middle-Length Discourses*, pp. 41-43.

8.3. The Arahant is not beyond ethical values

8.3.1. Misconceived imagery

Damien Keown, in the *Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (1992),⁵⁵ points out misinterpretations of two important Buddhist imageries, that is, the two famous parable of the Alagaddūpama Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya: the parables of the water snake⁵⁶ and of the raft.⁵⁷ The theme of the sutta reflects a

⁵⁵ See details in Damien Keown (1992), *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan).

⁵⁶ M. 1. 133 f.



common problem with the shadow of religion in general and celibate monasticism in particular, that is, sexuality is not a hindrance to spiritual training. The sutta opens with the monk Ariṭṭha having this wrong view: “As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, those things called ‘obstructions’⁵⁸ by the Buddha are not able obstruct one who indulges in them.”⁵⁹

When the matter is brought before the Buddha, he emphatically declares that he has always taught that sensual pleasures are a hindrance to spiritual development. The point here is not that the body is evil, but that it is made up of the four elements or phases of matter (earth, water, fire and wind), and as such are in a constant flux. It is the mind or consciousness that one should really deal with as it is the only means to a direct experience of reality. In meditation, one shuts down the physical sense-doors, as it were, and attends to the mind singly and directly. It is as if one has to first switch off the car engine, open the hood, and dismantle the engine for a complete overhaul and reassemble so that everything runs well or better after that.

In the parable of the raft, the Buddha relates how “a man in the course of his journey saw a great stretch of water, whose near shore is dangerous and fearful and whose far shore

⁵⁷ M. 1. 134 f.

⁵⁸ “Obstructions” (*antarāyikā dhammā*). Comy says that the term means “intentionally transgressing the seven classes of offences. For intentional transgression, even an offence of wrongdoing or of wrong speech hinders the fruit of the way.” Comy here gives a list of ideas and deeds that obstruct either heavenly birth or final deliverance or both. But here sexual intercourse (*methuna dhamma*), is meant (MA. 2. 33). See Vin. 1. 93, 115; S. 2. 226; Thig. 492; Vism. 215; MA. 3. 102.

⁵⁹ In making this statement, Ariṭṭha directly contradicts the third of the four intrepidities of the Buddha. Because of the Buddha’s awakening, no one can justly charge that: (1) he is not fully enlightened, (2) he has not fully destroyed his defilements, (3) those obstructions to the spiritual life declared by the Buddha are not obstructions, (4) the Dhamma properly practiced does not lead to the goal declared by the Buddha. M. 12. 25.



is safe and free from fear, but there is no ferry or bridge for going across to the far shore.” So he “collects grass, wood, branches and leaves, and binds them together into a raft, and supported by the raft and using his hands and feet, goes safely across to the far shore.” Having safely crossed the waters, he leaves the makeshift raft behind and goes “wherever he wishes.” At the end of the parable, the Buddha declares:

“Even so I have shown you that the Dhamma is comparable to a raft, which is for crossing over (the waters to the far shore), not for the purpose of grasping. “Bhikkhus, having known the parable of the raft, you should abandon even the Dhamma, how much more that which is not Dhamma.”⁶⁰

Largely on the basis of these two sentences, some have misconstrued⁶¹ that “ethics in Buddhism has only a provisional and instrumental status may- even muse-be discarded when it has fulfilled its function of ferrying the practitioner to the further (sic) shore of enlightenment,” just as one would not be foolish enough to carry around a makeshift raft after one’s journey is done.⁶²

Keown points to two famous examples of the misconception of this parable of the raft, that is, those by I. B. Horner⁶³ and G. Dharmasiri,⁶⁴ to mean that the Arahant, being

⁶⁰ Dhammā pi vo pahātabbā pag’eva adhammā. See Keown 1992 ch esp pp. 92-102 for a detailed study. See also *Alagaddūpama Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya*.

⁶¹ More often in the early days of modern Buddhist studies (before 2000), than in recent times. After 2000m with the publication of Roger Jackson & John Makransky (eds), *Buddhist Theology*, scholars of Buddhism generally are open enough to declare themselves as Buddhist scholars, too, i. e., are also practitioners, or are more experientially informed of their field.

⁶² Keown 1992: 92.

⁶³ I.B. Horner 1950: 1.

⁶⁴ Dharmasiri 1986: 183.



“beyond good and evil,” is above morality.⁶⁵ In *The Basic Position of Sīla*, Horner writes:

“Morality is to be left behind... like a raft once the crossing over has been safely accomplished. In other words, the Arahant is above good and evil, and has transcended both.”⁶⁶

And a more recent example is G Dharmasiri, who, in *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics*, writes:

“Here one goes beyond morality. That is why an Arahant has been described as having gone beyond both good and bad. He has transcended ordinary morality.”⁶⁷

Many scholars, and even those with a vague notion of Buddhism, are rightly or wrongly familiar with such a view. However, although recent scholars have shown some dissatisfaction with this view,⁶⁸ it was apparently Damien Keown who was the first to offer a comprehensive critical analysis of it, in his *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (1992).⁶⁹

The first problem with the view that Arahants are beyond morality is that the misconception is based largely on a misreading of the two sentences of the Alagaddūpama Sutta above. For, as we shall presently see, there are numerous passages in the Suttas attesting to the supreme moral virtue of the saints, especially the Arahants.

⁶⁵ Henri van Zeyst, similarly, takes nibbāna to mean the transcendence of ethical values (1961: 143 f). apparently, this wrong view is more common in intellectual or academic Buddhism than in traditional Buddhism.

⁶⁶ I.B.Horner 1950: 1.

⁶⁷ G. Dharmasiri 1986: 183.

⁶⁸ E. g. John Ross Carter, “*Beyond ‘Beyond good and evil’*” (1984).

⁶⁹ For details on this topic, see P. D. Premariri, “Moral Evaluation in Early Buddhism”, *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, 1 (1975): 63-74 and K. Jayatilleke, “The Ethical Theory of Buddhism”, *The Mahabodhi*, 78 (1970): 192-7.



Secondly, if the view that Arahants are beyond morality is true, why is this important fact not pointed out explicitly by the Buddha?

“Apart from the Buddha, the Theravāda tradition itself seems reticent on the matter, and there appears to be evidence that it understood the parable in the way suggested. On the contrary, the evidence is that it did not. Nor do any Mahāyāna sources appear to take the parable as significant in an ethical sense. We might expect it to be cited frequently by texts which seek greater moral latitude for Bodhisattas, but it does not appear to be used in this way.”⁷⁰

The one who has “crossed over” to the far shore (nibbāna) is one who has left behind all his defilements, especially the latent tendencies of lust, ill will and ignorance. That being the case, it is obvious that there is no question that even the thought of greed, hate or delusion would arise in such a saint.

8.3.2. Fords and Banks

In the early texts, the imagery of fords (tittha), is understandably common. Streams and rivers had to be crossed as safe points or where there are rafts or boats. The monsoons worsened the situation by bringing floods, making it harder to cross the waters. In such situations, it is common to regard high and dry land, such as the river banks as safe ground. For the traveler, the far shore is not only the immediate destination, but also safe ground. As such, the far shore is often used to represent nibbāna, to journey’s end in the pilgrim’s progress. Here we have two short Suttas, teachings to Saṅgārava (Saṅgārava Sutta, A. 5. 232 ff, 252 ff), showing that the “far

⁷⁰ Keown 1992: 94.



shore” representing moral perfection and the realization of the path.

Both these Suttas make it very clear that *sīla*, as well as *samādhi* and *paññā* (all three constituting the threefold training of the noble eightfold path) are part of the far shore, and are not left behind on the near shore after awakening. Here the symbolism of the far shore is a truly Dhamma-centred way of life as taught by the Buddha.

8.3.3. Arahants have supreme moral virtue

Why then does the Buddha use the parable of the raft, or what is its correct import? The Commentary takes *dhammā* here to mean “good states,” that is, calm and insight (*samathavipassanā*), citing the *Laṭukikopama Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*⁷¹ as an example of the teaching of the abandonment of attachment to calm,⁷² and the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta*⁷³ as one of the abandonment of attachment to insight.⁷⁴ A detailed discussion on why the parable of the raft is not about transcendence of morality has been done in the introduction to the *Alaggadūpama Sutta*. Only the main points will be mentioned here.

Buddhaghosa, in his Commentary, interprets the reference to going beyond “good things” more specifically as a warning regarding the danger of being attached to meditative experience, that is, the practitioner should let go of both calm and insight to go higher until desire-and-lust is abandoned, that is, liberation attained.⁷⁵

However, when we examine the context of the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta* more closely, we will see that it is

⁷¹ M. Sutta No. 66.

⁷² M. 1. 455.

⁷³ M. Sutta No. 38.

⁷⁴ M. 1. 260 f.

⁷⁵ MA. 2. 109. Keown inadvertently cites this as “MA. 1. 209.”



about the *dependent arising of consciousness*. In other words, it is about *doctrines*. Since the same parable—the raft—is mentioned here, it clearly shows that the parable also means that one should not cling to teachings as well, but take them as learning steps on the path of liberation.⁷⁶

Keown gives an interesting discussion on the parables of the Alagaddūpama Sutta,⁷⁷ but does not touch on the remainder of the sutta, that is, the section on doctrines.⁷⁸ We shall here look at some key points that attest to the fact that *Arahants are not “beyond good and evil” in the sense of transcending morality*, but on the contrary they are supreme in their moral virtue.

