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**The Buddha on Meditation
and
Higher States of Consciousness**

DANIEL GOLEMAN

THE WHEEL PUBLICATION Nos. 189/190

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In the Buddhist doctrine, mind is the starting point, the focal point, and also, as the liberated and purified mind of the Saint, the culminating point.

— Nyanaponika, *Heart of Buddhist
Meditation*

INTRODUCTION

The predicament of Westerners setting out to explore those states of consciousness discontinuous with the normal is like that of the early sixteenth century European cartographers who pieced together maps from

¹ To Acharya Anagarika Munindra of the International Meditation Center, Bodh Gaya, India, and S. N. Goenka of Bombay, for their instrumental instruction in the teachings of the *Visuddhimagga*; to Baba Ram Dass for our conversations during the preparation of this paper; to Joseph Goldstein for his seminal comments on the mathematics of higher states of consciousness; and to Maharaj-ji for arranging my stay in India so as to make possible this work; I am deeply and humbly grateful.

explorers' reports of the New World they had not themselves seen. Just as Pizarro's report of the New World would have emphasized Peru and South America and underplayed North America, while Hudson's would be biased toward Canada and North America to the detriment of South America, so with explorers in psychic space: each report of states of consciousness is a unique configuration specific to the experiences of the voyager who sets it down. That the reports overlap and agree makes us more sure that the terrain within has its own topography, independent of and reflected in the mapping of it. The differences in maps show us that there are many routes to these states, and that they can be reached in distinct ways and told of within disparate systems of language, metaphor, and symbol.

Perhaps the most thorough maps of the realms of consciousness today are among the teachings of the religious systems of the East. The Tibetan *bardo* or the *loka* of the Vedas and Buddhism are in their esoteric sense metaphors for those mental states traditionally dealt with by Western psychology, as well as for a range of states not yet widely acknowledged by psychology in the West. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1968), for example, gives a psychological interpretation of terms found in Theravada scriptures for these terms: "hell" means anxiety; *preta loka*, the "realm of hungry ghosts," refers to motivation based on craving or deficiency; *asura loka*, the "realm of frightened ghosts," is irrational fear; and "heaven" is sensual bliss of the highest order. All these states exist here and now. Beyond these more familiar states the Eastern systems

go on to describe realms of mind that have only recently begun to be recognized and investigated by psychologists in the West. What has for ages constituted a fundamental transcendental religious experience, and so been described in the terminology of religious belief systems, is on the verge of being translated into the framework of modern psychology, itself a belief system, as "altered" or "higher states of consciousness" (ASC and HSC, respectively).

This paper is concerned with a subcategory of ASC: meditation-specific states of consciousness, or MSC. Meditation states are distinct from ASC in that they include only those states attained through meditation that transcend normal conditions of sensory awareness and cognition. ASC subsumes a wider range than does MSC: altered states include, e.g., those induced by hypnosis and psychedelics (topics beyond the scope of this paper) as well as MSC. In their effects on the three normal states of waking, dreaming and sleeping, MSCs produce a higher state, in accord with Tart's (1971) criteria for HSC: (1) all functions of "lower" states are available — i. e., waking, dreaming, sleeping—and (2) some new functions derivative of meditative states are present in addition. What I have called elsewhere (1971) the "fifth state" has by definition the attributes of an HSC; the meditation-specific states to be discussed here are not HSC within Tart's formulation.

As systematic investigation of states of consciousness comes to fruition, seeming differences among traditional sources in descriptions and delimitations of meditation and higher states may prove to be

due to the individual idiosyncracies of those who have experienced and told of them, rather than to the innate nature of the states themselves. Since most of the teachings about MSC and HSC are within a religious framework, the particular belief system in terms of which the experiences of an HSC are interpreted also must be seen as accounting for some of the variance. Here, as elsewhere, the Schachter (1962) effect prevails: cognitive predispositions determine the interpretation and labelling of internal stimuli. Ramana Maharshi, for example, a being who has experienced higher states himself, says of St. Paul's great experience on the Damascus road that, when he returned to normal consciousness, he interpreted it in terms of Christ and the Christians because at the time he was preoccupied with the thought of them; St. Paul then identified his realization with this predominant thought (Chadwick, 1966). A more recent example is R. M. Bucke (1961), who spontaneously entered a high state while riding home after an evening of reading Whitman's Vedantic poetry, and subsequently saw his experience in terms of "cosmic consciousness." As Suzuki (1958) points out, in every religion it has been the core experience of an altered state which has preceded and been foundation for the subsequent structures of institution and theology. Too often it is the latter that have survived rather than the former; thus the modern crisis of the established churches might be seen in terms of the disappearance in our age of personally experienced transcendental states, the "living spirit" which is the common base of all religions.

This paper presents a detailed discussion of the *Visuddhimagga* account of Gotama Buddha's teachings on meditation and higher states of consciousness—perhaps the most detailed and extensive report extant of one being's explorations within the mind. On the basis of these teachings, implications are discussed for research in the psychophysiology of meditation, and a framework of landmarks are proposed for methodical laboratory tests of meditation and meditative states of consciousness.

VISUDDHIMAGGA: THE BUDDHA'S MAP OF HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Perhaps the broadest and most detailed treatment of higher states of consciousness is the encyclopedic *Abhidhamma*, attributed to the disciples' rendition of more than forty years of Gotama Buddha's discourses. Some of the basic doctrines of the *Abhidhamma* were summarized in the fifth century by Buddhaghosa in his voluminous *Visuddhimagga*, the "path to purification."¹ Buddhaghosa explains that "purification" should be understood as *nirvana*. In the course of delineating this path virtually every

1 The most authoritative translation of the *Visuddhimagga* is by Bhikkhu Nanamoli; published by Semage & Co., 70 Prince Street, Colombo 11, Sri Lanka. In addition to the translation by Bhikkhu Nanamoli, I have also consulted contemporary commentaries on the *Visuddhimagga* by Bhikkhu Soma (1949), Conze (1956), Dhammaratana (1964), Kashyap (1954), Lama Govinda (1969), Ledi Sayadaw (1965), Mahasi Sayadaw (1965, 1970), Narada Thera (1956) Nyanaponika Thera (1949, 1962, 1968), Nyana-tiloka (1952a, b), and P. Vajiranana.

other path to meditative states is touched on; the Buddha, it is said, traversed them all before attaining the nirvanic state. Indeed, the system of paths and their respective states given in the *Visuddhimagga* encompasses or intersects the major practical teachings of most all the Eastern schools newly transplanted to the West.

The Buddha's system begins with *sīla*—virtue or moral purity—the systematic cultivation of thought, word, and deed, converting energies spent unprofitably into profitable or wholesome directions. “Wholesome” is understood to be the absence of greed, hate, and delusion which can lead one toward meditative states of consciousness, and finally to nirvana. In the process that culminates in nirvana, *sīla* is the essential foundation, the “cool-headedness” which serves as the basis for attaining MSC. *Sīla* is one of three major divisions of training in the Buddha's schema, the other two being *samādhi* or concentration and *prajñā* or insight. There is a psychological interaction effect between *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā*. Effortful *sīla* facilitates initial concentration, which enables sustained insight. Established in either *samādhi* or *prajñā*, *sīla*, formerly an act of the will, becomes effortless and natural. *Prajñā* can reinforce purity while aiding concentration; strong concentration can have both insight and purity as by-products. The dynamic of interaction is not linear; the development of any one of the three facilitates the other two. There is no necessary progression, but rather a simultaneity and spiral of interactions in the course of traversing any given meditation path. Though

the presentation here is of necessity linear, it should be kept in mind that in actuality there is a complex interrelation in an individual's development of moral purity, concentration, and insight. These are three facets of a single process.

To attain effortless *sīla*, ego must "die"—i.e., desires originating from thoughts of self cease to be the primary determinants of behavior. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, if this "death" comes about through development of *samādhi*, ego will remain in the form of latent tendencies which will remain inoperative so long as mind is concentrated and will bloom again when concentration wanes. If ego death is due to maturing of *prajñā*, ego will cease to exist as an operative force in behavior, though it may continue in thought as old habits of mind; with full insight mind remains disenchanted with ego desires which are now realized to be impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self. On first attainment of nirvana (i.e., 'stream-entry'), *sīla* is perfected, the potential for impure acts having been utterly relinquished. From the Eastern viewpoint, this endstate is *vairagya*, choiceless *sīla*. *Sīla* is not merely abstention from acting in proscribed ways, but also involves avoiding the intent to act or speak in those ways, for intentions are seen as the root of action. Thus, e.g., the *Visuddhimagga* urges the meditator, should lustful thoughts arise, immediately to counter those thoughts by contemplating the loathsomeness of the body. The object of the practice of moral purity is to free the meditator from thoughts of remorse, guilt, or shame.

What was initially effortful practice facilitates a change in consciousness to higher states where the attitudes embodied in sīla are an effortless and natural by-product of the state itself. In these states the laws of thought and behavior are determined by the experiences of bliss, contentment, and detachment that prevail there. The old psychologies of the West, based on fundamental assumptions such as sexual dynamisms and the urge to power, cease to apply in these new realms of the mind, just as Newtonian physics was found to be inadequate for understanding physics within the atom.¹ Meditative and higher states are from the perspective of most Western psychology “transcendental” in that they are a realm beyond that particular body of thought, but MSCs and HSCs are not without laws and rules of their own.

Sīla in the Visuddhimagga tradition begins with the observance of the codes of discipline for laity, novices, and fully ordained monks. The precepts for laity are but five: abstaining from killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, lying and intoxicants. For novices the list expands to ten; for monks it mushrooms to 227 prohibitions and observances regulating monastic life. While the practice of sīla varies in accord with one’s mode of life, its intent is the same: it is the necessary purification of one’s deeds and speech which can serve as preparation for

1 One exception is the late Abraham Maslow’s (1970) “Theory Z,” which could, along with the work of R. Assagioli and C. G. Jung, become for the West the cornerstone for a psychological understanding of HSC.

meditation. On one level these are codes for proper social behavior; in this Buddhist tradition, that level is secondary in importance to the life of motivational purity proper behavior foreshadows. Sīla is to be understood not only in the ordinary external sense of propriety, but also as mental attitudes or as psychological preconditions out of which right speech, action, and thought arise. Behavior is to be controlled insofar as it affects consciousness. Sīla is conscious and intentional restraint of action designed to produce a calmed and subdued mind. Purity of morality has only the purity of mind as its goal.

Satipaṭṭhāna

Because a controlled mind is the goal of sīla, its practices include restraint of the senses. The means for doing so is *satipaṭṭhāna*, or mindfulness. Control is exercised over the sense organs through cultivation of the habit of simply noticing sensory perceptions, and not allowing them to stimulate the mind into thought-chains of reaction to them. This attitude of paying sensory stimuli bare attention, when systematically developed into *vipassanā*, seeing things as they are, becomes the avenue to the nirvanic state. In daily practice it facilitates detachment toward one's internal universe of perception and thought. One becomes an onlooker to his own stream of consciousness, preparing the way to those states that transcend normal consciousness.

In the initial stages, before becoming firmly grounded in mindfulness, one is vulnerable to distractions from external circumstances. Accordingly

the *Visuddhimagga* gives instructions to the would-be meditator for what constitutes an optimum life setting. One must engage in “right livelihood” so that the source of financial support will not be cause for misgivings. In the case of monks, professions such as astrology, palm-reading, and dream interpretation are expressly forbidden, while the life of a mendicant is recommended. Possessions should be kept to a minimum. A monk is to possess only eight articles: three robes, a belt, a begging bowl, a razor, a sewing needle, and sandals. Food should be taken in moderation, enough to ensure physical comfort but less than would make for drowsiness. One’s dwelling should be aloof from the world, a place of solitude; for householders who cannot live in isolation, a room should be set aside solely for meditation. Undue concern for the body should be avoided, but in case of sickness appropriate medicine should be obtained. The four requisites of clothing, food, dwelling, and medicine are to be acquired only insofar as they are necessary to well-being, and without greed, so that even one’s material necessities will be pure and untainted.

Since the state of one’s mind is seen to be affected by the state of mind of one’s associates, it is recommended that the meditator surrounds himself with likeminded people. This is one of the advantages of a *sangha* (Sanskrit: *satsang*), narrowly defined as those who have attained the nirvanic state and, applied in its widest sense, the community of people on the path. Meditation is facilitated by the company of mindful or concentrated persons, and is impeded by “hanging out” with those who are agitated, distracted, and immersed in worldly

concerns. The latter are likely to engage in talk which does not lead to detachment, dispassion, or tranquillity. The sort of topics typical of such unprofitable talk are enumerated by the Buddha as (from Nyanaponika Thera, 1962, p. 172):

Talk about kings, thieves, ministers, armies, famine, and war; about eating, drinking, clothing, and lodging; about garlands, perfumes, relatives, vehicles, cities and countries; about women and wine, the gossip of the street and well; about ancestors and various trifles; tales about the origin of the world, talk about things being so or otherwise, and similar matters.

Hindrances

Having gained the advantages and encouragement to be found in a sangha and become firmly set in meditation, the determined meditator at a later stage may find to be obstacles what once were aids. The *Visuddhimagga* lists ten categories of potential attachments or hindrances to progress in meditation: (1) any fixed dwelling place if its upkeep is the cause of worry, (2) family, if their welfare causes concern, (3) accruing gifts or reputation which involves spending time with admirers, (4) a following of students or being occupied with teaching, (5) activities or projects, having "something to do," (6) travelling about, (7) people dear to one whose needs demand attention, (8) illness involving treatment, (9) theoretical studies unaccompanied by practice, and (10) supernormal psychic powers, the practice of which becomes more interesting than meditation. The principle underlying this list is that release from worldly

obligations frees one for single-minded pursuit of meditation. This is purification in the sense of freeing the mind from affairs that might disturb it.

There is a further set of thirteen practices of self-purification treated in the *Visuddhimagga* apart from sīla. These ascetic practices are optional in the “middle way” of the Buddha. If someone set on a contemplative life should find any of them conducive to that aim, he may practice them but in their observance must be discreet, preferably doing them without anyone noticing. These ascetic means to purification include wearing robes made only of rags; begging for food; eating only one bowl of food, and just once a day; living in the forest under a tree; dwelling in a cemetery or in the open; sitting up throughout the night. Though optional, the Buddha praises those who follow these modes of living “for the sake of frugality, contentedness, austerity, detachment,” while criticizing those who pride themselves on practicing austerities and look down on others. In all facets of sīla, spiritual pride mars purity. The goal of sīla, is a mind unconcerned with externals, calm and ripe for the inward turning of attention that is meditation.

SAMADHI: THE PATH OF CONCENTRATION

With the development of sīla a psychological base is prepared for training in samādhi, concentration. The essence of concentration is nondistractedness; sīla is the systematic pruning away of sources of distraction. Now the meditator’s work is to attain unification of mind, one-pointedness. The stream-of-thought

normally contains myriad concomitants. The goal of samādhi is to break and steady the thought continuum by fixing the mind on a single thought. That one thought is the subject of meditation. In samādhi the mind is not only directed toward the subject, but penetrates it, is absorbed in it, and becomes one with it. The concomitants of the thought-stream are prevented from dissipation by being firmly fixed on that one point.

Anything that can be the object of attention can be the subject for samādhi meditation. Samādhi is simply sustained attention to a single point. But the character of the object attended to has definite consequences for the outcome of meditation. The compilation of sutras known as the *Nikāyas* gives the fullest list of subjects of meditation recommended by the Buddha, elaborating 101. The *Visuddhimagga* enumerates 40 meditation subjects:

ten *kasinas*, contemplation devices: earth, water, fire, air, dark-blue, yellow, blood-red, white, light, bounded space;

ten *asubhas*, loathsome and decaying corpses: e.g., a bloated corpse, a gnawed corpse, a worm-infested corpse, a skeleton;

ten reflections: on the attributes of the Buddha, his Teaching, the sangha, one's own sīla, one's own liberality, one's own possession of godly qualities, or on the inevitability of death; contemplation on the 32 parts of the body, or on in-and-out breathing;

four sublime states: lovingkindness, compassion, joy in the joy of others, and equanimity;

four formless states: contemplation of infinite space, infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, and the realm of neither-perception-nor nonperception;

the loathsomeness of food; and

the four physical elements (earth, air, fire, water) as abstract forces.

Each of these subjects has characteristic consequences for the nature, depth, and by-products of concentration. All of them can serve as bases for developing concentration to the depth necessary for attaining the nirvanic state. The concentration produced by those of a complicated nature—e.g., the attributes of the Buddha—will be less unified than that produced by a simple object—e.g., the earth kasina, a claycolored wheel. Apart from the quality of concentration produced by a given meditation subject, each has distinct psychological by-products. The meditation on lovingkindness, for example, has among its fruits: the meditator sleeps and wakes in comfort, dreams no evil dreams, is dear to all beings, his mind is easily concentrated, his expression serene, and he dies unconfused. Perhaps the most important consequence of a subject is the depth of absorption—*jhāna*—it will produce.

MEDITATION SUBJECT	HIGHEST JHANA LEVEL ATTAINABLE
Kasinas; Mindfulness of breath; Neither-perception-nor-nonperception	Eighth
No-thing-ness	Seventh
Infinite consciousness	Sixth
Infinite space	Fifth
Equanimity	Fourth
Lovingkindness; Selfless joy; Compassion	Third
Body parts; Corpses	First
Reflections; Elements; Loathsomeness of food	Access

The Buddha recognized that persons of different temperaments would be more suited to some meditation subjects than to others. The typology of temperaments he set down as guidelines for advising which person should be given which subject has four main types: (1) one disposed to hatred, (2) the lustful, deluded, or excitable, (3) one prone to faith, (4) the intelligent.¹ Subjects suitable for type (1) are the four sublime states and the four color kasinas; for type (2) the 10 asubhas, body parts, and respiration; for type (3) the first six reflections; for type (4) reflection on death, the loathsomeness of food, and the physical elements. The remaining subjects are suitable for all cognitive dispositions.

¹ This typology parallels a psychoanalytic scheme of character types based on cognitive styles; in the same order (Shapiro, 1961): (1) the "paranoid," who sees others as separate and suspect, (2) the "hysteric," who judges and acts on the first impulse, (3) the "obsessive-compulsive," who looks to others for direction, and (4) the "psychopath" who perceives accurately but restructures reality as he wishes.

The ideal meditation teacher was the Buddha, who, it is said, had developed the power to know the mind and heart of others, and so could match perfectly each person with the appropriate subject for concentration. In lieu of the Buddha, the *Visuddhimagga* advises the would-be meditator to seek out a teacher according to his level of attainment in meditation, the most highly accomplished being the best teacher. His support and advice are critical in making one's way through unfamiliar mental terrain. The pupil "takes refuge" in his teacher, and must enter a contract of surrender to him. What is surrendered is the propensities of ego—"hindrances"—which might prevent the student from purposefully pursuing meditation to the point where those ego propensities are transcended. But the responsibility for salvation is laid squarely on the student's shoulders, not on the teacher's; the teacher is not a traditional Eastern guru, but a "good friend" on the path. The teacher will point the way, the student must walk for himself. The essence of the role of teacher in this tradition is given in the lines from the *Zenrin*:

If you wish to know the road up the mountain,
You must ask the man who goes back and forth on it.

Jhāna: Levels of Absorption

Having found a suitable teacher and been instructed in an appropriate subject, and established to some degree in *sīla*, the meditator begins in earnest. This first stage is marked by an internal psychological tension between concentration on the primary object of attention—the meditation subject—and distracting

thoughts, which hinder concentration. These hindrances mainly take the form of: desires; ill-will, despair, and anger; sloth and torpor; agitation and worry; and doubt and scepticism. With sustained effort there comes the first moment when these hindrances are wholly subdued, marked by a quickening of concentration. At this moment those concomitants of consciousness that will mature into full absorption come into dominance. This is the first noteworthy attainment of samādhi; because it is the state verging on full absorption, it is called "access" concentration.

This state of concentration is comparable to a child not yet able to stand steady but always trying to do so. The factors of mind characteristic of full absorption are not strong at the access level; their emergence is precarious, and the mind fluctuates between them and "inner speech," the usual ruminations and wandering thoughts. The meditator is still receptive to sensory input and remains aware of environmental noises and body states. The primary object is a dominant thought, but it does not yet fully occupy the mind. At this stage there may emerge (though not always) any of the following: strong feelings of zest or rapture, happiness and pleasure, equanimity, initial application to the primary object as though striking at it, or sustained application to the primary object as though repeatedly noting it. Sometimes there are luminous shapes or flashes of bright light, especially if the meditation subject is a kasina or respiration. Visionary experiences associated with MSC occur at this level, where mind is purified but still can be occupied with name and

form. There may also be a sensation of bodily lightness, as though floating in the air. Access concentration is a precarious attainment, and if not solidified into full absorption at the same sitting, it must be guarded between sessions by avoiding distracting endeavors or encounters.

First jhāna

With continued application of mind to the primary object comes the first moment marking a total break with normal consciousness. This is full absorption, or jhāna. The mind suddenly seems to sink into the object and remains fixed in it. Hindering thoughts totally cease. There is neither sensory perception nor the usual awareness of one's body; bodily pain cannot be felt. Apart from the initial and sustained attention to the primary object, there are only rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness. There is a subtle distinction between "rapture" and "bliss": rapture at the level of this first jhāna is likened to the initial pleasure and excitement of getting a long-sought object; bliss is the enjoyment of that object. Rapture may be experienced as raising of the hairs on the body, as momentary joy flashing and disappearing like lightning, as showering through the body again and again in waves, as the sensation of levitation, or as the pervasive suffusion of thrilling happiness. Bliss is a more subdued state of continued ecstasy. One-pointedness is the property of mind that centers it in the jhanic state. The first experience of jhāna lasts but a single moment of consciousness. With continued practice the jhānic state can be maintained for progressively longer intervals. Until the jhāna is mastered, it is an unstable

attainment which might be lost. Full mastery is stabilized when the meditator can attain this first jhāna whenever, wherever, as soon as, and for as long as he wishes.

PATH OF CONCENTRATION

FORMLESS STATES	{ Eighth	Neither-perception-nor-nonperception. Equanimity and one-pointedness.
	{ Seventh	Awareness of no-thing-ness. Equanimity and one-pointedness.
	{ Sixth	Objectless infinite consciousness. Equanimity and one-pointedness.
	{ Fifth	Consciousness of infinite space. Equanimity and one-pointedness.
MATERIAL STATES	{ Fourth	Equanimity and one-pointedness. Bliss and all feelings of bodily pleasure cease. Concentration imperturbable. Breath ceases.
	{ Third	Feelings of bliss, one-pointedness, and equanimity. Rapture ceases.
	{ Second	Feelings of rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness. No thought of primary object.
	{ First Jhāna	Hindering thoughts, sensory perception, and awareness of painful body states all cease. Initial and unbroken, sustained attention to primary object. Feelings of rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness.
	{ Access	Hindering thoughts overcome; other thoughts remain—awareness of sensory inputs and body states. Primary object dominant thought. Feelings of rapture, happiness, equanimity; initial and sustained thoughts of primary object; flashes of light; or bodily lightness.

Second jhāna

In the further course of meditation one-pointed-ness will become more and more intensified by the successive elimination of rapture, bliss, and attention; the energy invested in the eliminated factors becomes absorbed by one-pointedness at each higher jhānic level (see above). The process of becoming totally one-pointed proceeds, after mastery of the first jhāna, with the systematic elimination of initial and sustained attention to the primary object, which, on reflection after emerging from the jhānic state, seems gross relative to the other mental factors. Just as the hindrances were overcome in attaining access, and all thoughts were stilled in attaining the first jhāna, applied and sustained attention to the primary object are abandoned at the threshold of this second jhāna. The procedure for this requires entering the first level of absorption on the basis of the primary object, and then, having previously so resolved, turning the mind toward the feelings of rapture, bliss, and one-pointedness, free of any idea of the primary object. This level of absorption is both more subtle and more stable than the first; mind is now totally free of any verbal formations or ideas of form embodied in the primary object. This jhāna is to be mastered as before.

Third jhāna

After mastery, on emerging from and reviewing the second jhāna, the meditator sees the factor of rapture—a form of excitement—as gross compared to bliss and one-pointedness. The third level of jhāna can be attained by again contemplating the primary object,

and abandoning sequentially thoughts of the object, and then rapture. The third level of absorption is marked by a feeling of equanimity and impartiality toward even the highest rapture, which manifests with the fading away of rapture. This jhāna is extremely subtle, and mind would be pulled back to rapture without this newly emergent equanimity. An exceedingly sweet bliss fills the meditator, and on emerging from this state he is aware of bliss throughout his body. Because the bliss of this level is accompanied by equanimity, mind is kept one-pointed in these subtle dimensions, resisting the pull of rapture. Having mastered the third jhāna as before, and on reviewing it, the mediator sees bliss as gross and 'disturbing compared to one-pointedness and equanimity.

Fourth jhāna

Proceeding again through the jhānic sequence, with the abandonment of all forms of mental pleasure, the meditator attains the fourth level. With the total cessation of bliss, the factors of equanimity and one-pointedness achieve full strength and clarity. All mental states that might oppose these remaining two factors have been overcome. Feelings of bodily pleasure are fully abandoned; feelings of pain ceased at the first jhāna. There is not a single sensation or thought. Mind rests with one-pointedness in equanimity at this extremely subtle level. Just as mind has become progressively more still at each level of absorption, breath has become more calm. At this fourth level, breath, it is said, ceases altogether. Concentration here is imperturbable; the meditator will emerge after a time limit set before entering this state.

Each Jhāna rests on that below. In entering any jhāna, mind traverses successively each lower level, eliminating its constituents one by one. With practice the traversal of jhānic levels becomes almost instantaneous, the mind residing at each level on the way for but a few moments of consciousness. As mental factors are eliminated, concentration is intensified.

The “formless jhānas

The next step in development of concentration culminates in the four states called “formless.” While the first four jhānas are attained by concentration on a material form or some concept derived therefrom, the formless states are attained by passing beyond all perception of form. While the first four jhānas are attained by removing mental factors, with the formless jhānas the complete removal of one stage constitutes the next attainment. All the formless jhānas share the factors of one-pointedness and equanimity, but at each level these factors are progressively refined.

The first formless absorption—the fifth jhāna—is attained by first entering the fourth jhāna through any of the kasinas. Mentally extending the limits of the kasina to the largest extent imaginable, the meditator turns his attention to the space touched by it. With this infinite space as the object of contemplation, and with the full maturity of equanimity and one-pointedness, mind now abides in a sphere where all perceptions of form have ceased. Mind is so firmly set in this level of sublime consciousness that no external sensory input can perturb or disrupt it. Still, the tendencies of the

mechanisms associated with sensory perception exist in the fifth jhāna, though they are not attended to: the absorption would be broken should attention turn to them.

The next level is attained (fifth jhāna having been mastered) by achieving the consciousness of infinite space, and then turning attention to the element of infinite awareness. Thus the thought of infinite space is abandoned, while objectless infinite consciousness remains. This marks the sixth jhāna. Having mastered the sixth, the meditator attains the seventh jhāna by first entering the sixth and then turning contemplation to the nonexistence of infinite consciousness. The seventh jhāna is thus absorption with no-thing-ness, or the void, as its object. That is, consciousness has as its object the awareness of absence of any object. Mastering this jhāna, the meditator then reviews it and finds any perception at all a disadvantage, its absence being more sublime.

So motivated, the meditator can attain the eight jhāna by first entering the seventh, and then turning attention to the aspect of peacefulness, and away from perception of the void. The delicacy of this operation is suggested by the stipulation that there must be no hint of desire to attain this peacefulness, nor to avoid perception of no-thing-ness.

Attending to the peacefulness, he reaches the ultra-subtle state where there are only residual mental formations. There is no gross perception here at all: thus "no-perception"; there is ultra-subtle perception: thus "not-nonperception." This eighth jhāna is called

the sphere of “neither-perception-nor-nonperception.” The same degree of subtlety of existence is here true of all concomitants of consciousness. No mental states are decisively present, yet residuals remain in a degree of near-absence. The *Visuddhimagga* says of mental states in the eighth jhāna, “not having been, they come to be; having come to be they vanish.” Lama Govinda (1969) describes it as the ultimate limit of perception. As with mind, so with body: metabolism becomes progressively more still through the formless jhānas until the eighth, where Kashyap’s (1954) characterization of cognition applies, too, to physiological processes: it is a state “so extremely subtle that it cannot be said whether it is or is not.”

The states of consciousness embodied in the jhānas are characteristic of what are called in the *Visuddhimagga* system the “Brahma realms,” the “planes of illumination,” and the “pure abodes.” Just as the jhānas are out of the relative world of sense-perception, thought, time, and space, are permeated with bliss and/or equanimity, embody infinite consciousness, and so on, so these other planes of existence are seen as existing solely in those jhānic dimensions. Beings may be born into an existence on one or another of these planes according to karmas of past lifetimes, especially the degree to which one has mastered jhānas in a human birth.¹ Thus, for example, developing the second jhāna and

¹ These “kingdoms of heaven” are sometimes called in other cosmological teachings “astral planes,” *deva lokas*, *bardos*, and the like.

practicing it to the highest degree is said to bring rebirth in the realm of "radiant Brahmas," from whose bodies rays of light are emitted like flashes of lightning.

The section on supernormal powers is the one part of the *Visuddhimagga* most dubious from the standpoint of the West, since it treats as real, events that overleap the bounds of even the most advanced physical sciences. The *Visuddhimagga* enumerates among these supernormal accomplishments: knowing the minds of others, knowing any past or future event, materialization of objects, seeing and hearing at great distances, walking on water, flying through the air, and so on. More interesting, the *Visuddhimagga* describes in technical detail how these feats are performed, while Western science at present cannot reconcile their possibility.¹ Yet every school of meditation acknowledges them as byproducts of advanced stages of mastery, if only to caution against their misuse. The *Visuddhimagga* sees them as fruits of concentration but a hindrance to full insight, and sets down stiff provisos as prerequisites for

1 Tart (1971) describes as a "state-specific science" one where a group of practitioners are able to achieve a certain state of consciousness and agree with one another on their common attainment of that state, and then investigate further areas of interest—e.g., the interaction of that state with "reality." By these criteria, the Buddha and his meditating disciples are analogous to a principal investigator and coinvestigators in the science of MSC, the *Visuddhimagga* and other Buddhist teachings are their findings, and the supernormal powers described here are a representative body of technology generated by their research efforts.

supernormal powers, warning that they are hard to maintain and the slightest thing breaks them. The required degree of mind-mastery for their use is formidable. One must first have full proficiency in fourteen methods of mind-control, beginning with achievement of all eight jhānas, using as a base each of the eight kasinas up to the white one, and including such feats as skipping both alternate kasinas and alternate jhānas—i.e., attaining first jhāna on the earth kasina, then third jhāna on the fire kasina, etc.—in both forward and reverse order. The *Visuddhimagga* estimates that of those who try, only one person in 100,000 or one million will achieve the prerequisite level of mastery. It further marks as a “blemish” wanting it to be known one can practice these things (little wonder that Western parapsychological researchers have yet to encounter a subject capable of the supernormal feats of mind—e.g., telekinesis and supernormal hearing—described).

From the Buddhist point of view, the attainment of powers is a minor advantage, of no value in itself for progress toward liberation. Powers in one who has not yet attained the nirvanic state are seen as an impediment, for they may endanger progress by enhancing his sense of self-esteem, thus strengthening attachment to self. In Buddhist tradition powers are to be used only in circumstances where their use will be of benefit to others. It is an offense against the community of monks for a Buddhist monk to display before laity any psychic powers that are beyond the capacity of ordinary men; a false claim to their possession would mean expulsion from the Order.

PRAJÑĀ : THE PATH OF INSIGHT

From the standpoint of the *Visuddhimagga*, mastery of the jhānas, and the sublime bliss and supernormal powers that may accrue therefrom, is of secondary importance to the cultivation of *prajñā* (*Pāli*: *paññā*) discriminating wisdom. Jhāna mastery is part of a fully rounded training, but the advantages are seen in terms of making the mind wieldy and pliable for speeding the training in *prajñā*. Indeed, the deeper stages of *samādhi* are sometimes referred to in *Pāli*, the language of the *Visuddhimagga*, as concentration-games, the “play” of those well advanced in the practice. But the crux of this training is the path that begins with mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), proceeds through insight (*vipassanā*), and ends in *nirvāna*.

Mindfulness

The first phase, mindfulness, entails breaking through habits of stereotyped perception. The natural tendency is to “habituate” to the world surrounding one, to substitute abstract cognitive patterns or perceptual preconceptions for the raw sensory experience. The practice of mindfulness is purposeful de-habitation: to face the bare facts of experience, seeing each event as though occurring for the first time. The means for de-habituating is continual observation of the first phase of perception when the mind is in a *receptive*, rather than *reactive*, state. Attention is restricted to bare noticing of objects. Facts of perception are attended to as they arise at any of the five sense-doors or in the mind, which in the *Visuddhimagga* constitutes

a sixth sense. While the meditator attends to sense impressions, reaction is kept to a bare registering of the facts of impression observed. If further mental comment, judgment, or reflection should arise in one's mind, these are themselves made objects of bare attention; they are neither repudiated nor pursued, but dismissed after their noting. The essence of mindfulness is, in the words of Nyanaponika Thera (1962), "the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens *to* us and *in* us, at the successive moments of perception."

It is in the thorough pursuit of mindfulness that the concentration developed previously finds its utility. In adopting and applying this new habit of bare perception, one-pointedness and the concomitant factors of concentration are essential. The optimal level of concentration in practicing mindfulness is, however, the lowest: access. Mindfulness is to be applied to the perceptual process of normal consciousness, and from the first jhāna on, those processes cease. A level of concentration less than that of access, on the other hand, would be overshadowed by hindering thoughts and mental wandering, and so be dysfunctional for practicing mindfulness. It is only at the access level that there is a perfect balance: perception and thought retain their full strength, but concentration is powerful enough to keep the mind from being diverted from steadily noting the processes of perception and thought.

The preferred method for cultivating mindfulness is to precede it with training in the jhānas. Having some degree of mastery in samādhi, the meditator then applies

his power of concentration to the task of mindfulness. There is, however, a method of "bare insight," where these practices are undertaken without any previous attainment in absorption. With bare insight the prerequisite level of absorption is attained through the practice of mindfulness itself. During the first stages of bare insight, the meditator's mind will be intermittently interrupted by wandering, hindering thoughts which will arise between moments of noticing. Sometimes they will be perceived, sometimes not. Gradually the momentary concentration of mind in noticing will strengthen until virtually all stray thoughts are noted; such thoughts will then subside as soon as noticed, and the practice will resume immediately afterwards. Finally the point will be reached where the mind will be unhindered by straying. Then the noticing of perceptual and cognitive processes will proceed without break; this is functionally equivalent to access concentration.

In practice there are four varieties of mindfulness, identical in function but distinguishable by virtue of their point of focus. Contemplation can focus on the body, on feelings, on the mind, or on mind-objects. Any one of these serves as a fixed point for bare attention to the processes of experience. Mindfulness of the *body* entails attending to each moment of bodily activity, such as posture and movement of limbs, regardless of the nature of the activity engaged in. All functions of the body in daily experience are to be clearly comprehended by simply registering their occurrence; the aim of action is to be disregarded—the focus is on the bodily act itself. Mindfulness of *feeling*

involves focusing on internal sensations, merely noting whether they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, but without dwelling on them. All proprioceptive stimuli are simply noted as they come to attention. Some will originate as the initial reaction to sensory input, some as physiological concomitants of psychological states, some as by-products of physiological life processes; whatever the source, the sensation itself is registered.

In mindfulness of the *mind*, it is mental states as they come to awareness that are objects. Whatever mood, mode of thought, or psychological state presents itself, it is simply to be registered as such. If, for instance, there is anger at a disturbing noise, at that moment one simply notes, "anger." The fourth technique, mindfulness of *mind-objects*, is virtually the same as the one just described save for the level at which the mind's workings are observed. Rather than noting the quality of mental states as they arise, the meditator notes the objects of the thoughts which occupy those states—e.g., "disturbing noise." When a thought arises it is noted in terms of a scheme for classifying mental contents which broadly categorizes all thought forms as either hindrances to, or factors of, enlightenment.

The Stages of Insight

As any of these four techniques of mindfulness are persistently pursued, they break through the normal illusions of continuity and reasonableness that sustain cognitive and perceptual processes. The mind begins to

witness the random and discrete units of stuff from which a reality is continually being structured. There emerge a series of realizations concerning the true nature of these processes, and mindfulness matures into insight. The practice of insight begins when contemplation continues without lag; mind is fixed on its object so that contemplating mind and its object always arise together in unbroken succession. This marks the beginning of a chain of insights—mind knowing itself—culminating in the nirvānic state (see table—p. 33).

The first cognitive realization is that the phenomena contemplated are distinct from mind contemplating them. The faculty whereby mind witnesses its own workings is experienced as different from what is witnessed. As with all the stages of insight, this realization is not at all on the level of verbalization at which it is expressed here, but rather at the level of raw experience. The understanding arises, but not necessarily an articulation of that understanding.

Once the two-fold nature of mind and its objects is realized, there arises in the meditator a clear understanding that these dual processes are devoid of self. They are seen to arise as effects of their respective causes, not as the result of direction by any individual agent. All come and go according to their own nature, regardless of “one’s will.” It becomes a certainty to the meditator that nowhere in the mind’s functioning can any abiding entity be detected. This is direct experience of the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*, literally “not-self,” that all phenomena are devoid of an indwelling personality, including “one’s self.” All one’s past and future life is

understood as merely a conditioned cause-effect process. Doubts whether "I" might really exist have gone: "I am" is known to be a misconception. The truth of these words of the Buddha (*Samyutta-Nikāya*, 135) are realized:

Just as when the parts are set together
There arises the word "chariot,"
So does the notion of a being
When the aggregates are present.

Further contemplation reveals that witnessing mind and the phenomena it takes as objects arise and pass away at a frequency beyond the meditator's ken. Flux and change are seen to characterize the whole field of consciousness. The realization strikes the meditator that his world of reality is continually renewed every mind-moment in a seemingly endless chain of experiences. The fact of impermanence (Pāli: *anicca*) is known in the depths of his being. Seeing that these phenomena arise and pass away at every moment, the meditator comes to see them as neither pleasant nor reliable. Disenchantment sets in: what is constantly changing cannot be the source of lasting satisfaction. The psychological process, begun with the realizations of reality as devoid of self and ever-changing, culminates in a state of detachment from one's world of experience to the point where it can be seen as a source of suffering (Pāli: *dukkha*).

"Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away"

Without any such further reflections, contemplation continues. A stage follows where the beginning

PATH OF INSIGHT

Cessation	<i>Nirodha</i> : Total cessation of consciousness.
↑	<i>Nirvana</i> : Consciousness has as object total cessation of physical and mental phenomena.
Effortless Insight	Contemplation quick, effortless, indefatigable. Instantaneous knowledge, of <i>anattā</i> , <i>anicca</i> , <i>dukkha</i> . Cessation of pain; equanimity pervades.
↑	
Realizations Leading to Desire to Escape	Realizations of dreadful, unsatisfactory, and wearisome nature of physical and mental phenomena. Physical pain. Arising of desire to escape these phenomena.
↑	Perception of vanishing of mind objects. Perception fast and flawless. Disappearance of lights, rapture, etc.
Pseudo-Nirvana: Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away	Clear perception of arising and passing of each successive mind moment, accompanied by: brilliant light strong mindfulness rapturous feelings equanimity toward objects tranquility of contemplation devotion attachment to these energy newly arisen states happiness quick and clear perception
↑	{ These processes seen as neither pleasant nor reliable. Experience of <i>dukkha</i> , unsatisfactoriness. These processes are seen to arise and pass away at every moment of contemplation. Experience of <i>anicca</i> ; impermanence. These dual processes seen as devoid of self. Experience of <i>anattā</i> , "not-self." Awareness and its object are perceived at every moment as distinct and separate processes.
Stage of Reflections	
↑	
Mindfulness	Mindfulness of body function, physical sensations, mental states, or mind objects.
↑	
Applying Concentration	Access Concentration: Bare Insight: Previous practice of <i>Samādhi</i> . No previous practice. <i>Samādhi</i> developed to access level by mindfulness.

and end of each successive object of contemplation is clearly perceived. With this clarity of perception there arise:

the vision of a *brilliant light* or other form of illumination, which may last for just one moment or longer;

rapturous feelings causing goose-flesh, tremor in the limbs, the sensation of levitation, and so on (as described above in the factors of the first jhāna);

a calm *tranquillity* of mind and body, making them light, plastic, and easily wielded;

devotional feelings and faith, which may take as their object the meditation teacher, the Buddha, his Teachings—including the method of insight itself—and the *Sangha*, accompanied by joyous confidence in the virtues of meditation and the desire to advise friends and relatives to practice it;

vigorous and steady *energy* in contemplation, neither too lax nor too tense;

sublime feelings of *happiness* suffusing the whole body, a wholly unprecedented bliss which seems never-ending and motivates the meditator to tell others of this extraordinary experience;

quick and clear perception of the phenomena noticed: noticing is keen, strong and lucid, and the characteristics of impermanence, non-self, and unsatisfactoriness is understood quite clearly and at once;

strong mindfulness in practicing insight so that all successive moments of phenomena present themselves effortlessly to noticing mind;

equanimity toward all mental formations: neutral feelings prevail toward the subjects of insight, which proceeds of itself without effort;

a subtle *attachment* to the lights and other factors listed here, and to pleasure in contemplation.

The meditator is elated at the emergence of these ten signs, and may speak out his experiences thinking he has attained enlightenment and finished the task of meditation. Even if he does not think they mark his liberation, he may pause from the task of insight to bask in their enjoyment. For this reason these ten signs are subtitled in the *Visuddhimagga* "The Ten Corruptions of Insight"; it is a pseudo-nirvāṇa. The great danger here is in "mistaking what is not the Path for the Path," or, in lieu of that, faltering in the pursuit of insight because of attachment to these phenomena. When the meditator, either by himself or through advice from his teacher, realizes these experiences to be a landmark along the way rather than his final destination, he turns his focus of contemplation on them, including his own attachment to them.

Proceeding, the meditator finds that these experiences gradually diminish and the perceiving of objects becomes clearer. The discrimination of successive phenomena becomes increasingly finer; perception is flawless. The perception of objects becomes faster,

and their ending or vanishing is more clearly perceived than their arising. Only their vanishing comes to be perceived at every moment of contemplation: contemplating mind and its object are experienced as vanishing in pairs at every moment. The meditator's world of reality seems to be in a constant state of dissolution. A series of realizations flow from this experience. The mind becomes gripped with fear and dread; all mental formations are seen to be dreadful in nature. Becoming—i.e. the coming into being of thoughts—is regarded as a state of terror. The occurrence of mental phenomena—ordinarily reckoned a source of pleasure—is seen only as a state of being continuously oppressed, which mind is helpless to avoid.

Then arises realization of the faults and unsatisfactoriness of all phenomena. All mental formations are seen as utterly destitute of any core or satisfaction. In them is nothing but danger. The meditator comes to feel that in all the kinds of becoming there is not a single thing that he can place his hopes in or hold on to. All mental formations—whether the objects noticed or the consciousness engaged in noticing, or in any kind of existence brought to mind—appear insipid. In all the meditator perceives, he sees only suffering and misery.

Having known the misery in all phenomena, the meditator becomes entirely disgusted with them. Though he continues with the practice of insight, his mind is dominated by feelings of discontent and listlessness toward all mental formations. Even the thought of the happiest sort of life or the most desirable objects will seem unattractive and boring. He has become absolutely dispassionate and adverse toward the multitudinous field

of mental formations, and to any kind of becoming, destiny, or state of consciousness.

Between the moments of noticing, the thought will arise that only in the ceasing of all mental formations is there relief. Now mind no longer fastens on to formations; the meditator becomes desirous of escape from suffering on account of these phenomena. Painful feelings may arise throughout his body, and he may be unwilling to remain long in one posture. The comfortless nature of mind-stuff becomes more evident than ever; motivation for deliverance from it emerges at the root of his being. With this strong motivation for surcease from mental formations, the meditator intensifies his efforts of noticing these formations for the very purpose of escaping them. Then the nature of these phenomena—their impermanence, the element of suffering, and their voidness of self—will become clearly evident. Also at this stage the meditator's body will usually undergo severe, sharp pains of growing intensity. His whole body and mind will seem a mass of suffering; restlessness may overwhelm his application to insight. But by applying the practice of noticing to these pains, they will come to cease. At this point noticing becomes strong and lucid. At every moment he knows quite clearly the three characteristics of these phenomena, and one of the three will come to dominate his understanding.

Now contemplation proceeds automatically, without special effort, as if borne onward of itself. The feelings of dread, despair, misery, etc. which formerly arose cease. Bodily pains are absent entirely. Both dread

and delight in mental objects have been thoroughly abandoned. Exceedingly sublime clarity of mind and pervasive equanimity toward all mental formations emerge. The meditator need make no further deliberate effort; noticing continues in a steady flow for hours without interruption or tiredness. Contemplation proceeds by its own momentum, and insight becomes especially quick and active.

Insight is now on the verge of its culmination; noticing is keen, strong, and lucid. All mental formations are instantly known to be impermanent, painful or without self just by seeing their dissolution. All formations are seen either as limited and circumscribed or as devoid of desirability, or as alien. Detachment from them is at a peak. Noticing no longer enters into or settles down on any formations at all. Then consciousness arises that takes as its object the "signless, no-occurrence, no-formation": nirvāna. Physical and mental phenomena cease entirely. This moment of realization of nirvāna does not, in its first attainment, last even for a second. Immediately following, mind reflects on the experience of nirvāna just past.

NIRVĀNA

The experience of nirvāna is a cognitive shock of deepest psychological consequence. Its nature is of a realm beyond that of the consensual phenomenal reality from which our language is generated, and so nirvāna, the unconditioned state, is describable only in terms of what it is not. It is the "Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed." The word itself is derived from the negative prefix "nir" and the root "vana," to burn,

a metaphorical expression for the extinction of all forms of becoming: desire, attachment, and ego. Decisive behavior change follows from this change in consciousness. With the realization of nirvāna, aspects of ego, or normal consciousness, are abandoned, never to arise again. The path of insight differs significantly from the path of samādhi on this point: nirvāna destroys “defiling” aspects of ego—hatred, greed, delusion, etc.—whereas jhāna suppresses them. Nirvāna makes sīla effortless; in fact, sīla becomes the only possible behavior. Jhāna supplants defilements, but their seeds remain latent in personality as potentialities; on emergence from the jhānic state these acts again become possible as appropriate situations arise.

Levels of realization of nirvāna

There are four levels of realization of nirvāna, contingent upon the depth of insight attained in approaching it. Persons who have achieved nirvāna are distinguished according to their level of attainment. The number of times one enters the nirvānic state determines his degree of mastery—i.e., the ability to attain nirvāna whenever, wherever, as soon as, and for as long as he wants—but is not related to the level of attainment. One can enter nirvāna with a given level of insight countless times without any change of level. The deeper the development of insight prior to entering nirvāna, the higher the level of attainment, and the more pervasive the consequent personality changes. The experience of nirvāna itself is identical at each level of attainment; the difference between levels is reckoned in terms of the consequent permanent loss of ego on emergence from nirvāna. Entering the nirvānic state is

one's "awakening"; subsequent ego loss is one's "deliverance" from bondage to personality. D. T. Suzuki (1957, p. 55) says of the Buddha's prototypic experiences of enlightenment:

The enlightenment feeling affects the whole personality, his attitude toward life and the world. . . . Buddha's experience was not just a matter of feeling which moves on the periphery of consciousness, but something awakened in the deepest recesses of a human being.

The first level is that of *Sotāpanna*, "Stream Enterer." One becomes a Stream Enterer at the first moment of the first experience of nirvana, and remains so until insight deepens to the degree necessary to mark the next level of attainment. The "stream" entered is that leading to the total loss of ego, the cessation of all becoming. This final liberation, it is said, is sure to occur "within seven more lifetimes." At this first level the following strata of personality traits and attitudes drop away: greed for sense desires and resentments strong enough to produce anxiety; greed for one's own gain, possessions, or praise strong enough to cause inability to share with others; failure to perceive the relative and illusive nature of what seems pleasurable or beautiful; the misapprehension of permanence in what is impermanent (*anicca*); and of self in what is devoid of self (*anatta*); adherence to mere rites and rituals, and the belief that this or that is "the Truth"; doubt or uncertainty in the utility of the path of vipassana; lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, physically harming others, or earning a livelihood at the expense of others.

When insight deepens so that the realizations of dukkha (suffering), anattā, or anicca more fully pervade one's being, there comes a quantum-level intensification of insight: nirvana is now attained at a level where both greed for sense desires and ill-will become attenuated. One is now a *sakadā gāmi* "Once-Returner," who will be fully liberated in this lifetime, or he will be reborn only once more within the world of five-sense experience; any future rebirth will be on higher planes. Added to the elements of ego abandoned with Stream Entry are gross feelings of desire for sense objects, and strong resentment. The intensity of experiences of attraction and aversion undergoes a diminution: one can no longer be strongly impelled toward or put off by any phenomena; sex, for example, loses its appeal, though it might still be engaged in for procreation. An impartial attitude toward any and all stimuli is typical.

At the next quantum-level intensification of insight, both greed for sense desires and ill-will are abandoned without remainder. What was diminished on attaining to Once-Returner is now wholly extinguished. One's status becomes *anāgāmi*, "Non-Returner," who no longer is reborn in the world of five-sense experience, but will reach the final state of nirvāna in a realm of great purity, the so-called 'Pure Abodes' (*suddhāvāsa*). In addition to previously abandoned ego elements, the last remaining residual propensities for greed or resentment drop away. All aversion to worldly states such as loss, disgrace, pain, or blame ceases. Malicious motivation, volition, or speech becomes impossible—one can no longer even have a thought

of ill-will toward anyone; the category of "enemy" vanishes from thinking, along with that of "dislike." Similarly, even the subtlest desire for sense objects disappears. Sexual activity, for example, is now extremely unlikely, because feelings of craving or lust are extinguished. Equanimity prevails toward all external objects; their valence to the Non-Returner is absolutely neutral.

The final and full maturity of insight results in overcoming all fetters of ego, and the dissolution of any subjective meaning in the consensual conceptual universe. One is now an *arahant*, a "Fully-Realized Being" or saint. He is absolutely free from suffering and from the generation of any new karma. Having no feelings of "self," any acts will be purely functional, either for maintenance of the body or for the good of others. There remains not a single unabandoned internal state from one's past owing to which thoughts of greed, hatred, etc. could come to mind. All past deeds are erased, as is all future becoming; only pure being remains. The last vestiges of ego relinquished in this final stage include: all feelings of approval for or desire to seek the worldly states of gain, fame, pleasure or praise; any desire for even the bliss of the material or formless *jhānas*; mental stiffness or agitation, covetousness of anything whatsoever. The least inherent tendency toward an unvirtuous thought or deed is literally inconceivable.

From the level of *arahant* the validity of the noble truths of impermanence, suffering, and non-selfhood is evident at every moment. Wei Wu Wei (1968, p. 61)

says of the meaning of suffering from this level of consciousness:

When the Buddha found that he was Awake. . . it may be assumed that he observed that what hitherto he had regarded as happiness, as compared to suffering, was such no longer. His only standard henceforward was *ananda* or what we try to think of as bliss. Suffering he saw as the negative from of happiness, happiness as the positive form of suffering, respectively the negative and positive aspects of experience. But relative to the noumenal state which now alone he knew, both could be described. . . as *dukkha* (suffering). *Dukkha* was the counterpart of *sukha* which implied "ease and well-being," . . . to the Buddha nothing phenomenal could appear to be *sukha* although in phenomenality it might so *appear* in contrast to *dukkha*.

Understanding the truth of non-self for an arahant is more straightforward. Suzuki (1958, p. 293) puts it simply: when one attains that level he finds "by immediate knowledge that when one's heart was cleansed of the defilements of the ordinary ego-centered impulses and desires, nothing was left there to claim itself as ego-residuum." Impermanence is perceived at the primary stage of cognition. For an arahant, perception in vipassana is perfected: he is a witness of the most minute segments of the mind's working, the chain of mind-moments. According to this tradition, the Buddha witnessed 17×10^{21} mind-moments in the "wink of an eye," each one distinct and different

from the one preceding and the one following it. Like him, the arahant sees that elementary constituents of the flow of consciousness are changing at every moment. Nothing in the universe of one's mind is constant, and one's external reality follows from one's internal universe. Nowhere, then, is there any stability or permanence.

NIRODHA

There is a state apart from nirvana, little known in the West, called *nirodha*, cessation. In nirvana, awareness has as its object the cessation of consciousness: in *nirodha*, awareness ceases altogether, though only temporarily for the duration of this state. It is the absolute cessation of consciousness and its concomitants. *Nirodha* is accessible only to a Non-Returner or an arahant who has also mastered all eight *jhānas*. Neither a Stream Enterer nor a Once-Returner has relinquished enough strata of ego to muster the super-concentration required for *nirodha*—in the access process to this state of total non-occurrence even the slightest residuum of sense desire will be an obstruction.

The path to *nirodha* entails the practice of *vipassana* using as a base each *jhāna* in succession up to the eighth, neither-perception-nor-nonperception. With the cessation of this last state of ultrasubtle consciousness, one enters *nirodha*. Cessation is “differently real,” all the data of our experience of reality, even the most sublime states, being absent. Although *nirodha* can last for up to seven days of the human time-rhythm, there is no time sequence in the state

itself: the moment immediately preceding it and that immediately following it are experienced as of immediate succession. The limit of seven days given for the duration of nirodha may be due to its unique physiology: heart-beat and normal metabolism, it is said, cease along with consciousness, though metabolic processes continue at a residual level so that the meditator's body can be distinguished from a corpse. Prior to entering this state the meditator must set a predetermined length of time for staying in it. On emergence, he will go through the jhānas in reverse order to normal consciousness. At the eighth jhāna, awareness resumes; at the third, normal bodily function; at the first, discursive thought and sense perception.

THE TWO PATHS: THEIR HIGHEST EXTREMES

At their highest extremes, the path of samadhi through the jhānas and the path of insight to nirvāna tend to meet. But between these ultimate states of rarefied consciousness there remain extremely subtle but crucial differences. The seventh jhāna is a state of awareness of consciousness that has no object: no-thing-ness. In the eighth jhāna the consciousness of no-thing-ness cannot even be said to be operative, but yet remains as a latent function, and so cannot be said not to exist: this is the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. At nirvāna the final extinguishing of consciousness begins, with a state that is the awareness of no consciousness at all. This process of extinguishing culminates in nirodha,

where there is no awareness whatsoever. The attainment of even the highest jhānas does not on emergence necessarily affect normal ego function, while the experience of nirvāna irrevocably alters ego function.

These different paths mark two extremes on a continuum of exploration and control of mind. One who could marshal enough one-pointedness to attain, say, the formless jhānas might easily attain the nirvanic state should he choose to turn his powerful concentration ability to watching his own mind. And, conversely, one who had entered the nirvanic state might well possess a mind so indifferent to hindrances and distractions that should he choose to focus on a single object of awareness, he would readily enter and proceed through the jhānic levels. Thus those beings who have traversed these distinctly different paths to their highest extremes may no longer belong solely to one, but rather to both. With full mastery of either samādhi or insight, the other is readily attainable, the distinction between meditation avenues melts. As the *Zenrin* puts it:

From of old there were not two paths
“Those who have arrived” all walked the same
road.

THE BUDDHA'S MAP: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

In an earlier article (1971) I proposed a comparative study of meditation techniques to see whether differences in technique are psychophysiologicaly consequential. This elaboration of the Buddha's ancient system can be a step toward that

investigation, by serving as the framework for a grid and gradient in psychophysiological studies of those techniques. Dalal & Barber (1969), in reviewing studies of yogis, concluded that "yogic samadhi" is an hypothesized ASC as yet inadequately denoted and without objectively verifiable criteria; the Buddha's map of MSC can be seen as a model for research meeting Barber's methodological requirements. The *Visuddhimagga* is unique in the orderly fashion in which it delineates MSC along both psychological and physiological parameters (see Table 1—p.50); the distinct levels of MSC shown can be conceptualized as the ledges of a psychophysiological step-function (see Ashby 1970). Though this psychophysiological cartography of MSC is by no means complete, it gives enough key landmarks in these realms of mind to serve as a skeleton on which might hang amplifications.

The initial stage in either path is access concentration. The major psychological indicators of the access level are an initial stilling of the mind, qualitatively distinct from normal consciousness though thoughts and sensory perceptions remain; visions and bright lights; feelings of rapture, happiness, and bodily lightness. It may be that the bulk of EEG studies of meditation have been of subjects at this level, and that the state most often produced by alpha-wave feedback devices with normal subjects resembles access concentration: Kamiya (1969) describes the "alpha state" as "a general calming down of the mind." My own experience as a subject in an alpha-feedback experiment at Harvard Medical School was that when I was emitting a more or less sustained

train of alpha my consciousness was at a level of "access to access concentration." That is, my mind was not so stilled as to be at the level of access concentration, but it was qualitatively more calm compared to its normal state; there were feelings of bliss, quiet rapture, and contentment while thoughts floated by. Had I entered full access, the alpha perhaps would have gotten stronger. In a study of the subjective states associated with alpha activity, Brown (1970) found greatest enhanced alpha to be related to narrowing of perceptual awareness and pleasant feeling states—two fundamental components of access concentration. Both yogis practicing samadhi and zazen meditators produce alpha and sometimes theta (Anand et al. 1961, Kasamatsu & Hirai 1969), but in no study thus far has there been a scale used for judging the level of absorption the subject had attained.

Psychophysiological measures

When appropriate studies are done, alpha giving way to theta may be found associated with jhānas above the level of access as well as with skilled practice of insight techniques like zazen, where mastery of concentration at the access level seems to be an adjunct. Theta may be associated both with the higher jhānas and the later stages of insight; delta may accompany the higher jhānas and nirvana, and nirodha may even be marked by a subdelta EEG. One might anticipate a discrepant pattern of measures like brain-wave changes comparing concentration and insight techniques, the former becoming slower through the jhānas, the latter levelling off at access

level with a quantum leap at nirvana. Within the jhānas and the stages to nirvana, there may be unique and distinct shifts in patterns of psychophysiological measures at any given stage—e.g., excitation due to rapture at the access level may produce an increase in heart rate while EEG shows alpha or even theta waves. But generally speaking, metabolic indicators such as oxygen consumption, cardiac output, heart rate, and respiration rate should decrease as mind becomes progressively stiller, as is suggested by Elmer Green's (Green, Green & Walters 1970) "psychophysiological principle":

Every change in the physiological state is accompanied by an appropriate change in the mental-emotional state, and conversely, every change in the mental-emotional state, conscious or unconscious, is accompanied by an appropriate change in the physiological state.

On attaining the first jhāna, the meditator should experience cessation of all discursive thoughts other than that of the primary object; loss of awareness of all sensory stimuli; intense rapture, bliss, and fixity of mind in the state itself. Behaviorally this internal state should be verifiable to investigators in the meditator's failure to react in any way to external sensory inputs. Orme-Johnson found that TM meditators habituated more quickly than nonmeditating controls. Tests of habituation in Indian yogis practicing samadhi have shown that they fail to respond to external sounds at all (Anand et al. 1961)—an indication that the subjects were at least at the first level of jhāna.