The purpose of the section of the six ground for views of the Alagaddūpama Sutta is to prevent the disciple from holding the self-view. All of the five aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness—are to be regarded as “This is not mine; this I am not; this is not my self.”⁷⁹ The first reflection directs one’s mind away from craving; the second, away from conceit; and the third, away from wrong view.

The section on not-self⁸⁰ similarly points out that there is nothing really permanent that one can cling to.⁸¹ At best, one could only cling to *a self-theory*, but this does not mean that there is something really permanent. Since lust, or more specifically, sexuality, is the most selfish of human traits, clearly, for an arahant, who has destroyed the notion of self, is

⁷⁶ Bodhi interprets dhammā in the same way: “dhamma here [M. 22] signifies not good states themselves, but the teachings, the correct attitude to which was delineated just above in the simile of the snake.” M: ÑB 1209 n 255.

⁷⁷ Keown 1992: 92-105.

⁷⁸ M. 1. 135-142.

⁷⁹ M. 1. 135 f.

⁸⁰ M. Sutta No. 22.

⁸¹ M. 1. 137 f.



beyond it. This is especially clear from one of the epithets of the Arahant given in the sutta, that is,

“And how, bhikkhus, is the monk one who has broken the pillar?

Here, bhikkhus, the monk has abandoned craving, cut it off at the root, made a palm stump of it, done away with it, so that it is no longer subject to future arising. That is how, bhikkhus, the monk is one who has broken the pillar.”⁸²

In the section on “not yours” (na tumhākaṃ),⁸³ who are not yet Arahants are exhorted on the higher meaning of the training rule.

“Therefore, bikkhus, give up what is not yours.”⁸⁴ When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

What is it that is not yours?

Form is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Feeling is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

⁸² M. 1. 139.

⁸³ Na tumhākaṃ. This section [40] forms a sutta of its own - (kāya) *Na tumha Sutta* (S. 2. 64 f). The following 2 sections [40-41] - text and simile - form, in practically identical words, 4 suttas of similar names: the (Khandha) *Na tumha Sutta* (S. 3. 33 f), but in the 2 (Dhātu) *Na tumha Sutta* (S. 4. 81 f) its theme is the 18 elements (6 internal sense-organs, 6 external sense-fields, 6 sense-consciousness). In all these 5 suttas, the word dīgharattaṃ is omitted in the closing stock phrase.

⁸⁴ Comy: It is the attachment or desire (chandarāga) to the five aggregates, not the aggregates in themselves, that should be given up: they “cannot be torn apart or pulled out.” I have rendered yaṃ as “what” (which has a general sense) rather than as “whatever” which connotes that there are certain things that we do “own,” which would go against the teaching of anattā.



Perception is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Formations are not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.

Consciousness is not yours. Give it up. When you have given it up, it would be for your welfare and happiness for a long time.”⁸⁵

Especially relevant here is the admonition, “Feeling is not yours. Give it up.: If the non-arahant is admonished not to be attached to feelings, surely the quality would be perfected in an Arahant.

This teaching is then followed by the Jetavana simile⁸⁶, where the Buddha says that although people keep taking away “grass, sticks, branches and leaves” from Jetavana and destroyed them, we do not harbour the notion that “People are carrying us off, or burning us, or doing what they like with us.”⁸⁷

The meaning of the simile is that we lose nothing by letting go of our attachment to the aggregates (that is, the body and mind): indeed, we have more to gain, namely, liberation.

In fact, the Alagaddūpama Sutta closes with a description of *how the fetters are successively destroyed* leading to what type of sainthood this brings. Even for those who fail to walk the path, the Buddha makes this remarkable declaration at the close of the Sutta:

“In the teaching well proclaimed by me, plain, open, clear, free from patchwork, those who have mere faith

⁸⁵ M. 1. 140 f. Comy: Only an aggregate (form, etc.) is the basis for the wrong concept of a self, since apart from them there is nothing else to crave for.

⁸⁶ M. Sutta No. 22.

⁸⁷ M. 1. 141.



in me and mere love for me, are all bound for heaven”⁸⁸

8.3.4. What is meant by “beyond good and evil”

8.3.4.1. Canonical passages on “beyond good and evil”

For a better understanding of the phrase puñña, pāpa, and similar forms, let us examine some key passages in the early Suttas where they occur.

Anavassuta cittassa for him whose mind is not soaked in lust,

Ananvāhata cetaso for him who is unaffected by hate,

Puññapāpa pahīnassa for him who has abandoned both good and evil,

N’atthi jāgarato bhayaṃ for the wakeful, there is no fear.⁸⁹

The Dhammapada Commentary glosses the phrase puññapāpa pahīnassa here as: “For those with influxes destroyed (khīṇ’āsava),⁹⁰ who have abandoned good and evil by the fourth path”⁹¹, which clearly refers to the Arahants. The

⁸⁸ M. 1. 142. “Those who have mere faith in me and mere love for me,” yesaṃ mayi saddhāmatam pemamattam. This phrase is found in *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (M. 1. 143 ff), *Bhaddāli Sutta* (M. 1. 444 ff) and *Kiṭṭāgiri Sutta* (M. 1. 479 ff). Cf *Sarakāni Sutta* (S. 4. 375-380). Comy explains that this refers to the insight practitioners (vipassaka puggalā) who have not attained any supramundane state, not gaining even stream-entry, they are reborn in a heaven. On the other hand, we can take this passage as is, that is, anyone who has “mere faith, mere love” in the Buddha are reborn in a heaven, without going against the grain of early Buddhism. See M. ÑB 2001: 1212 n 274.

⁸⁹ Dh. V. 39.

⁹⁰ The Arahants have overcome the four āsavas, i. e., the of (1) sense-desire (kāma’āsava), (2) desire for eternal existence (bhava’āsava), (3) wrong view (diṭṭhi’āsava), (4) ignorance (avijj’āsava). D. 2. 82, 2. 91; Pm. 1. 442, 561; Dhs §§ 1096-1100; Vbh. § 937.

⁹¹ DhA. 1. 309. Cauttha maggena pahīna puññassa c’evapahīna pāpassa



first two lines of the stanza allude to lust and to hate respectively. Thus we can deduce that the third line (puññapāpa pahīnassa) refers to the overcoming of delusion. Here it means the Arahant has abandoned the conceit “I am,” the desire, “I am,” and the latent tendency, “I am.”

The Commentary to the Samanupassanā Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya ⁹² explains “this regarding” (ayaṃ... samanupassanā) as “regarding with views” (diṭṭhi samanupassanā), and the notion “I am” (asmī ti) as the “threefold proliferation” (papañcattaya) of craving, of conceit, and of views. The two differ in that while “regarding” is a conceptually formulated view, the notion “I am” is a subtler manifestation of ignorance expressive of desire and conceit. The self-identity view is uprooted at stream-winning, but the notion “I am” is only fully destroyed by the path of Arahant hood. ⁹³

Yo'dha puññañ ca pāpañca	Who here both good and
evil,	
Bāhetvā brahmacariyavā	having pushed away,
who lives the holy life,	
Saṅkhāya loke carati	he wanders wisely in the
world - ⁹⁴	
Sa ve bhikkhū ti vuccati.	He is indeed called a
monk. ⁹⁵	

A more idiomatic translation would be:

Who here, having pushed away both good and evil, and
lives the holy life,
Wanders wisely in the world—he is indeed called a

khīṇāsavassa.

⁹² S. Sutta No. 22.

⁹³ SA. 2. 269 f.

⁹⁴ Comy glosses saṅkhāya as ñāṇena (with knowledge) [DhA. 3. 393]. I have freely rendered it as adv.

⁹⁵ Dh. 267.



monk.

According to the Dhammapada Commentary, a certain sectarian who goes around collecting almsfood feels that the Buddha should call him a monk, too. The Buddha replies that one is not a monk merely because one lives on almsfood. A true monk is one who has pushed away both good and evil.⁹⁶

In the Sabhiya Sutta,⁹⁷ we again see the Buddha defining an Arahant—here called simply “an ascetic” (samaṇa)—as one who has given up both and evil:

Samitāvi pahāya puñṇapāpaṃ	Mentally calm, having given up good and evil,
Virajo ñatvā imaṃ paraṃ ca lokam	free from defilement's dust, knowing this world and the next,
Jātimaraṇaṃ upātivatto	gone beyond birth and death:
Samaṇo tādi pavuccate tathattā	such a one is called an ascetic in accordance with reality. ⁹⁸

And in the final verse of the Sabhiya Sutta, Sabhiya describes the Buddha himself as one who is untouched both good and evil:

Puṇḍarīkaṃ yathā vaggu toyē na upalippati
 Evaṃ puñṇe ca pāpe ca ubhayē tvaṃ na lippasi
 Pāde vīra pasārehi, Sabhiyo vandati satthuno ti.
 Just as a white lotus in unsullied by the water,
 Even so, he is not soiled by either good or evil:

⁹⁶ DhA. 3. 391 f.