TABLE 1
PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL LANDMARKS OF MSC

PATH OF JHANA		PATH OF INSIGHT	
Subjective Landmarks	Objective Measures	Subjective Landmarks	
<i>Jhāna 8.</i> Neither-perception nor-nonperception	Shut-down of metabolic function; “near-death” metabolism	<i>Nirodha</i> : total cessation of experience; neither knower nor object.	<i>Nirvana</i> : cessation of awareness as primary object; no awareness of physical/mental phenomena.
<i>Jhāna 7.</i> Awareness of No-thing-ness	Metabolism bare minimum	<i>Effortless insight.</i> Instantaneous awareness of mind-moments; fatigueless energy; equanimity; cessation of pain.	
<i>Jhāna 6.</i> Awareness of Infinite Consciousness		<i>Desire to escape physical/mental phenomena</i> Realization of dreadfulness of mind-moments; physical pain.	
<i>Jhāna 5.</i> Awareness of Infinite Space		<i>Pseudo-nirvana rejected.</i> Clear perception of end of mind-moments; lights, rapture, etc. vanish.	
<i>Jhāna 4.</i> Equanimity and one-pointedness; cessation of feelings of pleasure, bliss.	<i>Jhāna 4:</i> Cessation of breath Concentration impervious to any and all distractions	<i>Pseudo-nirvāna.</i> Clear perception of arising and passing of mind-moments; accompanied by: bright light(s) rapture, happiness,	
<i>Jhāna 3.</i> Feelings of bliss, one-pointedness, and equanimity; rapture ceases.			

TABLE 1 (con't)

<i>Jhāna 2.</i> Feelings of bliss, one-pointedness, and rapture; no thoughts of primary object.	Decreasing metabolic indicators: heart rate, cardiac output, respiration rate etc.	tranquillity, devotion energy, strong mindfulness equanimity toward mind-objects attachment to these states.
<i>Jhāna 1.</i> Continuous, sustained concentration on primary object; accompanied by feelings of rapture and bliss, one-pointedness; thoughts hindering concentration, sensory perception, and awareness of pain all cease.	<i>Jhāna 1:</i> No response to external inputs; habituation. Mindfulness: non-habituation to external stimulus.	<i>Reflections.</i> Awareness and its objects seen as distinct processes; experience of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and impersonality of mental functions. <i>Mindfulness.</i> All sensory stimulus and thoughts (mind-moments) register in awareness.
<i>Access concentration.</i> Primary object dominant thought interspersed with other thoughts, hindrances to concentration tentatively overcome; awareness of sensory inputs and body states remains; feelings of rapture, happiness; flashes of lights and visions; sensation of body lightness.	Alpha, theta states	<i>Access concentration.</i>

The successive transitions upward from first jhāna until the fourth are difficult to discriminate. Subjectively the change undergone in transition from first to second is primarily the disappearance from awareness of the primary object or any discursive thinking whatever. From second to third the feelings of rapture fall away, replaced by an attitude of equanimity. On ascending to the fourth jhāna all feelings of bliss cease, leaving only equanimity and one-pointedness; breath is said to cease, and the meditator is utterly impervious to any distraction. Just as the mind becomes more still at each higher jhāna, so with respiration, until at the fourth jhāna breath is said to cease altogether. Whether or not breath actually ceases remains an empirical question; it may be found that breath in the higher jhānas actually becomes very shallow and slows, say, to a rate of one every minute, and so might *seem* to cease. One of the few studies to date of yogis practicing samādhi meditation found an extreme slowing of respiration rate to 4 to 6 per minute in some subjects (Bagchi et al. 1971). The jhānas with their accompanying progressive respiratory quiescence constitute what Wallace (1970, 1971) calls the “fourth state of consciousness,” and describes as “a wakeful hypometabolic physiologic state.” On the basis of physiological studies of practitioners of “transcendental meditation”—a concentration technique—he postulates a shift in the cellular metabolism of oxygen which would allow breathing to become still, perhaps ultimately to the point of cessation. The formless jhānas—i.e., fifth through eighth—differ from the fourth not in factors of consciousness but in the

degree of refinement of those factors as well as in primary object. At the eighth jhāna mind function is stilled to its most subtle extreme. The same can be expected from metabolism.

The path of insight is distinguishable at inception from concentration techniques: at its initial stages the insight meditator is mindful of each successive thought or sensation and so does *not* habituate (see, e.g., the study of zazen—an insight technique—by Kasamatzu & Hirai 1969). The next major landmark is the stage of “Knowledge of Arising and Passing Away” of mind-moments, the pseudonirvana. The insight meditator will experience at this point any or all of these signs: visions of brilliant lights, feelings of rapture, tranquillity, devotion, energy, and happiness; quick, clear perception, strong mindfulness and equanimity in the practice itself; and attachment to this state. There are no necessary physiological concomitants of this stage, though some may be discovered such as alpha or a quickened heartbeat. Nor are there any in the following phases of realization, where the dissolution of each mind moment is clearly perceived, and the indicators of the previous stage fade. But accompanying the ensuing series of realizations about the wearisome and dreadful nature of these phenomena and the arising of the desire to escape them, sharp pains frequently rack the meditator’s body. These pains cease only at the next phase, where equanimity prevails. At this point contemplation is effortless, and the meditator can continue for hours or days without fatigue.

Not until the end of the path of insight is it likely to be most fruitful for psychophysiologic studies. On entering the nirvanic state awareness takes as its object nonawareness. This blackout of consciousness entails all the metabolic shutdowns of the eighth jhāna, perhaps to an even more marked degree. On ascension to nirodha, awareness ceases totally, as does metabolic functioning.¹ Heartbeat is said to stop as well as all organic systems; according to the *Visuddhimagga*, the only distinctions between a corpse and the body of one in nirodha is that the latter remains warm and does not decompose. As with the breath rate, the actual degree of slowing of heart rate awaits empirical verification.² The “seven days” traditionally set for the duration of this state suggest a metabolically determined limit in nirodha for bodily maintenance. / Similarly phenomena of a “survived death” under rare circumstances have

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- 1 The ascension through insight into nirvana can be seen as the psychophysiological analog of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, that consciousness mediates and affects the object it observes. Nirodha is the penultimate case: when consciousness observes itself, the process culminates in the cessation of consciousness.
 - 2 Investigations of “heart stoppage” thus far have studied hatha yogis using effortful breath and muscle manipulation, not meditators (e.g., Wenger et al. 1961). One patient in California reportedly slowed his heart to a standstill for approximately 5 seconds—his method was merely relaxing (McClure 1959). When Swami Rama demonstrated a 17-second fibrillation of his heart for Elmer Green (Green, Green & Walters 1971) through a “solar plexus lock,” the Swami commented that he knew another way to stop his heart which involved a “hibernation-like” state, though he wasn't prepared to demonstrate it at the time.

been reported in patients clinically dead on the operating table, and in some persons struck by lightning, who have revived and recovered fully (Taussig 1969).

In almost every school and tradition the specifics of these higher states are not regarded as suitable subjects for teaching. As realities they transcend words; being inexpressible, they are to be experienced rather than discussed: thinking mind hinders realization. Detailed maps of the psychophysiology of these states can take their major landmarks from traditional sources like the *Visuddhimagga*, but data on the intricacies of mind-body topography in MSC and HSC will have to come from thoroughgoing research.

There is a paradox in seeking suitable subjects for the studies that might develop in this area; those nations with the required affluence and technological sophistication generally lack the traditions and schools that produce people developed enough in meditation to be worthwhile testing. One exception is Japan, where the Zen Institutes have pioneered in psychophysiological studies of zazen (see, e.g., Akishige 1970). But the largest untapped pool of potential subjects extends from the Middle East eastward throughout Asia outside the Communist nations, among Sufis or Muslim fakirs, the yogis of India, Tibetan lamas, and Buddhist monks. A further complication is that those who have developed greatest familiarity with MSC are the least likely to speak of their own attainments, except with deprecation. If they are to be tested in psychophysiological labs, they must be approached with the utmost discretion. In the West, for the most fruitful studies of MSC it is not the

students of the numerous rapidly proliferating techniques who should be tested, but rather their masters.

MAPS OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN PERSPECTIVE

This exposition, based on Buddha's map of MSC, may be an aid to those who seek to formulate theories or conceptualize and design research in this area. This was my intent. Those who through personal practice are themselves exploring these states may or may not find these thoughts or this map helpful. The work of *sadhana* is often amorphous, its delimitation fluid, and the stages of progress as intricate as one's life experience. There is as much variety in paths to higher states of being as there are persons on the path; any one map does not necessarily apply to a given person's situation. There is a Sufi saying, "He who tastes knows." In the words of Meher Baba (1967, p. 191):

In the spiritual life it is not necessary to have a complete map of the Path in order to begin travelling. On the contrary, insistence upon having such complete knowledge may actually hinder rather than help the onward march. . . . He who speculates from the shore about the ocean shall know only its surface, but he who would know the depths of the ocean must be willing to plunge into it.

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The Significance of Dependent Origination in Theravāda Buddhism

Nyanatiloka Mahathera

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Preface

The author of this essay, the late Venerable Nyanatiloka Mahathera (1878 – 1957), founder of The Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa (Ceylon), is widely known for his profound scholarship and hardly needs an introduction to students of Buddhist literature.

When, in the year 1937, the present instructive treatise was written, the venerable author had been in the Sangha for 33 years. The essay is the product not only of his extensive and deep study of the Pāli texts but also of his own insights developed by mature thought and meditation. Those who had the benefit of meeting him know that his was a mind by no means shackled by commentarial or any other tradition, but, in the essential features of the Dhamma, his penetrative mind confirmed the understanding embedded in those ancient sources. This applies, in particular, to the subject of this treatise, the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the profundity of which the Master himself had stressed. The author found support for the commentarial interpretation of it in the oldest Sutta texts, which are quoted in this treatise.

In this essay, reference is made to the interpretation of Dependent Origination put forward by Dr. Paul Dahlke. As the views of the latter have recently been revived by some contemporary writers, it was felt opportune to present this essay again. It should be mentioned that, in other respects, the writings of Dr. Dahlke were held in high esteem by the venerable author.

There always have been those who, in a rather sweeping manner, have questioned the value of the ancient Pāli Commentaries, and this hyper-critical attitude seems to be gaining popularity again in certain quarters. Regarding this, the Venerable Nyanatiloka once remarked that there are those who reject the Commentaries because they prefer to make their own.

This essay was first published in Ceylon for Vesak 1937, by The Buddhist Brotherhood of Kandy, under the title *Paṭicca Samuppāda. The Law of Dependent Origination. Explained in accordance with the Pāli Tradition*. In the present publication has been incorporated some additional matter taken from a later version appearing as an Appendix to the author's "Guide through the Abhidhamma Piṭaka" (First Ed., Colombo 1938). The original title has been changed in this new edition.

Nyanaponika Thera

Kandy

July 1969

Introduction

None of all the teachings of Buddhism has given rise to greater misunderstandings, to more contradictory and absurd interpretations than the doctrine of Dependent Origination (Paṭicca-Samuppāda). This is especially true with regard to some Western writers and scholars who too often did not possess even the rudiments of knowledge required for treating such a difficult subject. Obviously some of them did not even understand the correct meaning of the twelve basic terms of the formula, and, instead, based their interpretations on their own imagination.

In many cases (especially in the older Western literature on Buddhism), there was the attempt to present the Dependent Origination as an explanation of the primeval beginning of all things; and one saw in "Ignorance" (*avijjā*, Sanskrit: *avidyā*) the causeless first principle out of which in the course of time all conscious and physical life had evolved. All that in spite of the Buddha's repeated and definite declaration that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable (Anama-tagga Saṃyutta) and that all such speculations may lead to insanity (Anguttara Nikāya IV, 77); and that one could never imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and no Craving for existence (ib. X, 64; quoted in Visuddhi Magga, ch. XVII, and similarly in Milinda Pañhā, ch.2).

In the Prajñāpāramitā, according to Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (p. 473), we find, for example, the following statement: "Et comme elles (les conditions) n'existent pas (sic!), à cause de ce on les appelle Avidyā, c'est à dire ce qui n'existe pas(!), ou

l'ignorance." And in Kern, *Indian Buddhism*, we read: "Avijjā, ignorance, is the state of not knowing, of sleep. Man at first awaking enters into a state of half-consciousness; his mind is affected by vague impressions (Sankhārā) before he has reached the state of clear consciousness. Then the phenomena appear to him, and the activity of his organs of sense commences, etc." And, again, in Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*: "De l'ignorance proceda la faculte de la reflexion (sankhārā); de la faculte de la reflexion proceda la connaissance (viññāṇa); de la connaissance proceda l'union de l'esprit et de la matiere (nāma-rūpa), etc.".

In more recent times, again, quite a number of authors, chiefly Germans, led by Dr. Dahlke, call the Paṭicca Samuppāda a "Simultaneous" Dependent Origination and even go so far to assert that "the whole chain of the (twelve) conditions of origination represents one single karmic(!) moment of personal experience (*karmisches Erlebnismoment*)"! Now does this not really amount to the senseless assertion that Cause and Effect, i. e. the Karmic Process of Becoming (X=II)* and Rebirth (XI=III), Birth (XI) and Death (XII), the wholesome and unwholesome Karma-formations (II), the physical Sense Organs (V) and the (conscious) Impression (VI) — that all these things arise together at the very same moment, and that thus the Karma (i.e. action) of the preceding birth takes place simultaneously with its effect (vipāka) in the succeeding birth? — Now let me state that simultaneity, in fact, plays an important part in the Paṭicca-Samuppāda, as we shall see later on, but that it is only one of the 24 modes of conditioning that come into operation here.

* The Roman numerals refer to the formula of the Dependent Origination, as reproduced in the following.

Truly, not one of all these authors ever seems to have put to himself the question, for what earthly reason the Buddha should have thought it necessary to teach such a doctrine. It was surely not for the sake of mere mental gymnastics! It was to show, through which causes and conditions suffering comes into being, now and hereafter. For the Buddha shows in the formula of the Dependent Origination that it is through our life-affirming wholesome and unwholesome volitions, i. e. Karma-formations (II), performed through Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX) in the past birth, that this present conscious existence (III, etc.), with all its woe and suffering, has been caused; and that our present Karmic Process of Becoming (X) is the cause for future Rebirth (XI) and suffering; and that after the extinction of all Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX), no further life affirming Karma (II=X) is produced, and therefore no future Birth and Suffering will arise again. In order to demonstrate this, it is indeed necessary—against those aforementioned interpreters—to speak of three successive lives, of past, present, and future life. And this is not “merely a commentarial interpretation”, but it is also clearly, in a most unambiguous manner, supported by canonical Sutta texts, e.g., the Mahā-Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, where it is said :

“Once all Ignorance (I) and Clinging (IX) are extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor imperturbable Karma-formations (II=X) are produced, and thus no Consciousness (III=IX) will spring up again in a new mother’s womb.”

And, *“For if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother’s womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality (IV) arise?”* —

Now, let it here be said, once for all, that the Paṭicca-Samuppāda is nothing but the teaching of conditionality and interdependence of all the manifold phenomena of existence, that is, of everything that happens, be it in the realm of the physical, or the psychical. It shows how that combination of phenomena known by the 'conventional name' of 'I', 'person', etc., is not at all a mere play of blind chance, but how each phenomenon in this process of existence is entirely dependent upon other phenomena as its conditions, so that with the removal of those phenomena that form the conditions of rebirth and suffering, rebirth, and therewith also all suffering, will perforce cease and not arise again. And this is the vital point, the goal of the Buddha's teaching: deliverance from the cycle of rebirths with all its woe and suffering. Thus, the Dependent Origination serves to elucidate the second and third Noble Truth regarding the Origin and Extinction of Suffering, by explaining them from their very foundations upwards, and giving them a definite philosophical form.

Of the Sutta Piṭaka, it is the Nidāna Saṃyutta of SaṃyuttaNikāya (Nid.Samy.), and the Mahā Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya (Nid. Sutta), which provide most details for an explanation of the Dependent Origination.

Of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, it is the Paccayākāra Vibhanga, and above all, the Paṭṭhāna, that come here into consideration. In the latter work, however, there is no express reference to the Paṭicca Samuppāda formula, but all conditioned phenomena are arranged there from a quite different point of view, that is, with reference to the 24 conditions (see below, First Chapter).

The most detailed, and coherent systematical exposition of the Dependent Origination is given in Visuddhi

Magga (The Path of Purification), Ch. XVII, on which, to a great part, the present essay has been based, whilst, at the same time, also the afore-mentioned, and other, canonical sources have been used. Moreover, I have consulted the commentaries on the Abhidhamma and the Visuddhi Magga, as well as Sinhalese treatises, as Dharmaratna's *Vishesa-vistarārtha-sahita-paṭicca-samuppādaya* and *Sattvotpatti-Viniscaya*, and others.

Hence, this short essay, being entirely based on authentic Pali texts and Commentaries, reflects the true position of Theravāda Buddhism in its canonical sources and in its well-tested exegetical works.

For the sake of brevity, often a terse diction has been adopted in this treatise. But a careful study and a growing familiarity with the true significance of the terms here employed, will finally make the subject matter quite intelligible and self-evident.

PATICCA—SAMUPPADA

The Dependent Origination

- I-II. Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā
- II-III. Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇam
- III-I. Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ
- IV-V. Nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṃ
- V-VI. Saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso
- VI-VII. Phassa-paccayā vedanā
- VII-VIII. Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā
- VIII-IX. Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ
- IX-X. Upādāna-paccayā bhavo
- X-XI. Bhava-paccayā jāti
- XI-XII. Jāti-paccayā maraṇam

soka-parideva-dukkkha-domanassūpāyāsā sambhavanti.

Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

Avijjāya tveva asesavirāga-nirodhā saṅkhāra-nirodho, saṅkhāra-nirodhā viññāṇa-nirodho, viññāṇa-nirodhā nāmarūpa-nirodhā saḷāyatana-nirodho, saḷāyatana-nirodhā phassa-nirodho, phassa-nirodhā vedanā-nirodho, vedanā-nirodhā taṇhā-nirodho, taṇhā-nirodhā upādāna-nirodho, upādāna-nirodhā bhava-nirodho, bhava-nirodhā jāti-nirodho, jāti-nirodhā jarā-maraṇam soka-parideva-dukkkha-domanassūpāyāsā nirujjhanti.

Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

Translation

- I - II. Through Ignorance (avijjā) conditioned are the Karma-Formations (saṅkhāra).
- II - III. Through the Karma-Formations (saṅkhāra) conditioned is Consciousness (viññāṇa; in a new birth).
- III - IV. Through Consciousness (viññāṇa) conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (nāma-rūpa).
- IV - V. Through Mentality and Corporeality (nāma-rūpa) conditioned are the six Sense-Bases (saḷāyatana).
- V - VI. Through the six Sense-Bases (saḷāyatana) conditioned is Sense-Impression (phassa).
- VI - VII. Through Sense-Impression (phassa) conditioned is Feeling (vedanā).
- VII - VIII. Through Feeling (vedanā) conditioned is Craving (taṇhā).
- VIII - IX. Through Craving (taṇhā) conditioned is Clinging (upādāna).
- IX - X. Through Clinging (upādāna) conditioned is the Process of Becoming (bhava).
- X - XI. Through the (karmic) Process of Becoming (bhava) conditioned is Rebirth (jāti).
- XI - XII. Through Rebirth (jāti) conditioned are Decay and Death (jarā-maraṇa), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus arises this whole mass of suffering.

Through the entire fading away and extinction of this Ignorance, however, the Karma-formations become extinguished. Through extinction of the Karma-formations, Consciousness becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Consciousness, Mentality and Corporeality become extinguished. Through extinction of Mentality and Corporeality, the six Sense-Bases become extinguished. Through extinction of the six Sense-Bases, Sense-Impression becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Sense-Impression, Feeling becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Feeling, Craving becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Craving, Clinging becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Clinging, the Process of Becoming becomes extinguished. Through extinction of the Process of Becoming, Rebirth becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Rebirth, Decay and Death become extinguished, as well as sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of suffering.

CHAPTER I

In the 'Path of Purification' (Visuddhi Magga), ch. XVII, it is pointed out that, and the reason why, the Buddha employed various methods in dealing with the Paṭicca-Samuppāda. Four such methods are exemplified in that work.

The 1st and usual method leads in progressive order from I - XII; the 2nd, in progressive order from VII - XII; the 3rd, in retrogressive order from XII - I; the 4th, in retrogressive order from VIII - I. Besides these four, there are however, still other methods to be found in the

Sutta Piṭaka, e. g., one leading from III-XII (Nid. Samy. 49) and one from III-XII (ib. 43). In the Vibhanga of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, even 12 different methods are given. In the following, examples are quoted for the four first-mentioned methods.

(1st method). This is the usual twelve-link formula preceding this chapter.

(2nd method). “And whilst approving of the Feeling (VII) and cherishing it Craving springs up. But craving for Feelings means Clinging, and through Clinging conditioned is the Process of Becoming, through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth, and through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus arises this whole mass of suffering” (Majjh. No. 38).

(3rd method). “Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII): thus it was said. But are, O monks, Decay and Death really conditioned through Rebirth, or not? Or how is it?”—“Decay and Death, O Lord, are conditioned through Rebirth. Thus we think.”—“Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth: thus it was said. Through Ignorance (I) conditioned are the Karma-Formations: thus it was said (etc.). (ib.)

(4th method). “Through what, O monks, are those four nutriments — material food, sense-impression, mental volition, consciousness—conditioned, what is their origin, how are they produced, how do they arise? Through Craving (VIII) are these four nutriments conditioned. ... Through what, O monks, is Craving conditioned.....? Through Feeling..... Through what is Feeling conditioned etc. are the Karma-Formations conditioned.....? Through Ignorance (I)” (Nid. Samy. No. 11).

Before explaining the 11 propositions in the basic formula of Dependent Origination, it will be necessary for a full understanding of the relationship and interdependence of its 12 constituent links to give the reader an idea of the various ways, in which they are conditioned, i. e., of the 24 modes of conditionality (or, for short, Conditions), which are enumerated and described in the last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the Paṭṭhāna, the Book of Origination.

The 24 Conditions (Paccaya)

1. Root Condition	...	Hetu-paccaya
2. Object „	...	Ārammaṇa-paccaya
3. Predominance condition	...	Adhipati „
4. Proximity „	...	Anantara „
5. Contiguity „	...	Samanantara „
6. Co-nascence „	...	Sahajāta „
7. Mutuality „	...	Aññamañña „
8. Support „	...	Nissaya „
9. Decisive Support „	...	Upanissaya „
10. Pre-nascence „	...	Purejāta „
11. Post-nascence „	...	Pacchājāta „
12. Frequency „	...	Āsevana „
13. Karma „	...	Kamma „
14. Karma-result „	...	Vipāka „
15. Nutriment „	...	Āhāra „
16. Faculty „	...	Indriya „
17. Jhāna „	...	Jhāna „
18. Path „	...	Magga „

19. Association	„	. . . Sampayutta	„
20. Dissociation	„	. . . Vippayutta	„
21. Presence	„	. . . Atthi	„
22. Absence	„	. . . Natthi	„
23. Disappearance	„	. . . Vigata	„
24. Non-disappearance	„	. . . Avigata	„

These 24 conditions do not necessarily exclude one another, as we shall see later on. Some are even fully identical with each other. All these 24 conditions, according to the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha, may be reduced to only four, namely: Object (2), Decisive Support (9), Karma (13), and Presence (21).

1. Root-condition: *Hetu-paccaya*.

Just as a tree rests on its roots and cannot exist without them, so are all karmically wholesome (*kusala*) phenomena dependent on the presence of three wholesome motives, or Roots (*hetu*, or *mula*): Greedlessness (unselfishness), Hatelessness (*good-will*), or undeludedness (wisdom), and the 3 karmically unwholesome phenomena on the presence of unwholesome motives, or Roots: Greed, Hatred, or Delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*).

Thus, to the associated wholesome or unwholesome mental phenomena as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced by them, these 6 phenomena are said to be a condition by way of Root.

2. Object-condition: *Ārammaṇa-paccaya*.

Just as a weak man must lean upon his crutches to be able to walk, so do the 6 sense-objects (*ārammaṇa*, lit. 'props' or 'supports')—i.e. the visible object, sound, odour, taste, tangible object, and mind-object, be they past,

present, or future—form the props or supports to the corresponding 6 kinds of consciousness and the mental phenomena associated therewith.

Thus they are said to be to consciousness a condition by way of Object.

3. Predominance-condition: *Adhipati-paccaya*.

The 4 predominant factors are: concentrated Intention, concentrated Consciousness, concentrated Energy, concentrated Investigation (*chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsa*). Whenever through the predominance of one of these factors a state of consciousness comes to arise, then this factor forms to consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena an aid, or a condition, by way of Predominance.

4. Proximity-condition: *Anantara-paccaya*.

Immediately upon eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*) there follows the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), and immediately upon the mind element there follows the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) etc. (s. Second Chapter, section II). Just so it is with ear-consciousness etc.

Thus, eye-consciousness and its concomitant phenomena are to the mind-element etc.—and in the same way, the mind-element to the mind-consciousness-element, and all the preceding phenomena to all the immediately succeeding phenomena,—a condition by way of proximity. Therefore, whenever in proximity to wholesome or unwholesome phenomena, other phenomena do arise, then the former phenomena are to the latter phenomena said to be a condition by way of proximity, without which the latter phenomena cannot arise.

5. Contiguity-condition: *Samanantara-paccaya*.

This condition is identical with the foregoing and only different in name.

6. Co-nascence condition: *Saha-jāta-paccaya*.

Just as the burning lamp is a condition for light, so are the 4 mental groups (feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) one to another a condition by way of their Co-nascence or simultaneous arising.

That means, none of these phenomena can arise alone. If any of them arises, the others also do so simultaneously, so that the arising of any of them is conditioned through the simultaneous arising of the others. The same relationship exists between the 4 elements (solid, liquid, heat, motion), and—but only at the moment of conception—also between corporeality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*).

7. Mutuality-condition: *Añña-m-añña-paccaya*.

All afore-mentioned co-nascent phenomena (No. 6) are, as a matter of course, also conditioned by way of Mutuality.

8. Support-condition: *Nissaya-paccaya*.

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena in the sense of a foundation or support, just as the trees have the earth as their foundation, or as an oilpainting rests on the canvas.

Thus, all the above co-nascent (No. 6) and mutually (No. 7) conditioned phenomena are one to another also a condition by way of Support. Also the 6 physical bases of consciousness (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the physical organ of the mind) are to the 6 kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.) a condition by way of Support.

9. Decisive Support condition: *Upanissaya-paccaya*.

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena as a powerful and decisive support or

inducement. It is of 3 kinds: Decisive Support (1) by way of Object (*ārammaṇupanissaya*), (2) by way of Proximity (*anantarupanissaya*), (3) by way of Natural Condition (*pakaṭupanissaya*).

(1) If, e.g., after having performed a wholesome or an unwholesome deed, one is intensively reflecting on this deed as object, it becomes a strong and decisive support by way of Object (s. 2).

(2) Any preceding wholesome phenomenon is to any succeeding wholesome phenomenon.....to some of the succeeding unwholesome phenomena.....to any succeeding neutral phenomenon etc., etc., a Decisive Support by way of Proximity (s. 4.)

(3) Good or bad qualities, as faith, morality, learnedness, deludedness, etc., are a Decisive Support by way of Natural Condition. Moreover, anything whatever—past, present or future, real or imaginary—may become a decisive condition to our mind and body, e. g. the desired future health or wealth, or even Nirvana, may become a decisive condition to our present exertions.

10. Pre-Nascence-condition: *Purā-jāta-paccaya*.

The 6 physical sense-organs (s. 8), as well as the 5 physical sense-objects (visible object, sound etc), are to the corresponding kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.) a condition by way of Pre-Nascence. In other words, eye-consciousness etc. cannot arise without the pre-arising, or pre-existence, of the physical organs and physical objects. At the moment of conception of a being, however, mind-consciousness is co-nascent with the physical organ of mind, as mind-consciousness arises at the very moment of conception.

11. Post-Nascence-condition: *Pacchā-jāta-paccaya*.

Consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena are to this already-born body a condition by way of Post-Nascence, aiding the body in the sense of a prop, or support.

12. Frequency-condition: *Āsevana-paccaya*.

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is helping towards the competency and strength of the contiguous phenomena by way of Frequency, just as in reading a book, all the preceding applications to books, etc., do. It is threefold: by way of wholesome, unwholesome, or mere functional 'impulsive moments' (*javana*, s. Second Chapter, II-III, note). As it is said in Tika-Paṭṭhāna: "All the preceding wholesome phenomena are to all the succeeding wholesome phenomena a condition by way of Frequency, etc."

13. Karma-condition: *Kamma-paccaya*.

Volition (*cetanā*)—manifested in wholesome or unwholesome bodily, verbal, or purely mental Action (Pāli *kamma*)—is to the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) 4 mental groups (s. 6), as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to Residual karma (*kaṭattā*), a condition by way of Karma.

Kaṭattā = *katassa bhāvena*, lit. "through having been done," refers to such minor wholesome or unwholesome acts as have not yet produced results.

14. Karma-Result-condition. *Vipāka-paccaya*.

Karma-result (*vipāka*) is a condition which, by its passive nature, is supporting the other karma-resultant phenomena in their passivity ('effortless calmness' says Paṭṭhāna). As it is said (ib.): "The 4 mental groups, in so far as they as Karma-results, are one to another a condition by way of Karma-result."

15. Nutriment-condition : *āhāra-paccaya*.

There are 4 nutriments— (1) material food, (2) sense-impression (*phassa*), (3) mind-volition (*mano-sañcetanā*), (4) consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—which are aiding the corporeal and uncorporeal phenomena in the sense of a support, or prop. Material food is the necessary condition for the support of this body, whilst 2-4 are the nutrient conditions to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena (e.g. bodily and verbal intimation) produced thereby (Tika-Paṭṭhāna.)

By the 3rd nutriment 'Mind-volition', according to the Commentary to Abhidhammattha-Sangha VII, we have to understand wholesome and unwholesome Karma; whilst the 4th nutriment 'Consciousness' refers to Rebirth-consciousness, i.e. that state of consciousness that arises at the moment of conception of a being.

16. Faculty-condition : *Indriya-paccaya*.

There are 20 Faculties—physical, mental or moral—which are a condition in helping or influencing other phenomena in the sense of Predominance (s. 3). They are:— the 6 sense faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; vitality (either physical or mental); the 5 faculties of feeling: bodily pleasant and painful feeling, gladness, sadness, indifferent feeling; the 5 ethical faculties: faith, energy, attentiveness, concentration, wisdom; further, 3 supramundane faculties possessed by the 4 kinds of Holy Men (see my Guide through the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, II, 5).

The five physical sense-faculties (eye, ear, etc.) are a condition only to mental phenomena (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.), whilst the remaining faculties may be sometimes a condition to physical phenomena as well.

So is, e.g., the physical vitality to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13) a condition by way of faculty, without which those corporeal phenomena would not arise. The mental and moral faculties are a condition to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby.

17. Jhāna-condition: *Jhāna-paccaya*

Jhāna is here to be understood in its widest sense as a combination of certain mental constituents due to that concentration of mind which is an indispensable factor in any state of consciousness, be it karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral; the karmically-neutral Jhāna is either a Karma-result (*vipāka*), or a mere functional state as in the case of the Arahāt. There are altogether 7 Jhāna-constituents: Thought-conception, Discursive Thinking, Interest, Joy, Sadness, Indifference, Concentration. In joyful consciousness of the sense-sphere (*kāmāvacara*), as well as in the first Jhāna of the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*), 5 Jhāna-constituents are present, to wit:—Thought-Conception, Discursive Thinking, Rapture, Joy, One-pointedness of mind (*vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, citt'ekaggatā=samādhi*).

These phenomena are to their concomitant mental groups, as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13), a condition by way of Jhāna.

18. Path-condition: *Magga-paccaya*.

The 12 constituents, of which some belong to the right, some to the wrong path, are:—wisdom, thought-conception, right speech, right bodily action, right livelihood; energy, attentiveness, concentration; wrong views, wrong speech, wrong bodily action, wrong livelihood.

Thought-conception, energy, attentiveness and concentration may be either karmically wholesome (right), unwholesome (wrong), or neutral (as in the case of the Arahāt).

These constitutents, be they karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral, are to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby, a condition by helping them in the sense of a release from this or that.

Within the above corporeal phenomena are, according to the Pañha-vāra of Kusalattika-Paṭṭhāna, also included the corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13).

19. Association-condition: *Sampayutta-paccaya*.

A phenomenon which by its association is aiding other phenomena is called an Association-condition. Thus, the 4 mental groups which are arising simultaneously are one to another a condition by way of Association. Cp. 6, 7.

20. Dissociation-condition: *Vippayutta-paccaya*.

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena by not having the same base (eye, ear etc.) and object (visible object, sound etc.) Hence; the corporeal phenomena are to the mental phenomena, and the mental phenomena to the corporeal phenomena, a condition by way of Dissociation. It is threefold: co-nascent, post-nascent, or pre-nascent. As it is said in Paṭṭhāna:

“The ‘co-nascent’ wholesome (mental) groups are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of Dissociation. So are the ‘post-nascent’ wholesome groups to this pre-nascent body.”

In the Saha-jāta-Vibhanga it is said: “The karma-resultant (*vipāka*) neutral groups at the moment of conception are to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13) a condition by way of Dissociation. And the (mental) groups are to the physical base (of mind), just as the latter is to the (mental) groups, a condition by way of Dissociation.”

Further it is said in the Pañha-vāra of Kusala-ttika-Patthana: “The ‘pre-nascent’ physical eye-base etc. is to eye-consciousness etc. a condition by way of Dissociation.”

21. Presence-condition: *Atthi-paccaya*.

This condition refers to a phenomenon which by its presence—being either pre-nascent, or co-nascent—is aiding certain other phenomena as a support.

For example, the 4 simultaneously arising mental groups are one to another a condition by way of presence, i. e. the existence of any of the groups is dependent on the presence of the other groups. The same applies to the 4 primary physical elements, whilst the presence of corporeality is a condition to mentality. Also consciousness and the mental phenomena are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of presence. So are the 4 physical elements to the derived corporeal phenomena, the 5 sense-organs and objects (‘pre-nascent’) to the five kinds of sense-consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), and the physical organ of mind to mind-consciousness.

22. Absence-condition: *Natthi-paccaya*.

This condition refers to just passed (*samanantara*) mental phenomena, which through their absence are aiding the mental phenomena immediately following after them, by giving them an opportunity to arise.

Thus, the consciousness and mental phenomena which have just passed, are to the presently arisen consciousness and mental phenomena a condition through their absence. That means, the present consciousness is conditioned through the absence of the past consciousness.

23. Disappearance-condition: *Vigata-paccaya*.

In as much as those last mentioned phenomena are by their disappearance giving other phenomena the opportunity to arise, they are called also a condition by way of Disappearance.

24. Non-Disappearance-condition: *A-Vigata-paccaya*.

This condition is identical with the Presence-condition (s. 21), and refers to the same phenomena.

CHAPTER II

Explanation of the formula of Dependent Origination.

I-II. Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations (*Avijjā-paccayāsaṅkhārā*).

‘IGNORANCE’ (*avijjā*) is in the Sutta-piṭaka explained as not understanding the 4 Noble Truths regarding suffering, its origin, its extinction, and the path leading to its extinction; and in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, further, as not understanding the past, future and both the past and future existence, and as not understanding the Dependent Origination of all the phenomena of existence,

By ' FORMATIONS ' (*sankhārā*) are here meant the Karma-Formations, i. e. the rebirth-producing volitions (*cetanā*) manifested in bodily, verbal, or purely mental actions (Pāli *kamma*, Sanskrit *karma*). They are either: (1) meritorious (*puññābhisankhāra*), as such appertaining either to the sense sphere, or to the Jhānas of the form-sphere; (2) demeritorious (*apuññābhisankhāra*), appertaining only to the sense-sphere; or (3) imperturbable (*āneñjābhisankhāra*), appertaining to the four Jhānas of the formless-sphere. (1) and (3) are worldly wholesome (*lokiya-kusala*), and (2) karmically unwholesome (*akusala*). Karmically neutral, as well as supramundane wholesome (*lokuttara-kusala*) states, do not come into consideration here, as they are no condition for rebirth.

(Meritorious Karma-Formations). Ignorance may be to the meritorious Karma-formations a condition (a) by way of Object (s.2), or (b) by way of Decisive Support (s.9(1)).

(a) For example, if we take our own, or another person's Ignorance, as Object of our contemplation, considering it as something evil and rejectable, then we thereby produce meritorious volitions, meritorious Karma-Formations. In this case Ignorance is to these meritorious Karma-Formations—belonging to this sense-sphere—a condition through being the 'Object' of our contemplation.

Or, when with Jhāna-vision (in the form-sphere) we recognize Ignorance in another person's mind, at that time the thus produced meritorious Karma-Formations in the form sphere are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Object.'

(b) But if, in order to overcome Ignorance, we are induced to perform meritorious deeds or practise self-control—belonging to the sense-sphere—or attain the

Jhānas of the form sphere, in that case all these meritorious Karma-Formations produced thereby are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Decisive Support' (*upanissaya*).

(Demeritorious Karma-Formations). If, however, through thinking on a state of Ignorance, greed or any other demeritorious phenomena are springing up, then these demeritorious Karma-Formations are dependent on Ignorance, are conditioned through Ignorance by way of 'Object' (*ārammaṇa*).

Or, if we pay great attention to that state of Ignorance as object, concentrate our mind on it, and enjoy it by way of greed, etc., then Ignorance is to these demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of 'Predominating Object' (*ārammaṇādhipati*; s. 2 and 3), and by way of 'Decisive Support through Object' (*ārammaṇupanissaya*; s. 9 (1)).

Or if, blinded and impelled by Ignorance, one commits crimes, or any other demeritorious actions, then these demeritorious Karma-formations are conditioned through Ignorance by being their 'Decisive Support.'

The Ignorance bound up with each immediately Impulsive moment, is to the demeritorious Karma-Formations of each immediately following Impulsive moment (*javana*; s. 11) a condition by way of Proximity, Contiguity, by way of Decisive Support through Contiguity (s. 9 (12)), by way of Frequency (s. 12), Absence (s. 22), and Disappearance (s. 23).

Whilst doing any demeritorious action, at that moment Ignorance is to the *associated* demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of Root, Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence and Non-Disappearance.

(Imperturbable Karma-Formations). To the imperturbable Karma-Formations Ignorance may be a condition only by way of Decisive Support. If namely for the purpose of overcoming Ignorance, we produce the 4 *Jhānas* of the Formless sphere, then these Imperturbable Karma-Formations of the formless sphere depend on Ignorance as their 'Decisive Support.'

Here I wish to call attention to the fact that Ignorance, though being the main condition, is in no way the only condition to the Karma-Formations, and so it is in all other cases. Each of the 12 conditionally arising phenomena of the *Paticca-Samuppada* is dependent on various conditions besides that given in the formula, and all are inter-related and interdependent in manifold ways.

II - III. Through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness (*Sankhāra-paccayā Viññāṇam*)

Here, by CONSCIOUSNESS (*viññāṇa*) are meant only those classes of consciousness which are the results (*vipāka*) of wholesome or unwholesome Karma done in a former existence, namely:— eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-consciousness (i.e. visible sensation, audible sensation, etc.) with either desirable, or undesirable objects, according to whether they are the results of wholesome or of unwholesome Karma; further the Mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), i. e., Recipient Consciousness (*sampaticchana*), receiving the sense-object and being either the result of wholesome or unwholesome Karma-; further, the *Investigating* (*santīraṇa*) and *Registering* (*tad ārammaṇa*) Mind-Consciousness-Element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) being unaccompanied by moral Roots, which, as result of wholesome Karma, is accompanied either by gladness or indifference, and, as

result of unwholesome Karma, is accompanied by indifference-; further those 8 karma-resultant lofty states of Registering-, Rebirth-, Death-, and Sub-Consciousness which are accompanied by moral roots, greedlessness and hatelessness (*alobha, adosa*), and either associated with knowledge or not, accompanied by gladness or indifference, premeditated or not; further the karma-resultant consciousness in the form-sphere and formless sphere of existence due to the Jhanas practised in a previous birth (s. Dhamma-Sangani, or my Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka, I).