⁹⁷ Sn. 3. 6.

⁹⁸ Sn. 520.



Please stretch forth your feet, O Hero! Sabhiya honours the Teacher!⁹⁹

The verb *lippasi* (vl *limpasi*, “is soiled”) clearly alludes to lack of moral virtue, and its negative, *na lippasi*, as such, refers to the presence of moral virtue.

The next stanza is a well known definition of the Arahant found in the Vāseṭṭha Sutta¹⁰⁰, and which is also preserved in the Sutta Nipāta, the Dhammapada and the Gandhāri Dhammapada:¹⁰¹

Yo’dha puññañ ca pāpañ ca ubho saṅgaṃ upaccagā¹⁰²
Asaokaṃ virajaṃ suddhaṃ, tam ahaṃ brūmi
brāhmaṇaṃ.

Who here has gone beyond both good and evil and
clinging, too, Sorrowless, stainless, pure: him I call a
Brahmin.¹⁰³

The inclusion of “clining” (saṅga), a synonym for lust (rāga, taṇhā), which the Arahant has transcended, again shows his ethical perfection.

Another definition of the Arahant is found in the ancient Suddhaṭṭhaka Sutta¹⁰⁴ and its Commentary, the Mahāniddeśa:

Na brāhmaṇaṃ anatto suddhim āha	The Brahmin does not say that purity is from another,

⁹⁹ Sn. 547.

¹⁰⁰ M. Sutta No. 98.

¹⁰¹ Dh. V. 46. Yó du puñe ca pave ca, uhu ṣaga uvacca’i, aṣaga viraya
budhu, tam ahu bromi brahmaṇa.

¹⁰² SnA. 469 seems to take saṅgaṃ in opposition to ubho, rather than in agreement, but, cf ubhau saṅgāvupatyagāt (Uv. 33.29). K. R. Norman suggests “We should probably take saṅgaṃ as a masculine accusative plural.” Sn: N 265 n636, Cf. Dh. V. 46.

¹⁰³ M. 2. 196; Sn. 636; Dh. V. 412.

¹⁰⁴ Sn. 4. 4.



Diṭṭhe sute sīlavate mute vā

in the seen, the
heard, rules and
rituals, or the
sensed:

Puññe ca pāpe ca anūpalitto

not clinging to
good or evil,

Attañjaho¹⁰⁵ na-y-idha pakubbamāno

having abandoned
the grasped, he
effects no kamma
here.¹⁰⁶

Here again we see the Arahant is said to have *his locus of control within himself*, and does not rely on any external agency for spiritual salvation. The fact that he does not hold on to good or evil is because he has “abandoned the grasped,” that is, he has overcome greed, hate and delusion, and as such does not act, motivated by these unwholesome roots. The contexts of all these passages, most of which come from the oldest texts of the early canon—the Sutta Nipāta - is clear: the Arahant (or the saint in general) is not above moral virtue, but is in fact the best exemplars of it.

8.3.5. The Kamma that ends Kamma

The Kukkuravatika Sutta¹⁰⁷ and the (Vitthāra) Kamma Sutta¹⁰⁸ contain a fourfold classification of kamma according to their quality and results, thus:¹⁰⁹

- (1) Black kamma, black result;
- (2) White kamma, white result;

¹⁰⁵ Attan + jaho, where atta (Skt ātta, pp of ā + √dā, to give), “taken, grasped.” Opp niratta.

¹⁰⁶ Sn. 790; Nm. 86.

¹⁰⁷ M. Sutta No.57.

¹⁰⁸ A. 4. 232.

¹⁰⁹ This section is based on Payutto 1993: 81-91 (ch 5). For details of the four categories, see (Vitthāra) *Kamma Sutta*, A. 2. 230-232.



- (3) Black and white kamma, with both black and white result; and
- (4) Neither black nor white kamma, with neither black nor white result.¹¹⁰

The last is *the kamma that ends all kammās*. The first three categories of kamma are those of the unawakened, that is, of all beings, except of the Arahants. They are the numerous varieties and proliferation of action comprising the ten courses of unwholesome action (*dasa akusala kammaṃpatha*),¹¹¹ such as destroying lives, taking the not-given, sexual misconduct, wrong forms of speech, and negative mental states, and their respective opposites, that is, the ten wholesome courses of kamma. These kinds of kamma determine various kinds of good and bad life experiences and conditions, and their perpetuation. The events of the present life in turn create more good and bad kamma or activate old ones, thus spinning the saṃsāric wheel endlessly. Kamma has the tendency for self-perpetuating, keeping us in a kammic rut.

The fourth kind of kamma brings the exact opposite result. Instead of accumulating more kamma, it leads to *the ending of kamma*. This refers to the noble eightfold path or the seven awakening-factors, that lead to awakening. Sometimes, this fourth kind of kamma is spoken of as the intention, based on non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion, to abandon the other three kinds of kamma.

Although good kamma results in happiness, *such happiness is tainted with suffering*, as it can be a cause of future suffering. Anyone who holds to a notion of permanence will, wittingly or unwittingly, experience happiness as potential suffering. For, nothing is permanent, and the reality is that happiness is the absence of suffering, and suffering the

¹¹⁰ M. 1. 389; A. 2. 230-237.

¹¹¹ See M. Sutta Nos. 9, 114. The *Atthasālinī* also gives details of each of the ten wholesome and unwholesome courses of actions.



absence of happiness. When one understands the true nature of the two, that they are really the same side of the saṃsāric coin, then one is able to rise above them.

The fourth kind of kamma is about rising above the dichotomy of happiness and suffering. For simplicity, we can perhaps also call this happiness, “higher happiness,” one that has no potential suffering. It is not caused or conditioned by anything outside of oneself. This inner happiness truly frees one from suffering, and as such is untainted.

Elsewhere,¹¹² I have discussed these four categories in some detail in connection with two other sets of key terms of Buddhist virtue ethics, as follows:

- 1) Puñña and apuñña/pāpa (good and evil);¹¹³
- 2) Kusala and akusala (wholesome and unwholesome), and
- 3) Sukka and kaṇha (white and black, or bright and dark).

A summary here will suffice. The Arahant is said to be one who has abandoned both puñña and pāpa, that is, he will not be reborn. The Arahant is sometimes said to be kusala. Here, however, kusala and puñña are not coextensive: the state of an Arahant may be regarded as kusala, but it cannot be puñña. Keown seems to argue that because the Arahant is as good (kusala) as it is possible to be so, his happiness neither increases nor decreases, that is, it is of a supramundane quality.

¹¹² (*Vitthāra*) *Kamma Sutta*, A. 2. 230-232.

¹¹³ For details on this topic, see P. D. Premasiri (2006), *Studies in Buddhist Philosophy and Religion*, Homagama, Sri Lanka: Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society, pp. 10-14; John Ross Carter, *On Understanding Buddhists: Essays on the Theravāda Tradition in Sri Lanka*, NY: University of New York Press, 1993, pp. 89 ff & Krishna Del Toso., “The Role of Puñña and Kusala in the Dialectic of the Twofold Right Vision and the Temporary Integration of Eternalism in the Path Towards Spiritual Emancipation According to the Pāli Nikāyas, *Esercizi Filosofici* 3 (2008): 32-58.



Keown associates happiness with puñña, which he called the “experiential indicator or epiphenomenon” of kusala. Because the Arahant’s happiness neither increases nor decreases the Arahant is said to have abandoned puñña and pāpa.

“Puñña is a function of progress in kusala, since an Arahant no longer progresses in kusala it is meaningless to speak of him as producing puñña. He will, of course, continue to enjoy the secondary consequences of his virtue while he lives, but the experiential quantum of these consequences cannot be increased or decreased as they can for a non-arahant.”¹¹⁴

8.3.6. The Arahant is a paragon of moral virtue

The Buddha is not only morally virtuous, but from the early Buddhist texts, we know that he is “accomplished in knowledge and conduct” (vijjācaraṇasampanna).¹¹⁵ The Arahants, and even the learners on the path, are recollected thus:¹¹⁶

Supatipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho

The Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the good way;

Ujupaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho

the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the straight way;

Ñāyapaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho

the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the true way;

Sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho

¹¹⁴ Keown 1996: 124.

¹¹⁵ This is one of the 9 virtues of the noble saṅgha: see *Aṭṭhapuggala Sutta*, A. 4. 292.

¹¹⁶ For a detailed study of this recollection, see *Aṭṭhapuggala Sutta*, A. 4. 292.

¹¹⁸ Carter 55 n46 (1984: 51).



8.3.7. The Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta

A key passage in the Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta is sometimes misconstrued as meaning that one who has attained nibbāna or an Arahant transcends ethical values, that he is “beyond good and evil.”

“And, carpenter, where do these wholesome habits end without remains? Of their ending, too, it has been spoken: here, carpenter, a monk is *morally virtuous*, but he is *not made of moral virtue*,¹¹⁹ and he understands, as they really are, the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom, where these wholesome habits end without remains.”¹²⁰

We have here an example of the language of awakening. The usage of sīlamaya here is by way of “intentional language.”¹²¹ Sīlamaya literally means “made of moral virtue,” but here used figuratively to mean that the Arahant’s psychological and spiritual state is no more dependent on his kamma, that is, good or bad actions; hence, he is “beyond good and evil.” In this sense, too, he does not identify (tammaya)¹²² with his precepts; for, there is really nothing to identify with, after all. On the other hand, the unawakened person as a rule identifies with his actions: “I am doing; this is mine; he is doing something to me,” and so on.