In the preceding para, reference has been made to the momentary stages within the process of a single unit of cognition (*citta-vithi*; cognitive series). Though these stages are already indicated in the canonical Dhamma Sangani, they have received nomenclature and detailed treatment only in the commentarial Abhidhamma literature. In a single process of sense experience, taking visual consciousness as an example, the following stages, or phases, are distinguished :

As soon as the visible object enters the field of presentation, there occurs in (1) Subconsciousness (*bhavanga*) (2) a Perturbation (*bhavanga-calana*) and (3) a Breaking-off of Subconsciousness (*bhavangupaccheda*), which in rapid succession is followed by (4) Advertance to the threshold of the sense stimulus (*pancadvaravajjana*), (5) Eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-vinnana*), (6) Recipient consciousness (*sampaticchana-citta*), (7) Investigating consciousness (*santirana-citta*), (8) Determining consciousness (*voththapana-citta*), (9) the Impulsive moments (*javana-citta*), and finally (10) the Registering consciousness (*tadarammana*, lit. 'that object'), after which the whole sinks again below the threshold of full consciousness, and gets immersed in Sub-consciousness — 6 is called Mind-element (*mano-dhatu*), 7-10 Mind-Consciousness-element (*mano-vinnana-dhatu*).

Hence the Karma-Formations are to all the afore-mentioned karma-resultant classes of consciousness (which include Rebirth-Consciousness, *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) a condition by way of Karma (s 13), and thus also a condition by way of

Decisive Support. For it is said in the Tika-Paṭṭhāna: “Wholesome and Unwholesome Karma (*kamma*) is to its result (*vipāka*) a condition by way of Decisive Support.”

Thus, the Karma-Formations are to Rebirth-consciousness (*patisaṅkhi-viññāṇa*), too, a condition by way of Decisive Support.

Rebirth-consciousness, which of course is a mind-consciousness (*mano-vinnana*) arises at the very moment of conception.

In the Sutta it is said : “Once all (I) Ignorance and Clinging is extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable (II) Karma-Formations are produced, and thus no (III) Consciousness will spring up again in a new mother’s womb” (Nid. Samy. No. 51).

III - IV. Through Consciousness conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (*Viññāṇa - paccayā Nāma-rūpam*).

“For, if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother’s womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality arise?” (Nid. Sutta). “Just as two bundles of reed leaning one against the other, so are Mentality and Corporeality dependent on Consciousness.” (Nid. Samy. No. 67).

‘Mentality’ (*nāma*) refers here only to 3 of the mental groups, i.e. feeling, perception and mental formations, for the 4th, the consciousness-group, has already been mentioned as the condition to the 3 other groups and corporeality. (Apart from the Paṭicca-samuppāda formula, Mentality, or *nāma*, is a name for all 4 mental groups).

‘Corporeality’ (*rūpa*) comprises the 4 primary physical elements—solid, liquid, heat, motion—and all the corporeal phenomena derived therefrom.

In the Sutta it is said :

“Feeling, perception, volition, sense-impression, mental reflection: these are called Mentality. The 4 primary elements and the corporeality derived therefrom: this is called corporeality” (Majjhima-Nikāya 9).

(Consciousness and Mentality). At conception, or during life-continuity, Rebirth-Consciousness or some other karma-resultant class of consciousness, are to the simultaneously arising 3 mental groups (‘Mentality’) a condition by way of Co-Nascence (s. 6), Mutuality (s. 7), Support (s. 8), Association (s. 19), Karma-Result (s. 14), Nutriment (here consciousness; s. 15), Faculty (mind-faculty; s. 16), Presence (s. 21), and Non-Disappearance (s. 24).

.. (Consciousness and Corporeality). Consciousness is to the 6 physical sense-organs (corporeality), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty (mind-faculty), Dissociation (s. 20), Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Mutuality. To the remaining corporeal phenomena it is a condition in the same ways, excepting only Mutuality.

Karmic Consciousness, i.e. consciousness accompanied by rebirth-producing wholesome or unwholesome volitions, — at the stage of Impulsive moments; s. II-III — is to the karma-produced Corporeality (i.e. the physical changes arising from moment to moment during life-continuity) a condition by way of Decisive Support (s. 9).

There are many more ways, in which the numerous Corporeal and Mental phenomena are dependent on the

various kinds of karma-resultant Consciousness. A detailed explanation is given in Paṭṭhāna.

IV - V. Through Mentality and Corporeality conditioned are the 6 Sense Bases (*Nāma-Rūpa-paccayā Saḷāyatanaṃ*).

The 6 Sense Bases (*āyatana*) are a name for the 5 physical sense-organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) and the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), the latter being a collective term for the 5 kinds of sense consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*) and the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). Cf. II - III.

As condition to the Sense Bases, Mentality (*nāma*) again refers to the above mentioned 3 mental groups, whilst Corporeality (*rūpa*) refers to the 4 primary physical elements, the 6 physical seats (*vatthu*) of consciousness (i. e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and physical seat of mind) and the physical life-faculty.*

(Mentality and Mind-Base). The 3 mental groups ('Mentality') are a condition only to the 6th Base, the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), as it is said in Vibhanga: "Through Mentality (*nāma*) conditioned is the sixth Base (*nāma-paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ*.)"

At the moment of conception the 3 mental groups ('Mentality') are to the mind-Base a condition in at least 7 ways, i. e. by way of Co-Nascence (6), Mutuality (7), Support (8), Association (19), Karma-Result (14; s. II), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (24); some mental

* The physical seat of mind must not be confounded with the Mind-base (*manāyatana*); cf preceding paragraph.

phenomena ('Mentality') also by way of Root (e. g. karmically neutral greedlessness, etc. included in the group of Mental Formations), or by way of Nutriment (e. g. Mind-Volition and Mind-Impression; s. 15).

Also during life-continuity, karma-resultant Mentality is to the Mind-Base a condition in the above ways, whilst the meritorious and demeritorious Mentality is to it a condition in the same ways, excepting only Karma-result; some non-resultant (meritorious, etc.) mental phenomena may be to the Mind-Base a condition by way of Root, some by way of Nutriment.

(Mentality and 5 physical Bases). Karma-resultant Mentality dependent on the 5 sensitive organs (e.g. Feeling or Perception produced through eye-impression, ear-impression, etc.) is during life-continuity, to the 5 physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition by way of Post-Nascence (11), Dissociation (20), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (23).

Also karmically wholesome and unwholesome Mentality is to the 5 physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition in the above four ways.

(Corporeality and Mind Base). The physical seat of mind (included in 'Corporeality') is, at the moment of conception, to the Mind-Base a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. The mind namely is functioning from the very first moment of conception of a being. Hence, at conception, and only at conception, does the physical organ of the mind arise simultaneously with mind-consciousness ('Co-Nascence') both being conditions one to another, whilst the physical organ of the mind is a Support (or foundation) to the Mind-base by its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

(Corporeality and 5 physical Bases). The 4 primary physical elements, i. e. the solid, liquid, heat and motion (included in 'Corporeality'), are to any of the 5 physical sense-organ Bases (i. e. eye, ear, etc.), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Of the 5 sentient organs only the body-sensitivity appears at conception, hence simultaneously with the four elements ('Co-Nascence'), whilst the other organs appear later. The existence of all these 5 physical Bases, however, is dependent on the Support, Presence and Non-Disappearance of the 4 primary physical elements.

The physical Life-Faculty (included in 'Corporeality') is, at conception and during life-continuity, to the 5 physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Faculty. In other words, the 5 sense-organs are dependent on the Faculty of physical life, on its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

Bodily Nutriment (included in 'Corporeality') is to the 5 sense-organ Bases, during life-continuity, a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Nutriment. In other words, the 5 sense-organs can exist only as long as the material nutriment is present.

(The 6 sense organs and Mind Base). The 5 physical sense-organs (included in 'Corporeality') are, during life-continuity, to the 5 kinds of sense-consciousness, as eye-consciousness, etc. (included in the Mind-Base), a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. In other words, these five kinds of consciousness cannot arise without the Support, the Pre-Arising, the Presence, and the Faculty of the 5 physical sense-organs.

The physical organ of mind (included in 'Corporeality') is, during life-continuity, to Recipient consciousness and mind-consciousness (included in the 'Mind-Base'; s. above) a condition by way of Support, Pre Nascence, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance, i. e. the arising of these two kinds of consciousness depends—during life-continuity—on the Support, Pre-arising and Presence of the physical organ of the mind.

V - VI Through the 6 Sense Bases conditioned is Sense-Impression. (*Saḷāyatana-paccayā Phasso*).

The 6 kinds of Sense Impression (*phassa*) are: eye-impression (visual contact), ear-impression, nose-impression, tongue-impression, body-impression, mind-impression, being either the results of wholesome or unwholesome Karma. They are associated with all the above-mentioned kinds of karma-resultant consciousness (s. II - III).

(5 sense-organ Bases) The 5 physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) are to the corresponding 5 kinds of sense-impression (eye-impression, etc.) a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Here it should be remembered that the sense-organ Bases are included also in the 20 'Faculties' (s. 16). Sense-Impression cannot take place without the physical organs having already arisen (Pre-Nascence), without their being 'present' etc.

(Mind-Base) The 5 classes of sense-consciousness, visual, etc. (included in the 'Mind-Base'), are to the corresponding karma-resultant Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance.

Here again we have to remember that consciousness and its mental concomitants, hence also Sense-Impression, are all 'simultaneously arising' (Co-Nascence), 'mutually conditioned' and inseparably 'associated' with each other, and that the 5 kinds of sense-consciousness are all 'Karma-Results' and considered as 'Nutriment' (consciousness) and 'Faculties' (s. 16).

(5 physical object-Bases). The 5 physical sense-object Bases, as visible object, sound etc., are to the corresponding 5 Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Object, Pre-Nascence, and Non-Disappearance. That means, the existence of the 5 Sense-Impressions depends on the existence of the 5 physical Objects, on their having 'already arisen' (Pre-Nascence), on their 'not having disappeared'. For, if the 5 physical Objects have not already arisen, no corresponding Sense-Impressions will take place.

(6 object-Bases). The 6 objects, i.e. the physical objects, and the mind-object (which latter may be sometimes also a corporeal phenomenon), are to Mind-Impression a condition merely by way of Object, i.e. through their being its objects.

VI - VII. Through Sense-Impression conditioned is Feeling (*Phassa-paccayā Vedanā*).

There are 6 kinds of Feeling (*vedanā*): born of eye-impression, ear-impression, nose-impression, tongue-impression, body-impression, and mind-impression. With every kind of consciousness, Feeling is inseparably associated. Here, however, only the karma-resultant Feelings come into consideration, i.e. those Feelings which are associated with the above mentioned classes of karma-resultant consciousness (s. II-III) and karma-resultant sense-impressions (s. V-VI).

The 5 Sense- Impressions (i.e. eye-impression etc.) are to the corresponding 5 kinds of Feeling (i.e. born of eye-impression etc.) a condition in 8 ways, i.e. by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutri-ment, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Here again the reader has to remember, that all the mental phenomena in one and the same state of consciousness, hence also the above Sense- Impressions and the corresponding five kinds of Feeling, are necessarily dependent one upon the other by their 'simultaneous arising' (Co-Nascence), their Presence, their Association etc.

To those karma- resultant Feelings, however, which arise along with the Recipient, Investigating, and Registering stages of consciousness, the 5 Sense- Impressions are a condition by way of Decisive Support. To Recipient Consciousness, however, they are a condition also by way of Contiguity.

Mind- Impression (*mano-samphassa*) is to the simultaneously arising karma- resultant Feelings of the sensuous sphere associated with Registering consciousness, a condition in the above 8 ways (i.e. by Co-Nascence etc.).

To those karma- resultant Feelings of the 3 spheres (the sensuous, form- and formless- sphere) that arise at conception, in sub- consciousness, and at death, as well as to those Feelings that arise along with the Registering consciousness at the mind- gate, to all those does Mind- Impression associated with the 'Advertence to the threshold of the mind' (*mano-dvārāvajjana*) constitute a condition by way of Decisive Support.

VII - VIII. Through Feeling conditioned is Craving *(Vedanā- paccayā Taṇhā)*

With regard to the 6 objects, there are 6 kinds of Craving, i. e. craving, with regard to visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily sensations, and mind objects.

If, with regard to any of these objects Craving arises with the desire for sensual enjoyment, it is called 'Sensuous Craving' (*kāma-taṇhā*). If it is connected with the belief in eternal personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Existence' (*bhava-taṇhā*). If it is connected with the belief in annihilation of personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Annihilation' (*vibhava-taṇhā*).

Any Feeling associated with any karma-resultant consciousness is to Craving a condition by way of Decisive Support, irrespectively whether the feeling be agreeable, painful or indifferent. For even painful Feeling may be a condition to Craving, as dependent on painful Feeling there may arise the desire and craving for happiness.

VIII-IX. Through Craving conditioned is Clinging (*Taṇhā-paccayā Upādānam*).

The 4 kinds of Clinging (*upādāna*) are: sensuous clinging (*kāmūpādāna*), clinging to erroneous opinions (*diṭṭhūpādāna*), clinging to mere rules and ritual (*sīlabbatūpādāna*), clinging to the Ego belief (*attavādūpadāna*).

Sensuous Craving (*kāma-taṇhā*) is to Sensuous Clinging (*kāmūpādāna*) a condition by way of Decisive Support. To the other 3 kinds of Clinging—if associated with it—it is a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Root (greed); further, Craving may be to them a condition by way of Decisive Support, in which case, of course, it cannot be co-nascent etc.

IX-X. Through Craving conditioned is the Process of Existence (*Upādāna-paccayā Bhavo*).

The Process of Becoming (*bhava*) is of two kinds:—
(1) Karma-Process (*kamma-bhava*), being the active side

of existence; (2) Rebirth-Process (*uppati-bhava*), being the passive (re-active), karma-resultant side of existence.

(1) The Karma-Process consists of rebirth-producing volitions (*cetanā*) and the mental phenomena associated therewith, which all, combined together, are to be considered as Karma, or action (Pāli: *kamma*). As it is said in Vibhanga:—“What at that occasion is the Karma-Process? It is the meritorious, demeritorious, and imperturbable karma-formation (s. I-II). This is called the Karma-Process. Moreover, all action leading to rebirth is called Karma-Process.”

Hence, ‘Karma-Process’ (*kamma-bhava*) is a collective name for rebirth-producing Volition (*cetanā*) and all the mental phenomena associated therewith, whilst the 2nd link of the formula, the Karma-Formations (*sankhāra*), according to the Paṭisambhidā-Magga (Ñāṇakathā No. 4), designates the rebirth-producing Volitions (*āyuhana-sankhāra*) only.

(2) The Rebirth-Process, in short, comprises the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) groups of existence. In Vibhanga VI it is said:—“What on that occasion is the Rebirth-Process? There is the process of existence in the sensuous sphere, in the form-sphere, the formless sphere, the perception-sphere, the non-perception-sphere, the neither-perception - nor - non - perception-sphere, the one-group sphere (i.e. of the unconscious beings, possessing only one group, the Corporeality-group) the 5-group sphere (i. e. the sense-sphere and form-sphere): this is called the Rebirth-Process of Existence.”

Now, impelled by ‘Sensuous Clinging’ (*kāmūpādāna*) one may produce a meritorious or demeritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in the sensuous sphere. Or,

through sensuous clinging to happiness and joy (which one hopes to find in the form- or formless-sphere) one might practise the Jhanas of the form- or formless-sphere, and thus be reborn in that special sphere. In that case, Sensuous Clinging would be a condition of that meritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these spheres.

Or, impelled by 'Clinging to Erroneous Opinions' (*diṭṭhūpādāna*), e.g. to belief that the Ego reaches extinction in one of the three spheres, one may produce a Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in that special sphere. Thus, the Clinging to Erroneous Opinions is a condition to that Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in one of these 3 spheres.

In a similar way, also 'Clinging to Rules and Ritual' (*sīlabbatūpādāna*) and 'Clinging to the Ego Belief' (*attavādūpādāna*) may be a condition of such a Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these 3 spheres.

To the existence in the form- and the formless-sphere, as well as to the wholesome Karma-Process and the Rebirth-Process included in the sensuous sphere, this fourfold Clinging is a condition only by way of Decisive Support.

In the Sensuous Existence these 4 kinds of Clinging are to the unwholesome Karma-Process, if associated therewith, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance and Root (greed); but if dissociated therewith, merely a condition by way of Decisive Support.

X-XI. Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth (*Bhava-paccayā Jāti*).

Birth (*jāti*) is here explained as the manifestation of the 5 groups of existence (corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) at conception, which in the world of men takes place in the mother's womb.

By the Process of Becoming (*bhava*) in this connection, i.e. as the condition to Rebirth, we have to understand the Karma-Process of Becoming (*kamma-bhava*).

This Karma-Process is to Rebirth a condition by way of Karma, and hence by way of Decisive Support (s. II-III).

To the question, how one could know whether the Karma-Process is really the condition of Rebirth, Visuddhi-Magga XVII gives the following answer:—

“Though the outward conditions may be absolutely the same, there still can be seen a difference in the beings with regard to the qualities, as wretched, noble, etc. Even though the outward conditions, such as sperma, and blood of father and mother, may be the same, there still can be seen that difference between the beings, even if they be twins. This difference cannot be without a cause, as it can be noticed at any time, and in any being. It can have no other cause than the Karma-Process. And, as in the own life-continuity of those reborn beings no other cause can be found, it must be due to the Karma-Process. Karma (action) namely is the cause for the difference amongst beings with regard to high and low, etc. Therefore the Buddha has said: “Karma divides the beings into high and low” (Majjhima Nikāya 135). In this sense we should understand that the Process of Becoming is the condition of Rebirth.”

That in this ever-repeated process of Rebirth, in the absolute sense, no self, no Ego-entity is to be found besides these conditionally arising and passing phenomena, this truth is expressed by the Buddha in the following words:—

“To believe that the doer of the deed be the same as the one who experiences its result (in the next life): this is one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed, and the

one who experiences its result, be two different persons: this is the other extreme. Both these extremes the Perfect One has avoided and taught the truth that lies in the middle of both, to wit: Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations; through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness..... through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair” (Nid. Samy. No. 46).

“No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits :
Empty phenomena roll on,
This view alone proves right and true.

“No god, no Brahma, can be found,
No maker of this wheel of life :
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all.”

(quoted in Visuddhi-Magga XIX).

XI-XII. Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (*Jāti-paccayā Jarā-maraṇam*).

Where there is no Rebirth, there is no Decay and Death, no sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. But where there is Rebirth, there also is Decay and Death. Thus Rebirth is to Decay and Death, etc., a condition by way of Decisive Support.

The following diagram shows at a glance the relationship of dependence existing between three successive lives :—

Past	1. Ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>)	Karma-Process (<i>kamma-bhava</i>)
	2. Karma-Formations (<i>sankhāra</i>)	
Present	3. Consciousness (<i>vinñāṇa</i>)	Rebirth-Process (<i>uppatthi-bhava</i>)
	4. Mentality & Corporeality (<i>nāma-rūpa</i>)	
	5. The 6 Sense-Bases (<i>āyatana</i>)	
	6. Sense-Impression (<i>phassa</i>)	
	7. Feeling (<i>vedanā</i>)	Karma-Process (<i>kamma-bhava</i>)
	8. Craving (<i>taṇhā</i>)	
Future	9. Clinging (<i>upādāna</i>)	
	10. Process of Becoming (<i>bhava</i>)	Rebirth-Process (<i>uppatthi-bhava</i>)
	11. Rebirth (<i>jāti</i>)	
	12. Decay & Death (<i>jarā-maraṇa</i>)	

1-2 are identical with 8-10, as each of these 2 groups represents the Karma-Process, containing the 5 karmic causes of rebirth, to wit: 1. Ignorance, 2. Karma-Formations (rebirth-producing volitions), 8. Craving, 9. Clinging, and 10. Karma-Process (*avijjā, sankhāra, taṇhā, upādāna, kamma-bhava.*)

In the same way, 3-7 are identical with 11-12, as each of these two groups represents the Rebirth-Process, containing the 5 Karma-results, to wit: 3. Consciousness (rebirth, etc). 4. Mentality and Corporeality (conception),

5. the Bases, 6. Sense-Impression, 7. Feeling (*viññāṇa*, *nāma-rūpa*, *āyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanā*). Cf. *Paṭisambhidā*, *Ñāṇakathā* No. 4.

“Five causes were there in the past.
Five fruits we find in present life,
Five causes do we now produce,
Five fruits we reap in future life.”

(*quoted in Vis. Magga* XVII).

In *Nid. Samy.* No. 34 there are given 77 kinds of knowledge regarding the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*. They form 11 groups, corresponding to the 11 propositions of the formula, each with 7 kinds of knowledge. As all the 11 groups are in every respect throughout analogous, I am giving here only the first group of seven kinds of knowledge, namely :

- (1) that through Ignorance the Karma-Formations are conditioned ;
- (2) that, if there is no Ignorance, there also are no Karma-Formations ;
- (3) that also in the past the Karma-Formations were conditioned through Ignorance;
- (4) that, if there had been no Ignorance, there also would have been no Karma-Formations;
- (5) that also in the future the Karma-Formations will be conditioned through Ignorance;
- (6) that, if there will be no Ignorance, there also will be no Karma-Formations;
- (7) that even one's knowledge of the Fixity of this Law is subject to decay, disappearance, waning and cessation.

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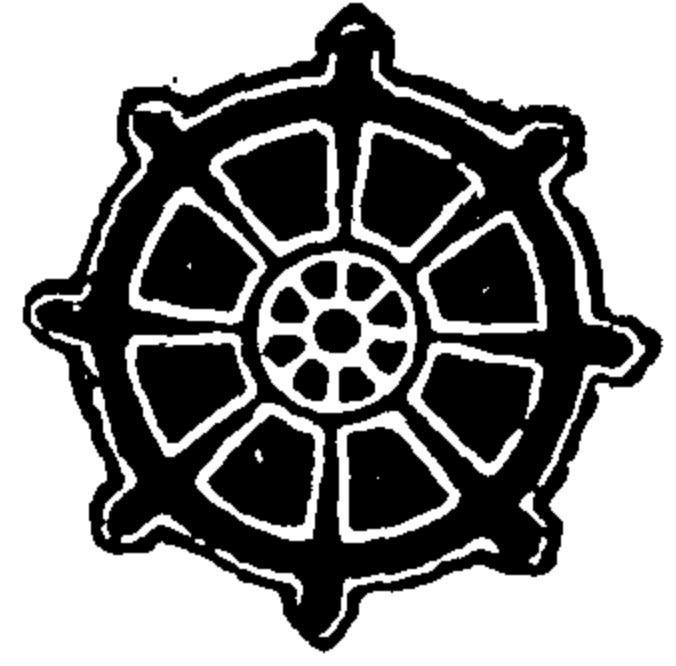
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The Buddhist Doctrine of NIBBĀNA

Two Essays by

The Ven. Dr. P. Vajirañāṇa

Francis Story

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**The Buddhist Doctrine
of
NIBBĀNA**

Two Essays



**The Ven. Dr. Parawahera Vajirañāṇa
and
Francis Story**



**BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
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THE BUDDHIST DOCTRINE OF NIBBANA

Venerable Dr. Parawahera Vajirañāṇa Thera

THE Buddha has given to the world a profound Doctrine, unprecedented in the history of mankind. His was a universal and eternal rule of virtue and wisdom. His was the system flowing upward, the way out of this painful Saṁsāra, one progressive adventure leading to the Supreme Goal of Nibbāna. The world has inherited the teaching of the Sakyamuni as his unique contribution to the commonwealth of spiritual treasure, in which all the wills of his converted were gathered together into one multifarious activity of human civilization to save the history of mankind from being a dull and painful record of human folly and bloodshed.

The real value of the Buddha's teaching lies in his unique Doctrine of Nibbāna, the most refulgent flower of the Aryan culture. Its teaching is irrefutable and self-evident. That life teems with suffering, is its teaching. It is not a myth, but it is the fact. There is happiness also to be found, and it is within, not without. Find the cause of suffering and remove it. Happiness then will be the reward. The cause of suffering lies also within life itself, and it is egoism and craving that are responsible for the disturbed harmony of life, but not the anger of any invisible power, or a forbidden fruit, or Pandora's casket.

According to this simple teaching all forms of craving must be extinguished to make life serene. The very idea of Nibbāna is the state of mind co-extensive with this serenity. Here surely we have the most complete analysis of the motive and meaning of the universe. The universe

is not the issue of a cosmic giant hidden somewhere in the sky, nor is it of primordial germ like a cosmic egg. To admit a universal first principle is scientifically an impossibility as well as a philosophical absurdity.

To begin with, the craving for individuality is the cause of all turmoil and greed. The craving for life results in three possible manifestations which are all evil. First comes the craving for sensuousness, the desire to gratify the senses. The second is the desire to prolong the cycle of life. Third is the desire for personal immortality. All this means the worldliness which is the cause of all commotion and unrest. There can be no happiness, no righteousness, nor social order, if man is not free from selfish desire and egoism caused by this threefold craving. It is the way out of this craving and the attainment of eternal Peace that is taught by the Buddhist doctrine of Nibbāna as the Supreme God of all humanity.

To understand the full significance of the Buddhist Doctrine of Nibbāna it is necessary to have some knowledge of other systems of thought with regard to the final goal of life. The immortality of the soul as the final destiny of man is the most persistent idea in all other religions, and this belief appears earliest in its crudest beginnings in the savage mind of primitive man. From the time of primitive man, many people have believed in it, in some form or other, very earnestly and seriously. When the Buddha made his appearance in India, it was current not only there but also in other parts of the world. Later, the great bulk of the human race, became so absolutely certain of the truth of their belief in the soul's immortality that they did not dare to entertain any other thought, however rational and scientific it might have been.

But to understand the objective validity or the futility of this belief it will be useful to review the original ideas and

the outstanding points in their development. There is a bewildering variety of views on the belief in the soul's immortality held by different schools, and the beliefs in (1) the life of the dead, (2) the resurrection of the body, (3) transmigration of the soul, and (4) the final return of the soul to its divine origin, are the most prominent among them.

Animism: (1) The conception of the life of the dead is probably the earliest thing to appear in religion, for it was the only religion of the early men, both of the East and West, before they had come to believe in gods. It is as old as that early savage level of thought in which no distinction was made between the animate and inanimate and the ideas of life and death themselves were but very ill demarcated. With the rise of crude hylozoism, the oldest primitive conception of the all-pervading life of matter, a vague adumbration of the existence of a soul began to pervade humanity. "All matter is alive, and all living beings have souls. Nothing perishes which has once existed, and things which appear destroyed only change their natures and pass into another form," is a simple statement of this belief.

The earliest Egyptian as well as Indian records attest this belief, and it is only an appropriation from the primitive men who used to derive their hypothesis mainly from the generic images of impressive phenomena. The concurrent suggestions of such phenomena as sleep, dreams, insanity and death would easily induce the primitive mind to believe that there is something in the bodies of the living, something that is an impalpable counterpart of the body, a distinct entity which could go away from the body at will and return to it again. For the savage mind, proof of this would lie in the fact that it is this inert body or soul of the sleeper that awakes him to report dream adventures in

some remote regions where he seemed to have been hunting or fighting, making love or feasting, meeting or consorting with people already dead.

This soul or life of the body was regarded as something bound up with the breath, which at death finally departed from the body to live independently as a ghost in an ethereal state. In point of fact, it is this primitive conception of the independent existence of a soul that has given birth to the idea of immortality.

During those early stages of primitive speculation the dead were regarded as bodily living. A dead person is the one whose soul or breath has left him, as if it were to roam about freely, but may return again to the body when it wants to be fed or tended. At this stage men kept the corpses of their dead relatives at home or in caves until they decayed, and this probably gave rise to the custom of mummifying dead bodies as was practised among the Egyptians as well as among some savage tribes.

This simple faith in survival after death, presupposed by the care shown by primitive man towards his dead, thus waxed into a definite belief in human immortality. In this first stage of its development immortality is conceived as the existence of the soul in an ethereal form more or less invisible. This belief was probably held by some Egyptians, Greek and Romans, and later by most of the Jews, as it was believed by Pre-Buddhistic Indians. It was simply a continuation of life under conditions more or less favourable, a creed appropriate to the animistic cult.

Brahmanism: (2) In the second stage of thought the fear of the dead became more obviously apparent in the savage mind; men dreaded the return of the ghost or the moving corpse, and strove to keep it away from the sight of the living. Burial was introduced as a simple mode of disposing of the remains of the dead, and from the practice

of the funeral rites arose the idea of Resurrection. Men did not forget their dead and buried relatives, especially when they were in need, and thought that the dead would rise from their graves incarnated with a fresh body and life. In the Vedic funeral hymns we find the idea of re-incarnation or resurrection of the dead coming to hold a definite position in Indian belief. The son or a close relative of the departed (preta) is instructed to make periodical offerings at the grave and invoke the deities supposed to be guardians and rulers of the dead; and the dead person is thus addressed :—

“ Go forth, go forth, along the paths where fathers
Of ours before have travelled on aforetime;
Both kings exulting in their own oblations
God Varuna shalt thou behold and Yama.”

“ Come with the fathers, come along with Yama,
With gifts and offerings in the highest heaven;
Come home again, leaving behind all evil,
Come with thy body, full of life and vigour.”¹

The resurrection which appears at first as a revival of the dead in bodily existence is afterwards regarded in Semitic religions as the last stage of the world, a redemptive purpose of God. It assumes the moral distinction of the righteous and the wicked in a vague administration of divine judgment. Its deepest motive, however, is religious. A blissful heaven is promised for the pious, as a reward for the good, and the lot of the ungodly is decided in a hell as the punishment for misconduct. Its tenets are included in “(i) the manifestation of God; (ii) the universal judgment; (iii) the perfect kingdom of Heaven coming after the judgment; (iv.) the resurrection of the righteous to the

¹ Brihad, Up. 1-4-14; 4-4-5, trans, by E. J. Thomas.

everlasting bliss in the presence of God; (v.) the damnation of the wicked to eternal shame and misery." In this doctrine of resurrection we find a belief in the immortality of both happiness and misery, and it is one of the most remarkable curiosities in the history of religion that such an idea has been developed into a definite doctrine of the final condition of man and the world.

(3) As a modification of this entirely mythical idea of individual immortality, there arose in the third stage of development the belief in the Transmigration of souls. It has come as a solace to those who were in despair about the unfair judgment passed on the wicked souls, and sought for a fair justice according to the merits of their crimes.

The belief in transmigration was always extensively held in many different parts of the world.¹ According to this belief the judgment of the soul was conducted by some powerful gods assisted by minor deities by assessors, supposed to represent each of the various crimes from which the dead person was expected to be free. In Egypt it was conducted by Osiris, and in India by Yama, the king of the dead. The general belief was that the souls of men are emanations from the Divine Soul, and each is supposed to return to its divine origin when it is accepted as sufficiently pure at the judgment. But those found guilty of sin are doomed to pass through a series of lower bodies in order to become sufficiently purified. The Egyptians thought that the sinful souls would be purified by a lengthened sojourn in the bodies of unclean animals such as the hippopotamus, crocodile, pig or serpent. Pythagoras, who introduced the doctrine of transmigration to Greece, thought that the soul assumes the form of a bird, like that of a wild fowl or a wood-cock, the idea which Shakespeare has ironically ridiculed.

¹ See "The Case for Rebirth," The Wheel No, 12/13.

The special characteristic feature of Indian belief in this doctrine is that the soul transmigrates from one mode of life to another, and the physical condition of each is determined by the moral and religious life of the preceeding. Here we find the Indian doctrine of Karma coming to the field to form the various schools of ontological and eschatological thought which held the Indian population in a net of views¹ for centuries.

Karma originally was a mythical conception attributed to Varuna, lord of the physical and moral order of the Universe. When mythical conceptions entered into the Vedic pantheon the early Indian mind was completely emancipated from connections with natural phenomena, whereby the cosmic changes were formerly explained, and new tendencies began to develop. The Universe was introduced as a sacrifice performed by Varuna, the lord of *ṛta*. *Ṛta* refers to the law of the Universe, the order of sacrifice and the moral law of the world. On account of *ṛta* everything in the Universe has a prescribed course; the sun and the moon pursue their course day and night respectively across the sky; the seasons move regularly in light and shadow across the earth; each individual performs his duties according to his own caste. The Karma is the duty, and it is the ritual of sacrifice.² The welfare of human beings depends on the sacrifice to deities. Thus developed the belief in Sacrificial Karma, and belief in gods.

The gods were personal beings who were responsible for everything beyond human control. The happiness of man was to be attained through divine mercy, which could be

1 *Micchā-diṭṭhi*; false assumptions.

2 Thus the concept of Karma in the Bhagavad Gita differs from the Karma (*kamma*) of Buddhism, which is an ethical concept.

won by placating deities with offerings that serve them as food. This may have a connection with the idea that food (*annam*) is the vital element, by which everything is sustained. To gain the desired happiness the sacrifice had to be performed according to the injunction of Prajāpati, the lord of the Universe, and it was to be conducted by the Brahmins who were supposed to be holy men born from the mouth of Brahma. When the idea of the moral law entered into Karma the knowledge of God was essential for the moral life of the individual. When moral striving ends in religious practice the individual is said to be freed from all bonds of earthly existence, and to have attained immortality in a blissful heaven. But those who have not reached the highest perfection in knowledge and Karma will have other chances for perfection in the course of transmigration or *saṁsāra*. Thus in Vedic Brahmanism the sacrifice is considered as Karma, as the binding principle.¹ When it is performed for worldly gain it becomes the bondage to the sensuous existence in *saṁsāra* or transmigration, and when it is performed with the knowledge of God without selfish ego, it tends to release (*Moksha*).

Jainism: When the mythical conceptions proved wearisome to the intellect and men were harassed by doubts about God and sacrifice, Karma together with the theory of knowledge and the belief in transmigration, took a new turn to evolve a definite system of thought called Jainism. This godless (*Anisvara*) system, like the scepticism of the Sophists assumes that all truth is relative to the observer; there is no objective truth. Knowledge is only personal belief; everything is equally false. Every statement of a thing gives us only a *Syāt* or 'may-be'; we cannot affirm or

1 Yoga.

deny anything. But this system of scepticism has a great significance for the doctrine of transmigration of the soul. It draws attention to the physical elements of knowledge and Karma, and gives an interpretation of the problem of the Universe by its seven principles of analysis (*sapta-bhangi*), which are as follows :

(1) All substances (*dravya*) are divided into two: (2) lifeless matter or body (*sarīra*), and (3) soul or life (*jīva*). *Dravya* is again divided into (4) space (*ākāśa*), and two subtle substances (5) *dharma* or *sukha*, happiness, and (6) *adharma* or *dukkha*, unhappiness, and (7) *pudgala*, living matter. *Ākāśa*, *dharma* and *adharma* are the necessary conditions for the souls and material aggregations which are the substance of all other things. *Ākāśa*, space, gives them room to exist; *dharma* sets them in motion; and *adharma* makes rest possible to them. Matter assumes forms eternal and imperishable. It exists in two forms of atoms (*anu* or *sukshma*) and aggregates (*skandha*). Atoms change and develop, and assume forms in aggregation as earth, water, fire and air. The individual existence is evolved from these elements bound up with Karma, and transmigrates in the process of evolution and devolution, atomic aggregation and disintegration, until Karma becomes nullified.

Just as the Ionian School of Greek philosophy, Jainism asserts a material substance as the universal first principle from which the infinite multiplicity of phenomena has been evolved. In addition to the animistic conception that all matter is alive and all living things have a soul, Jainism has its own doctrine of Karma to replace the idea of a divine Intelligence conceived in Greek philosophy as the harmony which constitutes the law of the Universe. Karma in Jainism is recognized as quasi-substance ready to be transformed into the different degrees of individual action. This kind of subtle matter fills all space, and pours into

the mundane soul. Combining chemically with the soul it forms a subtle body which determines the fate of the individual. Karma leaves the mark of every change on the individual organism. Fresh Karma always replaces that eliminated, and serves as the foundation of future existence. The soul must enter a new body until all Karma is neutralized by the practice of austerities (*tapas*) and Yoga. The soul, though a substance, is not matter, but it is co-extensive with the body. It is characterized by intelligence (*cetanā*), which is indestructible and can never be annihilated. When every Karma is purged off from the soul it attains liberation (*moksha*) and ascends to the abode of the liberated souls on the top of the Universe. Jainism thus believes in the transmigration of the soul as a necessary sequence to the law of Karma which is entirely physical and independent of any divine authority, and in the separation of the soul from its material connection as the attainment of immortality.

Sāṅkhya: As an antithesis between the pantheistic theology of the Vedic Brahmins and the animistic pluralism of the Jains there developed an even more advanced system of philosophy called Sāṅkhya, expounded by a sage named Kapila. It is probably the oldest system of advanced thought and it explains cosmic change on the basis of mathematical relations. It systematically enumerates twenty-five principles (*tatvas*) of phenomena, consisting of twenty-four material and an independent immaterial principle. It views the undeveloped and the developed state of one and the same substance as the cause of the Universe, and also believes in an infinite plurality of individual souls independent of the idea of a world-soul or an intelligent creator. Its dualism is that there is the eternal co-existence of a material first cause which is called *Prakṛiti* (nature), undifferentiated originant, and the

purusha, the permanent *ātman* or soul, which continually interact on one another. When the constituent factors of *Prakriti* are not in a state of equipoise (*samyavastha*) it becomes developed, in a gradual process of evolution, into all forms of the phenomenal Universe, under the influence of Purusha, the soul which stands behind, passive and unmoved. Prakriti has three constituents (*guṇas*) in perfect equilibrium, which appear in matter as lightness, movement and heaviness, and are cited, in mental phenomena as *sattva*, goodness or potential energy; *rājas*, passion or activity; and *tamas*, dulness or rigidity. *Mahāt*, the great, or *Buddhi*, intelligence, is the first evolute of prakriti. *Ahankāra*, the egoity, consciousness or the principle of individuation comes next. From egoity, in its *sattva* aspect, arise the *manas* or the inner sense, the ten indriyas, the five sense organs and the five organs of action, hands, feet, speech, excretory organs, organ of generation: from them in the *tamas* aspect the five *Tammatras*, subtle elements (smell, flavour, form, touch and sound) arise. From these evolve the five *mahābhūta*, the gross elements (earth, water, fire, air and space).

The souls being connected with matter become invested with a subtle body (*sukshma sarīra*) consisting of eighteen principles, namely, intelligence, consciousness, five subtle matters, and the organs of sense and action including the mind. The soul characterized by purity and intelligence accompanies its subtle frame through the circle of transmigration, connecting itself ever anew with matter as the fruition of dulness, *tamas* or non-discrimination. It is only by cutting off its bondage of worldly existence by attaining perfect knowledge of the absolute distinction between itself and the other twenty-four *tatvas* that the *purusha* is liberated from the miseries of transmigration and continues to exist in eternal separation from matter.