Furthermore, the passage should be taken in its right context, that is, the tenfold rightness (sammatta) the noble eightfold path along with right knowledge and right

¹¹⁹ Nirodho pi nesam vutto, idha thapati, bhikkhu sīlavā hoti no ca sīlamayo. Of sīlamayo, Comy says that, being endowed with moral habits, there is nothing further than this to be done (MA. 3. 270). “[B]ut he does not identify with the moral virtue” is based on M: ÑB 651 ad loc. On the various meanings of-maya, see VvA. 10.

¹²⁰ M. 2. 27.

¹²¹ Dh. V. 97.

¹²² Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, M. 1. 319.



liberation.¹²³ Analayo, in his *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization* reflects the mind of traditional Buddhists:¹²⁴

“...A close examination of the discourse (the *Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta*) reveals that this particular statement does not refer to the abandoning of ethical conduct, but only to the fact that the Arahants no longer identify with their virtuous behaviour.”¹²⁵

Regarding the other passages, which speak of “going beyond good and evil,” one needs to distinguish clearly between the Pāli terms translated as “good,” which can be either *kusala* or *puñña*. Although the two terms cannot be completely separated from each other in canonical usage, they often carry quite distinct meanings.¹²⁶ While *puñña* mostly denotes deeds of positive merit, *kusala* includes any type of wholesomeness, including the realization of *Nibbāna*.¹²⁷

What Arahants have “gone beyond” is the accumulation of *kamma*. They have transcended the generation of “good” (*puñña*) and of its opposite “evil” (*pāpa*). But the same cannot be said of wholesomeness (*kusala*). In fact, by eradicating all unwholesome (*akusala*) states of mind, Arahants become the highest embodiment of wholesomeness (*kusala*). So much is this the case that, as indicated in the

¹²³ D. 3. 271, 292; M. 1. 42; A. 5. 212.

¹²⁴ See Analayo 2003: 258 f.

¹²⁵ Wijesekera explains that the practitioner should “master morality, but not allow morality to get the better of him” (1994: 35). Cf *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* (M. 47. 13) where the Buddha points out that although he is possessed of a high level of virtue he does not identify with it (no *ca tena tammayo*). M. 1. 319.

¹²⁶ According to Carter, some degree of overlap exists between *kusala* and *puñña* in the context of the threefold volition, but a clear distinction between both terms can be drawn in regard to a person’s qualities. (1984: 48).

¹²⁷ In fact, according to D. 3. 102, the realization of *nibbāna* is the highest among wholesome phenomena; cf Premasir 1976: 68. Cf also Collins 1998: 154 & Nanayakkara 1999: 258. (Analayo’s fn).



Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta, they are spontaneously virtuous and do not even identify with their virtue.¹²⁸

Bhikkhu Bodhi further instructively summarizes the discussion here by noting “This passage shows the Arahant, who maintains virtuous conduct but no longer identifies with his virtue by conceiving it a ‘I’ and ‘mine.’ Since his virtuous habits no longer kamma, they are not describable as ‘wholesome’.”¹²⁹

By way of summary, it is important to understand that moral virtue is not abandoned “after it is cultivated.” Moral virtue is not a product of a process, but the willingness and ability to respond wholesomely to others and the environment as a result of our own wholesome mind. As unawakened beings, we have to deliberately direct our mind towards morally virtuous deeds and states, but for the Arahant, it is spontaneous nature. Furthermore, the unawakened depends on moral virtue (as good kamma) for their well-being, but the Arahant is no more “made of moral virtue,” since his mind is liberated from duality.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Anālayo 2003: 258; emphasis added.

¹²⁹ M: NB 1286 n 775.

¹³⁰ Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory as the final level of psychological development that can be achieved when all basic and mental needs are fulfilled and the “actualization” of the full personal potential takes place. Self actualization resides at the top of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs - becoming “‘fully human’...maturity or self-actualization”-and is considered a part of the humanistic approach to personality. Maslow lists the following characteristics of self-actualizers:

1. More efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it.
2. Acceptance (self, others, nature).
3. Spontaneity; simplicity; naturalness.
4. Problem centering (as opposed to ego-centered).
5. The quality of detachment; the need for privacy.



The four stages of enlightenment define a path of purity which transforms a putthujana (ordinary person) to an Arahant. The ten fetters bind an ordinary person to Saṃsāra because unwholesomeness resulting from immoral volitions create unwholesome vipāka kamma. The ten fetters are the cause of future rebirths. The Stream-winner is the first stage on the path of purifying the ten fetters. In this stage, one first tackles the fetters of illusion of self, doubts, and wrong rituals. It is the belief in a permanent self that distorts one's thinking because it drives one to seek self pleasure in external objects. One falsely believes that objects are permanent and that they belong to oneself. Because one is so consumed by thoughts of self, one doubts anything which goes against one's belief in a self. Thus, one doubts the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, the Four Noble Truths, and the Law of Kamma. In the place of realizing these truths, one engages in wrong rituals as a make-believe substitute for doing something right. One convinces himself that participation in wrongful rituals is good and worthwhile. The Sotāpanna overcomes these three fetters of illusion of self, doubt and wrongful rituals by adjusting one's view from view to right view. One has faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, and one has insight into the Law of

-
6. Autonomy; independence of culture and environment.
 7. Continued freshness of appreciation.
 8. Mystic and peak experiences.
 9. The feeling of kinship with others.
 10. Deeper and more profound relationship.
 11. The democratic character structure.
 12. Discrimination between means and ends, between good and evil.
 13. Philosophical, unhostile sense of humor.
 14. Self-actualizing creativity.
 15. Resistance to enculturation; the transcendence of any particular culture. (A. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 36; Goldstein, quoted in Arnold H. Modell, *The Private Self* (Harvard 1993) p. 44.).



Kamma. One now knows that there is a path that breaks the cycle of Saṃsāra. Rather than repeating one's old habits of unwholesomeness, the stream winner stops these unwholesome thoughts at the volition moments, and chooses to think morally. These moral thoughts are followed by sincere and honest speech and acts of compassion.

The path continues with elimination of the fetters of sense desires and hatred, two very strong fetters that are rooted deeply in one's mind. Sense desires are tightly interwoven with one's physical sense organs and with one's mental stimulus. Hatred is explosive and powerful and it can poison one's morality turning one's very being into evil. These two fetters need only be partially removed to reach the second stage of sakadāgāmi. These first five fetters are known as the lower fetters because they can be eliminated by the first three stages. The next five fetters can only be addressed by the Arahant stage.

The Arahant stage addresses craving, self, ignorance. Craving comes from the fetters of attachment to form and attachment to the formless. Although one no longer has sensual craving coming from the five lower fetters, one must destroy one's craving to ascend to the higher realms of pure form and the formless. The self comes from the fetters of conceit and restlessness. Even at this high stage on the path, the notion of self still arises as conceit and pride while restlessness disturbs one's equanimity. Ignorance is the last fetter the Arahant must overcome and it is the most difficult because its very nature involves "not knowing." It is difficult to overcome what one does not know what is wrong and what is right. Instead of the darkness of ignorance blinding one's view of one's unwholesomeness, wisdom shines a light of virtue to help one realize one's ignorance. With this realization, one rises above being ignorant and one can be aware of one's thoughts. One's awareness one's thoughts



shows what is going on in the 17 thought moments, especially the javana moments where volition can be immoral, moral, or neither. The putthujjana has immoral volitional javana moments, the Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, and Anāgāmi have moral volitional javana moments, and the Arahant has neither. Because the Arahant has neither immoral nor moral volitions, the Arahant does not plant seeds of future kamma. Thus, the Arahant breaks the chains of the ten fetters to end the cycle of rebirths in Saṃsāra.

The four stages of enlightenment provide a path to Arahanship, but the path must be tailored to each person because each person has a unique combination of the ten fetters. No two people have exactly the same combination. Everyone has their own unique path. Not only are the fetters different, but the kammic circumstances are different also.

The essence of this particular path of purity is to explain each stage as it relates to the removal of the ten fetters. The fetters define the unwholesomeness that must be eliminated to mark one's entry into each level. By examining the nature of each fetter, the wholesomeness that needs to be practiced becomes equally evident. And ultimately, it is in cultivating the wisdom that allows one to become aware of the truth of the three marks of existence that enables one to successfully achieve enlightenment.

CHAPTER NINE

Summary, Application and Conclusion

A summary of the findings, and their possible applications as well as implications for future research will be outlined in this final chapter.

10.1. Summary

Facts based on research, the social/cultural milieu of the times and individual personality of the researchers have a deep influence on theories of personality. Although there are several definitions and various theories regarding personality, there is no single universally accepted definition or theory.

In Buddhism, personality is not a static concept, but a constantly changing progressive aspect of the individual. It is an experience of forward movement, wherein an imperfection is left behind with each step, resulting in a more and more refined individual. The theory of personality in Buddhism has its own particular concepts and language based on the four kinds of āhāras (foods). They emphasise the psychological aspects, and therefore seek to improve the life of the individual by providing psychological means and ways to attain fulfillment and satisfaction.

Chapter one presents a broad overview of the concept of personality, ranging from some of the basic tenets in Buddhism to some concepts in Western psychology, using different sources such as the basic definitions from dictionaries to the highly philosophical debates.

Chapter two describes the individual as consisting of the five khandhas which is the substrata of sensory existence.



The first aggregate is the outer shell within which the important mind is contained. According to the scriptures, the interest of the mind is then aroused by the remaining four khandhas (vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra and viññāṇa). Presented differently, the five aggregates are said to be divided into two, the mental and the physical (nāma-rūpa). The first one, i.e. the corporeality, belongs to physical while the other four belong to the mental. The word “upādāna” is associated to these aggregates as they cling to saṃsāra firmly, (1) rūpupādānakkhandha, (2) vedanupādānakkhandha, (3) saññāṇupādānakkhandha, (4) saṅkhā-rūpādānakkhandha, and (5) viññāṇupādānakkhandha. The Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya, states that these five clings are called suffering. “Saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā,” which can briefly be translated as “the five aggregates which cling to saṃsāra are suffering.” It can be derived that existence by itself, is equivalent to suffering, because the being, like everything which belongs to the world is subject to change, decay, death. Therefore no permanent entity called soul (atta) exists, and they are all endowed with three-fold characteristics, viz: (1) anicca, impermanence (2) dukkha, suffering and (3) anatta, soullessness. The Khandha Saṃyutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya describes the nature of these five aggregates beautifully: The form is like a morsel of foam. Sensations are like bubbles and perception is a mirage. Mental states are like the trunk of a plantain tree. Consciousness is just an illusion.¹

According to chapter three, since personalities are born with five aggregates, therefore in their absence, personality does not exist. In Buddhism, individuals are grouped only in terms of their psychological, ethical and behavioural

¹ S. III. 142: Phenapiṇḍūpamam rūpam, vedanā bubbulupamā, marīcikūpamā saññā, saṅkhāra kadalūpamā, māyupamañca viññāṇam, dīpitādiccabandhunā.



characteristics.² We have learned that the Buddhist tradition does not focus much on abnormal personality. However, the Buddha did not ignore the maladjusted individual such as Kisa Gotamī.³ The Buddhist commentarial views that all worldlings are deranged except for Arahants.⁴

Sīvaka Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya⁵ explains that kamma is not the only cause of bodily suffering or that it is the only condition that forms personality. The Aṭṭhakathās⁶ mention the five natural orders (pañcaniyāma), of which kamma is only one. These natural orders govern the physical phenomena within and without a human being as well as his mental process. The laws of kamma and laws of mental processes are very closely related so that they may seem to be identical, but intention is what differentiates kamma from mere mental processes. The laws of mental processes (cittaniyāma) govern all mental activities, including the non-intentional. In contemporary terms, it is useful to understand that intentional actions include both conscious and unconscious actions. “Conscious” here refers to deliberate actions, carefully planned and mindfully executed. The best example is that of going on a meditation retreat: one prepares well for it, keeps to the precepts and retreat rules, and avoids anything that might distract one from one’s practice. “Unconscious” refers to personal habits (such as being easily angered, or worrying) and routine actions (such as working in a wrong livelihood). In this latter case, one could be constantly breaking the precepts or causing pain to others without being conscious of it or even not caring about it. This is what we learn from chapter four.

² It’s related to the field of studies.

³ S. 5. 3.

⁴ MA. I. 25.

⁵ S. 4. 230 f.

⁶ DA. II. 432; DhsA. 272.



The *Chalābhijā Sutta* of *Āṅguttara Nikāya*,⁷ in its typology of the four persons of a dark or a bright class, reborn into either dark or bright circumstances, is almost a verbatim restatement of the four types of persons of the *Puggala Sutta* of *Samyutta Nikāya*.⁸ Here, “dark” or “black” (*kaṇha*) signifies unfortunate circumstances due to past bad *kamma*, and “bright” (*sukka*) refers to fortunate circumstances due to past good *kamma*. Both the *Suttas* teach that no matter what circumstance we may be born into, or no matter what our past *kamma* may bring upon us, if we assert ourselves hard enough, we can rise above them.⁹ In case of *vāsanā*, the *Aṭṭhakathās* view that we can change our personality and may grow and may appear to be different at various times throughout our life, but our (including *Arahants*) *vāsana* stay the same except in the case of the Buddha. *Vāsanā* is similar to “preferences” in Western psychology. It is said that *Ahetuka*-beings (such as people with disabilities), and *Dvihetuka*-beings (see chapter 5) cannot attain *nibbana* in this very life but can certainly aspire for enlightenment in the life to come.¹⁰ To be enlightened in this life is not possible for those which are of lower species (their consciousness is weak of *upekkhāsahagata santīraṇa*, resultant of the previous *akusala*), but is however possible in the next. And the texts repeatedly state that those who have committed five crimes (*ānantarika-kamma*) also would be far away from achieving perfect personality or *nibbāna*. But they still have hope for the life to come if they continue fulfilling their principle.¹¹ This is what chapter five is about.

⁷ A. 6. 57.

⁸ S. I. 93-6.

⁹ See *Sabbāsava Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sutta No. 2.

¹⁰ Abhs. pp. 173-4; Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, (1954), *The Abhidhamma Philosophy* (Nalanda: Buddhavihar), p. 141.

¹¹ A. V. 129. With regard to the first crime, it is said in *Dīgha Nikāya* (No. 2) that if King *Ajātasattu* had not deprived his father of life, he would have reached entrance into the path of stream-entry.



Chapter six shows us how to develop our personality or get enlightenment. The Atthirāga Sutta (S. 12. 64) is about how our cyclic lives are prolonged, and how the Arahant breaks this cycle. Our saṃsāric lives are prolonged by the four foods, that is, edible food, contact (or sense-impression), mental volition, and consciousness. The Aṭṭhakathās say that they are so called because “they nourish” (āharanti) their own effects. Although there are other conditions for beings, these four alone are called “food” because they serve as special conditions for the personal life-continuity (ajjhatika santatiyā visesa paccayattā).¹² For edible food (kabalīṅkāra āhāra) is a special condition for the physical body of those beings who subsist on edible food. In the mental body, contact is the special condition for feeling, mental volition for consciousness, and consciousness for name-and-form.

The consciousness of an unawakened person, who is sustained by the four kinds of food, is compared to an artist and his works. The Saṃyutta Aṭṭhakathā explains that the painter or artist represents kamma with its adjuncts (SAT: craving and ignorance, and time and destination, etc); the panel, wall or canvas represents saṃsāra with its three realms. As the painter creates a figure on the panel, even so kamma creates a form in the three realms of existence. As the figure created by an unskilled painter is ugly, deformed and disagreeable, even so the kamma created with a mind dissociated from wisdom gives rise to an ugly, deformed and disagreeable figure. But as the figure created by a skilled painter is beautiful and well-formed, even so the kamma created with a mind associated with wisdom gives rise to a beautiful and well-formed figure.”¹³ The Arahant’s consciousness is compared to a sun-beam shining into a house

¹² MA. I. 209; SA. II. 26; DhsA. 153.

¹³ SA. II. 114; cf. MA. I. 166.



and not settling anywhere in empty space.¹⁴ The statement regarding the fourth and last kind of food begins thus: “Bhikkhus, if there is lust, or delight, or craving for the food that is consciousness, consciousness is established there and grows. If there is no lust, nor delight, nor craving for nutriment that is edible food... for the food that is contact... for the food that is mental volition... for the food that is consciousness... consciousness is not established there and grows. Where consciousness is not established and grows,... I say that it is without sorrow, without anguish, and without despair.”¹⁵ This is how four kinds of food help us to fulfill our personality or to become perfect personality.

In terms of development of personality, there is no distinction between a layman and a monk. In other words, everyone can attain Nibbāna in this very life if he or she practices according to the āhāras (dhamma). The only difference is that the layman has to go forth as a monk or to pass away immediately after attainment of nibbāna.¹⁶ But one also has to remember that the Buddha himself never even once said that Arahant hood could be attained only by the renunciant. For instance, King Suddhodana, the father of the Buddha, became an Arahant and died as a lay Arahant.¹⁷ This is a summary of chapter seven.

Chapter eight mentions the levels of development of personality, that is Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, and Arahant. Sotāpanna has cut off the first three fetters such as identity view, skeptical doubt, and clinging to rites and rituals. Psychologically speaking, the six types of defilement

¹⁴ S. II. 101-104.

¹⁵ S. II. 101-104.

¹⁶ MA. III. 196; Mil. 264; cf 164.

¹⁷ Reference for Arahant: ThgA. 141. Sotāpanna: *Vessantara Jātaka* (No. 547); Sakadāgāmī: J. I. 90; cf. DhA. III. 164 f; Anāgāmī: J. IV. 55 ff and DhA. I. 99.



abandoned by a Sotāpanna are: envy, jealousy, fraud, denigration and domineering.¹⁸ The Sakadāgāmī is an intermediate stage between the Sotāpanna, who still has comparatively strong sensuous desire and ill-will, and the Anāgāmī, who is completely free from sensuous desire and ill-will. Arahants enjoy complete freedom from the ten fetters. He is said to have a perfect personality according to the texts. In the Pāli Canon, qualities of Arahantship are described thus: “When a monk is an Arahant, his fermentations have ended, he has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis, he is dedicated to six things: renunciation, seclusion, non-afflictiveness, the ending of craving, the ending of clinging/sustenance, and non-deludedness.”¹⁹

The last chapter is a summary of the book. Emphasize the study and explains the limitation of the research as well as gives a suggestion for further research.

10.2. Applying āhāra to Daily Life

According to Buddhist texts, people who look deeply can discover the nutriments that feed them, nutriments that can lead to happiness or suffering. The edible food, sense impressions, intention, and consciousness—and these four nutriments can be instrumental to the way individuals

¹⁸ For details on these topic, see Nyanaponika Thera, ed & trans. (1988), *The Simile of the Cloth and The Discourse on Effacement*, The Wheel Publications No. 61/62. (Kandy: BPS).

¹⁹ A. III. 376. Yo so bhante bhikkhu araham khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasaññojano sammadañña vimutto, so cha tṭhānāni adhimutto hoti: nekkhammādhimutto hot, pavivekādhimutto hoti, avyāpajjhādhimutto hoti, taṇhkkhayādhimutto hoti, upādānakkhanyādhimutto hoti, asammohādhimutto ho.



experience their lives and the extent to which they are happy or they suffer.²⁰

10.2.1. Eating Wisely (kabalīṅkār'āhāra)

Who would have thought weight-loss could be so easy! According to *Doṇapāka Sutta* of *Samyutta Nikāya*,²¹ over-eating is the root of obesity, which hastens the aging process and threatens one's life, and that this only occurs when mindfulness is weak or absent. Once day, King Pasenadī of Kosala was complaining to the Buddha that he always felt very sleepy and uncomfortable after taking his meals. The Buddha subsequently advised him to be moderate and contented in his food intake, and also suggested to the King to recite this short verse as a reminder before any of his meals.²²

“When a person is constantly mindful, and knows when enough food has been taken, all their afflictions become more slender — they age more gradually, protecting their lives.”²³

After listening to the Buddha's advice, King Pasenadī became much more comfortable, energetic, healthy and happy.

The Buddha also encouraged his disciples to contemplate before having meals. This is the monk's practice

²⁰ M. I. 46 f.

²¹ S. I. 185 ff.

²² The Commentary to this text (*Doṇapāka Sutta of Samyutta Nikāya*) informs us that the king did not engage Sudassana to utter the verse throughout the entire meal, but only once he had started eating. The idea is not to cultivate an aversion to food, for food itself is not an evil. As with so much else in the Buddha's teaching, it is a matter of understanding cause and effect, and of using food skillfully as a tool for awakening rather than allowing oneself to be caught by the latent tendencies of attachment, aversion and confusion that might be evoked by our relationship to food. For details, see also Piyaseeli Jayasinghe, trans (2011), DhA, vol. II. (Dehiwala: BCC), pp. 151-2.

²³ S. I. 185: Manujassa sadā satīmato, mattaṃ jānato laddhabhojane, tanu tassa bhavanti vedanā, saṅikaṃ jīrati āyu pālayan ti.



which is still being used up to now. It is said that a monk is “moderate in eating” (mattaññutā ca bhattasmim) by contemplating that:

“Reflecting carefully, a Bhikkhu consumes food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the support and maintenance of this body, for avoiding harm, and for assisting the spiritual life, considering: “Thus I shall terminate the old feeling and not arouse a new feeling, and I shall be healthy and blameless and dwell at ease...”

From what has been mentioned, it can be said that this is the purpose of material food intake. We have to reflect and be mindful in order to look deeply into what and how we eat. We should not eat as it happens on autopilot. This mindless eating can easily lead to overeating which then brings suffering into our lives both in terms of weight gain and diseases.

There are several Suttas²⁴ that deal with overeating. According to them, overeating gives rise to bodily discomfort, lack of energy and vitality, and obesity that is associated with various medical problems, e. g., diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, gout, infertility, poor self-image with depression, etc.²⁵

10.2.2. Management of the Six Senses (phass’āhāra)

Most people are constantly being bombarded by sensory stimuli. Their six sense organs-eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind - receive continuous input from the world around

²⁴ S. I. 81 f; A. IV. 166 f.

²⁵ Brownlee, C, “Food Fix: Neurobiology Highlights Similarities between Obesity and Drug Addiction”, *Science News*, Vol. 68, No. 10, 9/3/2005; Weiner, Sydell (1998). “The Addiction of Overeating: Self-Help Groups as Treatment Models”. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 54 (2): 163–167. [doi:10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4679\(199802\)54:2<163::AID-JCLP5>3.0.CO;2-T.PMID 9467760](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4679(199802)54:2<163::AID-JCLP5>3.0.CO;2-T.PMID 9467760).



them, and this input becomes food for a person's consciousness. The onslaught of advertisement, the long hours in front of televisions, the overload of information from newspapers and magazines, all provide food for people's consciousness, feeding their craving, fear, anger, and violence.

We are exposed to so many forms, colors, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and ideas that are toxic and rob our body and consciousness of their well-being. Despair, fear, and depression may all be a result of ingesting too many toxins through sense impressions. Instead, individuals should be mindful of what their senses ingest so they can make choices that leave them feeling peaceful and light, rather than anxious and sad.²⁶

The Buddha compares sense contact as a flayed cow. If she stands exposed to a wall, the creatures dwelling in the wall would nibble at her. If she stands exposed to a tree, the creatures dwelling in the tree would nibble at her. In this way the Buddha suggested to his disciples to understand and be mindful of their feelings as the way they are.²⁷ One should keep watch over the door of sense faculties. For example, after seeing form with the eye, the Buddha advised that a Bhikkhu should be careful :

“...not grasp its marks and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unrestrained, bad unwholesome states of longing and dejection might invade him, he practices restraint over it; he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty...”²⁸

This keeping watch over the door of sense faculties also applied to ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. While

²⁶ S. IV. 132 ff; A. III. 410 ff.

²⁷ S. I. 598.

²⁸ A. I. 212.



keeping watch over every sense faculties, the key success is “guard and restraint.”²⁹

Thus, whatever we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think, all that we sense in our body and mind is food for our sense contact.

10.2.3. Controlling Our Intentions (*manosañcetan’āhāra*)

The third nutriment is intention, which is referred to as volition, or will. Everyone has a desire to obtain what they want, to be happy, and it is intention that directs them toward their goals.³⁰ But those goals can take many forms, and often they focus only on material ends, such as possessions, wealth, fame, position, or revenge.

However, as the Suttas³¹ point out, more often than not, these goals become obstacles to one’s happiness. We need to cultivate the wish to be free of these things so that we can enjoy the wonders of life.

This vision will help to free one from impulses and bring one real happiness. For this reason, the Buddha advised people to look deeply into the nature of their intention to determine whether it pushes them in the direction of suffering or onto the path of happiness.³²

Food of mental intention (*manosañcetanāhāra*) is the deepest desire which drives our actions. The Buddha compares to our love of life, and non desire of death, of our love for happiness, and loathing of pain. If there were two strong men seizing and dragging us to a pit full of charcoal, our aspiration would be to escape from that burning pit.³³ Thus, the Buddha urges us to understand and be mindful of the three craving: 1)

²⁹ A. I. 212.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ S. II. 11-3, 97 ff, 101 ff.

³² A. III. 150.

³³ S. I. 598-599.



Kāmatanḥā which refers to craving for sensuality, 2) Bhavatanḥā which refers to craving for becoming or existence, and 3) Vibhavanḥā which refers to craving for no becoming or non-existence.

10.2.4. Contemplation of the Consciousness (viññāṇ'āhāra)

The fourth nutriment is consciousness, which is sown by the seeds of an individual's past actions, his or her family, and society as a whole. Each day, people feed their consciousness through their words, thoughts, and actions. They can feed it with greed, ignorance, hatred, and pride, or they can nourish it by practicing the *Four Immeasurable Minds* (cattāri brahmavihārās)—love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.³⁴

Whatever they consume, people are constantly feeding their consciousness, and what they consume becomes the substance of their lives. For this reason, they should be careful which nutriments they ingest. Every time we ingest toxins into our consciousness, it is like stabbing ourselves with three hundred sharp knives. We suffer, and our suffering spills out to those around us.

The Buddha compares food of consciousness as a criminal whom the King had condemned to be pierced with a hundred spears in the morning. As the criminal was still alive, the king ordered to inflict him with another hundred spears at noon. The criminal being still alive, the king gave orders for a further hundred spears in the evening. The criminal suffered from terrible pains and sorrow.³⁵

This is how food of consciousness works. Thus, if we are not mindful we are punished as if we were shot by a hundred spears several times a day, or in other words, we are continuously struck by spears throughout our life without our

³⁴ A. II. 128-9.

³⁵ S. I. 599.



knowing that we are struggling from spears of life. It is our direct responsibility to transform and heal ourselves.

10.2.5. Analysis of Methods for Comprehending the Four Kinds of Āhāra

The Buddha said that his role is not to save, but to lead, to lead us from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, from bondage to freedom. It is up to us to work out our emancipation.³⁶ Once King Milinda asked Nāgasena Thera: “Does everyone attain nibbāna?” He replied that, “Not everyone, sire, obtains nibbāna, but he obtains nibbāna who, practising rightly, knows directly the things that should be directly known...”³⁷ Similarly, humanistic psychologists share this line of thought with the Buddha. Maslow said that all humans have the potential for self-actualization. Then why do all of us not attain self-actualization? To be self-actualized, Maslow believed that people should be regularly satisfied in their other needs and must also embrace the B-values.³⁸

³⁶ Dh. V. 276: *Tumhehi kiccamātappaṃ, akkhātāro tathāgatā..*

³⁷ Mendis, N. K. G. (rpt 2001), *The Questions of King Milinda* (Kandy: BPS), p. 57. In spite of the great differences as to type and extent of preparation for arahantship, similarity is required in a great number of respects. As arahantship in principle was considered attainable by everybody (although ‘individual/faculty differences in mental endowment’, puggalavemattatā, D. II. 152; Sn. p. 102; indriyavemattatā, M. I. 437, were recognized), the similarities must mainly consist in aquired traits.

³⁸ Maslow, 1970, pp. 149-202; Jess Feist and Gregory J. Feist (7th ed 2009), *Theories of Personality* (Singapore: McGraw-Hill), p. 299. In studying accounts of peak experiences, Maslow identified a manner of thought he called “Being-cognition” (or “B-cognition”, which is holistic and accepting, as opposed to the evaluative “Deficiency-cognition” or “D-



Puttamamsa Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya³⁹ does not emphasize the rules which people (personality) should follow and instead places focus on how people of all walks of life can apply these methods (four kinds of āhāras) in daily life. The Puttamamsūpama Sutta clearly guarantees that by practicing

cognition”) and values he called “Being-values”. He listed the B-values as:

- WHOLENESS (unity; integration; tendency to one-ness; interconnectedness; simplicity; organization; structure; dichotomy-transcendence; order);
- PERFECTION (necessity; just-right-ness; just-so-ness; inevitability; suitability; justice; completeness; “oughtness”);
- COMPLETION (ending; finality; justice; “it’s finished”; fulfillment; finis and telos; destiny; fate);
- JUSTICE (fairness; orderliness; lawfulness; “oughtness”);
- ALIVENESS (process; non-deadness; spontaneity; self-regulation; full-functioning);
- RICHNESS (differentiation, complexity; intricacy);
- SIMPLICITY (honesty; nakedness; essentiality; abstract, essential, skeletal structure);
- BEAUTY (rightness; form; aliveness; simplicity; richness; wholeness; perfection; completion; uniqueness; honesty);
- GOODNESS (rightness; desirability; oughtness; justice; benevolence; honesty);
- UNIQUENESS (idiosyncrasy; individuality; non-comparability; novelty);
- EFFORTLESSNESS (ease; lack of strain, striving or difficulty; grace; perfect, beautiful functioning);
- PLAYFULNESS (fun; joy; amusement; gaiety; humor; exuberance; effortlessness);
- TRUTH (honesty; reality; nakedness; simplicity; richness; oughtness; beauty; pure, clean and unadulterated; completeness; essentiality).
- SELF-SUFFICIENCY (autonomy; independence; not-needing-other-than-itself-in-order-to-be-itself; self-determining; environment-transcendence; separateness; living by its own laws).

³⁹ S. II. 97-100.



Kabalīṃkāra'āhāra, one can reach the stage of Anāgāmi.⁴⁰ The non-returner (anāgāmi) has totally broken the first five fetters, that is, the lower fetters (orambhāgiya saṃyojana) that bind one to the “lower” realms, that is, the sense world. When he dies here, he would be reborn in the Pure Abodes, propelled by remnants of his good kamma, to finish them off, so that he becomes fully awakened.

The remaining three āhāras are more related to mental factors. The Puttamaṃsa Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya further mentions that one who, understands and practices them collectively, can reach the level of Arahant.⁴¹ The Arahant has abandoned all ten fetters (dasa saṃyojana), so that he would never be reborn. That means he has attained Nibbāna, the end of suffering.

10.2.6. Importance of Sati

Based on what has been said above, we note that all āhāras (kabalīṃkāra'āhāra, phassa'āhāra, mano sañcetan'āhāra and viññāṇa'āhāra) come under one umbrella, that is sati.⁴² All our

⁴⁰ S. II. 99. Puna imam lokam āgaccheyya.

⁴¹ S. II. 99-100. Natthi kiñci uttariṃ karaṇīyanti vadāmi. Cf. M. I. 23: Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahma-cariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāya. Cf. M. I. 40: Eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto viharanto nacirass' eva yass' atthāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti tadanuttaraṃ brahmacariyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi. Cf. M. I. 4: Khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano sammadaññā vimutto. Cf. M. I. 167: Akuppā me vimutti, ayam-antimā jāti, natthi dāni punabhavo.

⁴² S. II. 11-3, 97 ff, 101 ff. Cf. A. III. 251. In the scheme of the Eightfold Path, sati or samādhi stands between sīla and paññā and supplements them both. It is a powerful technique for the acceleration of ethical and intellectual development towards their perfection in nibbāna. An image in Milinda's Questions illustrates nicely how meditation is the focal point and support of all virtuous qualities (kusaladhamma): The King said: Reverend Nāgasena, what is the distinguishing mark of meditation? The



actions such as: eating (āhāra, no. 1), touching (āhāra, no. 2), acting (āhāra, no. 3) and thinking (āhāra, no. 4) should be led by sati.⁴³ For this purpose, during 45 years⁴⁴ (even in the last

distinguishing mark of meditation, sire, is being the chief. All virtuous qualities have meditation as the chief; they lean, tend and incline towards it. Make a simile. As sire, in a pitched roof, all the rafters go to ridge-board, lean towards it and join it, and the ridge-board is said to be their chief—even so, sire, all virtuous qualities have meditation as the chief; they lean, tend and incline towards it (Miln. 38). Ācariya Buddhaghosa says that samādhi is the “virtuous concentration of the mind” (kusala citta ekaggatā, Vism. 69).

Scientific research into mindfulness generally falls under the umbrella of *positive psychology*. Research has been ongoing over the last twenty or thirty years, with a surge of interest over the last decade in particular. For details, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness_%28psychology%29>

⁴³ For more information on this topic, see Tse-fu Kuan, (2008), *Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: A New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pāli, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources* (London: Routledge).

⁴⁴ The other terms for sati are sampajañña, samādhi and appamāda. Appamāda is the last word of the Buddha (D. II. 72 f). Appamāda comes from a root word that suggests memory or recollection; while sampajañña and samādhi suggests a focused and concentrated attention. Etymology gives us a sense of sati, but in order to fully appreciate its distinctive meaning we need to look at how it is used in context. Appamāda is praised in the highest terms: for example appamāda is the wise man’s “foremost treasure” (S. I. 25). It is described as securing both good in ones present life, and in any future life. It bestows long life, health, beauty, and noble birth (S. V. 42). It is through appamāda that all other positive mental states are cultivated. In the Tathāgata Sutta it says: “... whatever wholesome states there are, they are rooted in diligence [i. e., appamāda] converge upon diligence, and diligence is declared to be chief among them. When a bhikkhu is diligent, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path.” (S. V. 42). Other suttas tell us that various qualities are developed and cultivated through appamāda, for instance the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (S. V. 91), and the Five Faculties (S. V. 232). Appamāda causes unarisen wholesome states to arise, and the Buddha declares that it is through appamāda that he won enlightenment (A. I. 10, V. 20). The



moment of his breath), the Buddha continued to advice his followers to develop sati or mindfulness, and to recognize and avoid the evil mental factors stated earlier as they arise in the mind. This can be done by cultivating wholesome mental factors such as alobha, adosa or mettā, karunā, muditā, which are the opposite of jealousy, and to practice upekkhā or balance of mind. The most important mental factor that one should develop is insight meditation or vipassanā bhāvanā.⁴⁵ It will make one see things as they are (yathābhūta-ñānadassana)⁴⁶ and not as they appear to be.

appamādavagga chapter of the Dhammapada is essentially an eulogy to appamāda in similar terms (A. I. 50). The Mahāmaṅgala Sutta mentions appamāda as one the ten qualities that are the highest blessing (A. I. 50). Clearly appamāda is a very important quality for the Buddhist, but what actually is it? In the Saḷāyatanaśamṃyutta, a sutta tells us that appamāda is associated with the quality of restraint: “If one dwells with restraint [saṃvuta] over the eye faculty, the mind is not soiled among forms cognizable by the eye. If the mind is not soiled, gladness is born. When one is gladdened, rapture is born. When the mind is uplifted by rapture, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated. When the mind is concentrated, phenomena become manifest [dhammānaṃ pātubhāvā], one is reckoned as ‘one who dwells diligently (See Dhammapada, chapter 11 “appamādavagga”)’”. So appamāda is the opposite of the qualities of intoxication (pamāda), obsession (pariyādāya), or infatuation (madanīyesu), with sensory experience. Positively it is a state of non-intoxication or sobriety which results in calm body and concentrated mind, and this enables one to see things as they really are, and to be liberated from suffering.

⁴⁵ A. I. 61 (new ed).

⁴⁶ Nyanatiloka, *BD*, p. 247.

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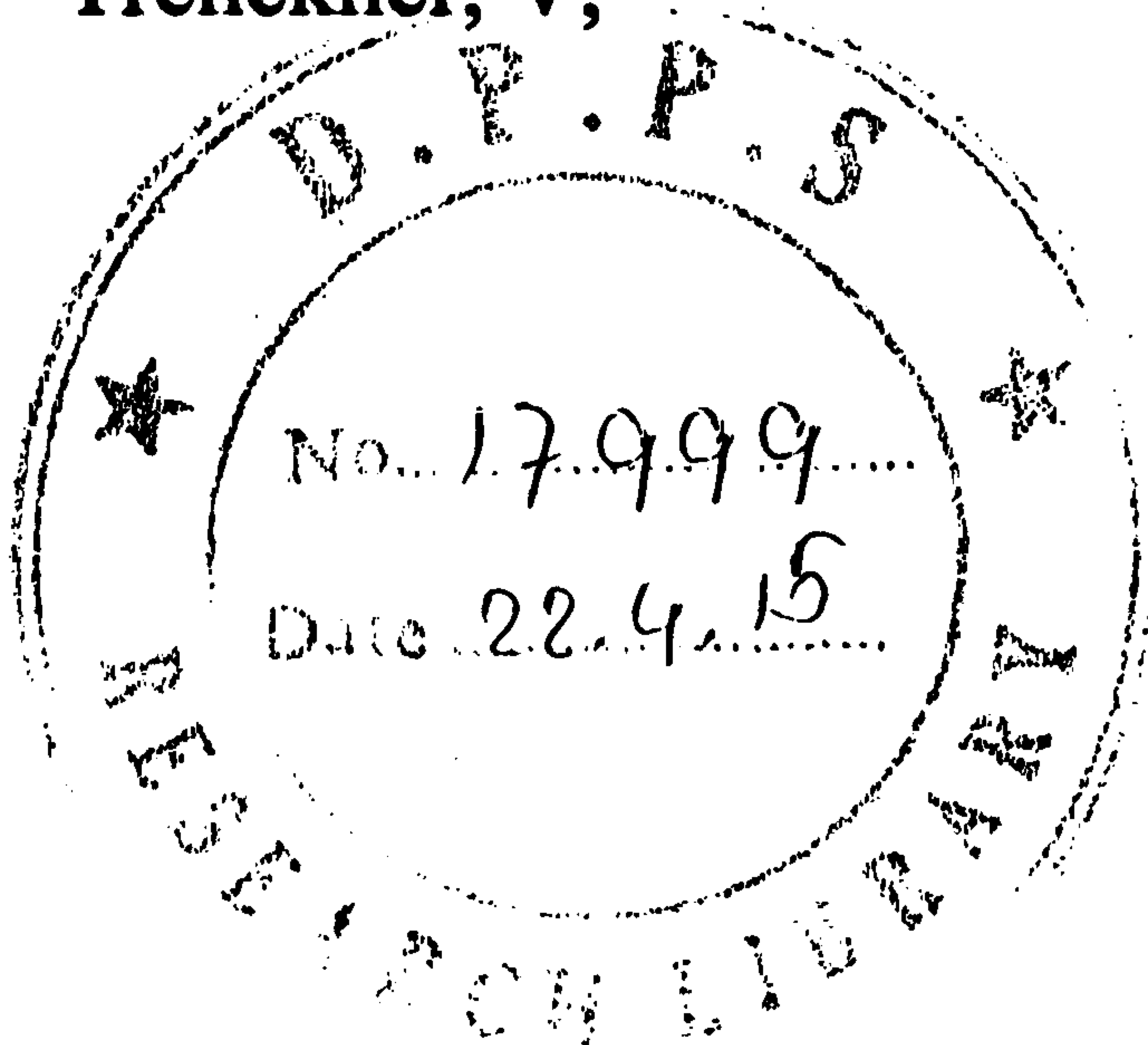
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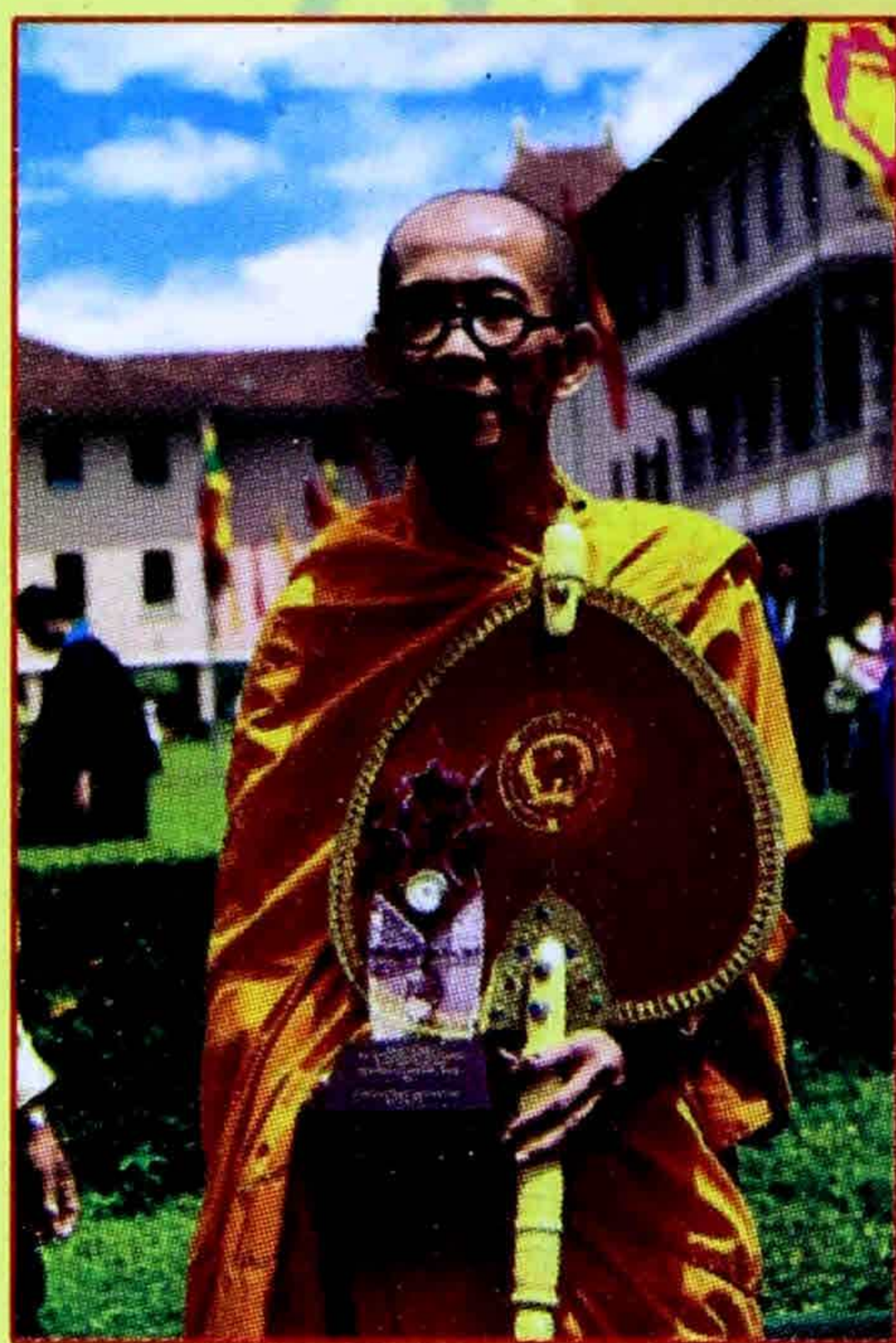


Religion / Psychology

Dr. Naw Kham La Dhammasami's book is an important addition to the lore of personality psychology books. As an Organisation Development specialist, I am interested in how personality affects job performance, attitudes, social relationships, health in the organisation, and he has given me additional tools and insight into my own field. It is in my opinion a must read for professionals and academics interested in psychotherapy or the importance of personality development, as it is a thorough study of the subject from a Buddhist perspective. He has moved beyond those who have written popular work which are blends of Western Psychology and Buddhism, and present here a synthesis of all the principles and theories of personality mainly based on Theravāda teachings. Practitioners may at times find it a little too academic but it is certainly a precious reference book.

I recommend this publication to all those who work to impact people's quality of life and who wish to bring about this change differently.

Dr. Leung Tuk Darga Kim
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Naw Kham La Dhammasami received his Ph.D. degree in Buddhist Psychology from University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. He has written a dozen books, including the best-selling *iBuddhist Psychiatry* (Second edition, Third printing) and *iDhamma: The Art of Stress Management* (Third printing). He is a Founder and President of *Tai Psychological Association* (TPA). In addition, he is a life member of the *Sri Lanka Association for*

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ISBN 978-955-7768-00-7



Price Rs.950/=