Sāṅkhya's method of gaining this knowledge of salvation was Yoga, the mental discipline to suppress the observing activities of mind, conscious or unconscious. According to the Sāṅkhya's theory of evolution, Prakṛiti, which is unconscious, itself evolves into all forms of phenomenal consciousness under the influence of *puruṣa*, the pure intelligence, the ultimate basis of all things. No cause is given for the origin of prakṛiti or puruṣa. But the free spirit (*puruṣa*) entering into the bonds of ignorance in the process of mechanical evolution of Nature, experiences the miseries of transmigration. Freedom is the result of Yoga; and it is regarded as the path to the *nirguṇa ātman*, the Self, devoid of constituent qualities. Yoga is the twenty-sixth principle thus added to the system. It is the path of the supreme God (Isvara-pada) to the theistic Sāṅkhyas, and has developed a complete system of mortification of the senses by means of austerity.

Vedānta: (4) Those who were not satisfied with these theories followed the old teachings of the Upanishads, and believed that this universe is "*māyā*", illusory, and without substance. But it is governed by an invisible agency called "Brahman", and that omni-presence is all-pervading and the knowledge of it is the path of salvation; the union with that supreme principle through Yoga is Nirvāṇa.

This doctrine of pantheistic conception has developed into Vedānta, a system of non-dualism (*advaita*), and it believes in Brahman as the sole reality, and the Universe emanated by that supreme principle as non-real, *māyā*. The individual soul is different from its divine origin. Its divine nature is obscured by being entangled under the influence of *māyā* in the external adjuncts (*upādhis*) of the senses and vital air (breath). These, together with Karma, the law of action, accompany the soul in its transmigration. When the insight into Brahman is attained, the delusive veil

of ignorance is removed, and the truth that the soul is divine and has always been with Brahman is revealed. The realization of this unity through Yoga results in Moksha or liberation.

Materialism: There is one more system worth mentioning. It is the materialism called *Lokāyata*, which is confined to the physical law of the world. It holds that only this world is real, and denies all theories of spiritual substance and future existence. The soul is identified with the body, or the sense or breath or thought formed by the elements, earth, fire, water and air. When the body is destroyed the soul disappears. The world is born of itself from the elements. God is a myth; virtue and vice are conventional; pain and pleasure are the natural facts of life. Those who followed this system were extreme materialists and believed in no religion. "All life, from the noblest human beings to the primordial animated germ is the result of the inter-action of material atoms, is governed by certain measurable physical forces. All yearning of man for immortality is futile." They had no reason to believe that there is anything beyond the visible universe, and in consequence they declined entering into any argument upon the subject. Their idea of Nirvāna was a sensuous enjoyment to the heart's satisfaction. So they were call "Cārvaka" or sensuous gluttons.

This is a brief survey of some Indian systems of thought which indicate the main ideas of the soul's immortality and the final goal of man. These systems have given rise to a variety of pre-Buddhistic conceptions, and when Buddhism was advancing as a new revelation of thought, the mental life of India was an everlasting intricacy. an entanglement within and without twisted together, as it were, in a net of views. The whole power of human reasoning was displaying a new boldness to solve the ultimate problems of

life and the universe. There were six famous philosophers by the names Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccāna, Nigantha Nāṭaputta and Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta; all lived in Magadha in Buddha's time. Apart from them there were Sāṅkhyas and many orthodox Brahmins.

Regarding the soul and its immortality all possible hypotheses were taught by them. Sixty-two views are enumerated in the Buddha's discourse on views called Brahmajāla, the Net of Views. Their details are confusing, and the following is just an abstract to show their fantastic implications. They all fall into ten groups :—

1. Four views on the eternity of the individual soul and the external world—were held to assert that both the soul and the world as a whole are eternal.
2. Four views were entertained to say that the soul and the universe are in some respects eternal and in some not. They assert that God is immortal, but not individual souls.
3. Some held that the universe is finite, or infinite, or finite and infinite, or neither finite nor infinite.
4. Some entangled themselves in four ways in endless and equivocal arguments, wriggling like eels, refusing to accept any one doctrine, negative or positive.
5. Some asserted in two ways that the universe and the soul sprang up from nothing, and denied all possibility of any cause.

These eighteen views are held concerning the beginning of the world and belong to *pubbanta*, to the past. They all concern points of ontology.

The following are the eschatological views held in forty-four ways about the future of the soul and the universe, and they belong to *aparanta*, the future.

6. They (like early Vedic theologians) held sixteen phases of hypothesis of a conscious existence of the human soul after death.
7. To others the soul was unconscious in eight ways.
8. Some (like the Sāṅkhyas) held in eight ways that the soul is neither conscious nor non-conscious after death.
9. Others (like Pakudha Kaccāna) held in seven ways the annihilation of the soul after death, saying that it is dissolved into seven permanent uncreated substances (earth, water, fire, air, happiness, pain and life).
10. Some (like the Cārvakas or materialists) held that souls attain the bliss of Nirvāṇa in the present life in five ways; either in the full enjoyment of the pleasures of sense or in one of the four Jhānic trances.

It is based on one or other of these views that almost all forms of religion and philosophy have come to exist, and all of them have their origin in the speculative thought of primitive men. As the means of the soul's salvation people engaged themselves in various religious practices, some killing animals, even human beings, by way of sacrifice to their various gods, and praying them to grant them immortal happiness; some seeing the futility and wickedness of those practices, left their home-life and became wandering ascetics; and some were musing under trees and in caves.

Others naked, sleepless and exposing themselves to cold and heat, tortured themselves as the punishment for their previous bad karma, or tried to burn out their passions by sitting in the midday sun with fires all round them. Some, in relation to the idea that water is the first element of the universe as conceived by the Upanishads, and also by Thales of the Ionian school, thought that it is the purifying element, and used to go to holy rivers daily to cleanse themselves of their sins. Others worshipped the sun and thought that the world where the sun resides is immortal. Some worshipped fire with the idea that it was the primordial principle. It was their belief that out of fire all things have emerged and into it all must return.

When the Buddha appeared in the sixth century B.C., the world was teeming with such fantastic thoughts and beliefs. The sixth century B.C. was the most remarkable in all history. Everywhere there was an intellectual and religious awakening, and men's reasoning was displaying in a new field of thought. It was about the same time that Western civilization, inaugurated by the teaching of the Ionian school and Heraclitus, was giving a new turn to the early Greek thought by introducing his principle of universal flux that explained everything in terms of force, movement, dynamic energy. It was at the same time that Jeremiah was giving a new message among the Jews in Babylon, and Confucius was animating the national life of China by his teaching of social ethics.

In the Enlightenment of the Buddha, the world of the sixth century B.C. was given a new vision, a new evaluation of life, a final solution of the riddle of the universe. His facts were simple, yet fundamental. He saw that there is suffering in life. What is the cause? *Taṇhā* or craving, egoism and ignorance. It is found within life. If this is so, surely there must be an escape, and it should be sought.

But it cannot be gained by killing animals and burning them in the name of a sky god. Nor did he think it is possible by asceticism and self-torture, to escape from life's sufferings. Having discerned that life is bound up with suffering, he went forth, leaving his princely comforts for a greater and more worthy cause; namely, to find the way of escape.

Seeking after the supreme happiness of release and making inquiries in others systems, he went from one teacher to another, then practised the most severe austerities until he became exhausted. Having realized the futility of those methods from personal experience, he took to the middle course, avoiding excess in either direction. He pursued the same path which he was practising as Bodhi-satta through immensities of time.

Meditation was his path, the analysis of that inexorable law of cause and effect. One day he attained Supreme Enlightenment with the realization of the Truth of Saṃsāra, the wheel of birth and death. His mind was emancipated as the glorious consummation of his long course of practice, and experiencing the bliss of emancipation he breathed the solemn utterance:

“How sweet is the solitude of the peaceful, of him who
has seen and perceived the Truth.

Happy to be without malice and to be kind to all;

Happy is the passion-free,

Happy he who has no desire;

To have removed the notion ‘I am’—that is the supreme
bliss.” (Udāna.)

Reflecting upon the profundity of his Dhamma and seeing the mental life of the people, he thought his doctrine could not be understood by them. For they were intent on worldly pleasure and their minds were so clouded with views and opinions that they would not give him a hearing.

But finding that there were some seeking the truth, whose minds could be easily purified from worldly taints and religious illusions, he proceeded to Benares to teach the Doctrine of Nibbāna to his first five disciples who were seeking after life's release. There He proclaimed, declared and expounded the law of Dhamma and set turning the Wheel of Truth with the following words :—

“ Monks, one who has left the worldly life (for seeking Truth and happiness) should not follow these two extremes; indulgence of sense gratification on one hand and self-mortification in religious practice on the other. Avoiding these two extremes the Tathagata has gained Enlightenment through the Middle Path, which tends to produce insight and knowledge, tends to calm, to higher insight and to Enlightenment, to Nibbāna”.

Then He explained the Four Noble Truths—the Truth of suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering—wherein the Doctrine of Nibbāna is embodied. At the end of his sermon Kondañña, the head of the five disciples, attained the knowledge that “everything that is subject to origin is also subject to cessation”.

All the five disciples became Arahants in the course of instruction. Thereafter the Master, the Teacher of Nibbāna, continued to teach the Dhamma for forty-five years, and those who attained the Happiness of Nibbāna during their life testified to the efficacy of the system of the Master by such utterances as :

“ Nibbāna have I realized, and gazed into the mirror of the Dhamma, the Noble Truth.
I am healed of my wound;
Down is my burden laid; My task is done;
My heart is utterly set free.” (Thera gāthā.)

Such, in brief, is the history of the doctrine of Nibbāna, taught by the Buddha, and it is flatly opposite to the idea of the soul's immortality taught in all other religions.

Now, let us see what Nibbāna really means. The Pāli word Nibbāna is the name given to the Supreme Goal of Buddhism, and it must be understood in its Buddhistic sense. It implies the peaceful state of emancipated mind of a person who has attained self-enlightenment, taking that state as his goal. It is to express this meaning that the Venerable Anuruddha has explained it in his Compendium of Philosophy in the following words (as translated by U Sbwe Zan Aung):—

“Now Nibbāna which is reckoned as beyond these worlds,¹ is to be realized through the knowledge belonging to the Four Paths. It is the object of these Paths and their Fruits. It is called Nibbāna, in that it is a departure from that craving which is called ‘*Vāna*’, Lusting.”

This is to show that Nibbāna is not a thing that a mundane mind can comprehend. It is a matter of understanding, not of dialectical ability, but of the inner illumination that comes of a spiritual growth which transcends the mind from its lowly condition of mundane existence to the Supernatural wisdom. Here Nibbāna is shown as an object (*Ārammaṇa*), but that is not an ordinary object perceptible to the senses. It is the object that is uppermost in the mind upon its entry into the Path of Transcendence. The Path-knowledge does not rise without that object, therefore, it is called the *Ārammaṇa* of the Path consciousness. It should be noted that according to the laws of psychology if there is no such thing as Nibbāna, the Path-knowledge

¹ *Lokuttara*, transcending all saṃsāric states, including the heavens of Form and Formlessness.

will not present itself. This suggests the possibility of Nibbāna, and it is an answer to those who say that the Buddhist idea of Nibbāna is a negative one. This object is the freedom of Taṇhā, craving, which is the cause of saṁsāric existence. Hence it is 'Ni-Vāna', departure from Vāna, lusting or craving.

Taṇhā is called Vāna in the sense that it operates (as if it were a thread or cord) to conjoin one life with another. Thus the Pāli word Nibbāna is composed of 'Ni-Vāna.' Here 'Ni' is a negative particle meaning "absence," Vāna is a metaphorical expression of taṇhā. Nibbāna therefore means *Taṇhak-khaya*, absence of craving or extinction of thirst.

Translators have let Nibbāna be freely rendered by the Sanskrit term Nirvāṇa. The word was probably originally Buddhist. But it has now been associated with the pantheistic eschatology of Vedānta to express the absorption of soul into Brahma or the Supreme Principle, and this idea is radically opposed by Buddhism.

The Oxford Dictionary does a wrong to Buddhism when it defines Nirvāṇa as "blowing out, extinction; in Buddhist theology, the extinction of individual existence and absorption into the supreme spirit as the Buddhist highest good, or the extinction of all desire and passions and attainment of perfect beatitude." Here the Buddhist idea of Nibbāna is confused with the Vedāntic conception, which is essentially non-Buddhist.

Pāli grammarians take Nibbāna as composed of "Ni-Vā-Na." Here the negative particle "Ni" means "out." The root "Va" is "to go" or "to blow," and "Na" is the suffix used to give an auxiliary sense; and the word is defined thus: "Nibbāti-Etenā'ti = Nibbānam—the aspirant goes out or becomes cool or extinct by the aid of this object,

Hence it tends to the state of Release, and therefore it is called Nibbāna.

In reference to the essential meaning of Nibbāna the Venerable Sāriputta replied to the question of Jambukhādaka in the following words:—

“Nibbāna, Nibbāna, they say. But what, friend, is this Nibbāna? Extinction of desires, extinction of hatred, extinction of delusion—that, friend, is called Nibbāna.” (S. iv. 251.)

There is the full meaning of extinction explained as “blowing out,” the blowing out of the fire of lust, hatred and illusion, and this Nibbāna consists of the Fruit of the Path, the actual attainment of the blowing out of the fire from the heart that was burning with it.

“The world is aflame” says the Buddha; (S. i. 31.), and according to the Commentator, it is aflame with the fire kindled by lust, hatred and delusion, and also by birth, decay and death, pain, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair. (A. i. 15.)

Hence the saying: “*Aggiṃ anāharo nibbuto*”—the fire having no more fuel is blown out. (M. 1. 1. 187). “*Nibbuto gini*”—My fire is out. (Sn. Verse 19). “*Sīti bhuto’smi, nibbuto*”—cool I have become, tranquil I am. (Thera gāthā 79).

These are the utterances of those who had attained Nibbāna during their life, and they have been the living examples to convey the meaning of Nibbāna in its full significance, the attribute of which is “Santi”—peace, tranquility or coolness. This is called *Sopādisesa-nibbāna dhātu*—the element of Nibbāna wherewith yet remains life’s substratum, and this refers to Arahatsip. It is called Sopadisesa¹ because it is experienced in life.

1 *Sa-upādisesa*. Its correlate is *Anupādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu*; Nibbāna without personality-aggregates remaining.

Nibbāna as “Asankhata-dhātu,” the unformed element, is singular and has no limitation. Here Nibbāna is called a Dhātu, an Element. The word *Dhātu* is the term used by the Buddha in opposition to the idea of Soul-theory. Dhātu means “Nissatta nijjīva”—“non-being, non-soul.” The Upanishads and the Jains use “Jīva” in the sense of Soul (Ātman) as in “Jīva-atmā—living-soul,” *Tam jivam, tam sarīram*—“What is soul, that is matter or body.” Using dhātu with Nibbāna the Buddha means that there is not even a purified soul in Nibbāna. It is also the complete denial of the idea of Unity with Brahma or Isvara-Pada, Godhead, as held by the Yoga Philosophy of mystics. Nibbāna is also called *Dhamma* to show it is no soul: “*Sabbe dhammā anattā*.”

Nibbāna is the bliss of emancipation which supersedes the complete annihilation of passions which are the bases of all the commotion and unrest of Saṁsāric existence. This is the visible fruit actually realized by the training in the Middle Path, avoiding all extremes in all directions. This path runs through the eight principles, viz., Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The disciple who treads this Path achieves moral purity in the first stage i.e., in the practice of the three principles: right speech, action and living, and thus he purifies his thoughts, words and deeds. Consequently he gains an unimpaired happiness of inward serenity (*Sīlavisuddhi*).

He then proceeds with the aid of right effort, mindfulness and concentration to meditate on a given subject of salutary nature and purifies his mind from lower tendencies, the five hindrances¹ that impede the growth of knowledge. When he is free from sensuous passions, malice, sloth and

¹ *Panca-nivarana*; see The Wheel No. 26.

torpor, distraction and agitation, and also from perplexity, he is like a man absolved from a debt, or recovered from a long sickness or released from a prison (*Chittavisuddhi*).

Being emancipated from these human weaknesses in each stage of the Jhānas by the gradual waning away of mental defilements, he determines to develop right insight in accordance with right view and intention (*Ditthivisuddhi*).

Discerning the three characteristics of phenomenal existence, impermanence, suffering and not-self, he develops full knowledge by the process of insight, in order to eradicate the roots of evil, the tendencies to attachment, hostility and delusion. Overcoming all doubts he is not puzzled by such quibbles as: "Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Whence have I come? Whither shall I go?" (*Kankhāvitarāṇa Visuddhi*.)

On the way of his progress in pursuit of Vipassanā, insight-knowledge, all the principles of enlightenment and all purifying elements become more and more intense. Then there arises in him a mental movement which raises the mind to the stage wherein he is assured of emancipation and is known as "Culla Sotāpanna," a "junior stream-winner." Proceeding further he experiences psychic illumination, higher knowledge, zest, serenity, bliss, resolve, exaltation, mindfulness, balance and desire to proceed further. Sometime these Super-normal psychic phenomena may deceive the meditator in regard to his attainment, and therefore they are called *Vipassanupakkilesa* impurities of Vipassanā, or Vipassanā fictions, whereby the aspirant may be under the impression that he is an Arahant, like the Elder Mahānāga.

Elder Mahānāga, who was living in Māgama, Ceylon, and attained these psychic powers, was deluded by the thought that he was an Arahant. Dhammadinna, his disciple, who was an Arahant, knowing his teacher was not

yet Arahant, went to him and asked a number of questions, which Mahānāga answered correctly. When Dhammadinna said: Rev. Sir, your knowledge is very keen, when did you attain this Dhamm?" "Sixty years ago," was the reply. "Could you practise your psychic powers?" asked Dhammadinna. "That is not difficult." "Then create an elephant," said Dhammadinna. Thereupon the Elder created a white elephant. "Now, Sir, make this elephant chase you with ears rigid, trunk thrust into the mouth, trumpeting furiously," said Dhammadinna. The Thera did so, and seeing the terrible form of the created elephant approaching him, rose from his seat and took to flight. Dhammadinna caught him by his robe and asked: "Sir, is there such a thing as fear in one who is an Arahant?" The Thera, thereby knowing himself to be still a Puthujjana, an ordinary person, said to Dhammadinna: "Friend, be my preceptor," and sat at his feet. "Sir, do not be anxious" said Dhammadinna, and gave him a subject for meditation. Mahānāga practised it and immediately attained Arahantship. Such is the strange irony of spiritual pride: Dhammuddhacca.

The skilful aspirant will class these psychic powers with the other phenomena, as possessing the characteristic of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self. Knowing them thus he realizes that "this is the Path, and that is not the path" (*Magga-amagga Ñāṇa-visuddhi*).

The meditator then goes through a series of contemplations realizing the rising and falling nature of phenomenal manifestations and their constant decay, and he understands them as being fearful and dangerous. Realizing them as not-self he feels a disgust for them. Contemplating an escape from them he comes to the sign-post of his objective goal. There he gains the knowledge of adaptation (*Anuloma-ñāṇa*.) It is this adaptive knowledge that raises

him from his worldly condition to a transcendental state, that is, to the Path of Nibbāna. This knowledge leading to emergence is also called “Atammayatā,” “not made of that.” It means that it is not made of, Taṇhā, craving, and does not depend on sankhāra, saṃsāric elements. This knowledge cannot be found in any other system of thought. In the Saḷāyatana Sutta, (M. iii. 220) the Buddha said: “Monks, depending on Atammayatā, attending to Atammayatā, you should reject, should transcend that indifference which has one state, which rests on one state.” This means that even when one attains Arūpa Jhāna leading to the formless state of existence his knowledge is not free from Taṇhā, because that Jhāna is attained with Vibhava-taṇhā, craving “to be more, or to become more.” Hence it is called “Tammaya” made of taṇhā. It is depending on this knowledge that Ālāra and Uddaka did not realize any further attainment, and that is why the Buddha rejected them while he was mastering himself in their methods of seeking after Nibbāna. The Arūpa-plane is a state of existence. Although it is free from physical matter, yet the mind exists there in a passive form. The Jains may have regarded this passive state of existence as immortal when they admitted that the souls, free from transmigration, ascend to the top of the world.

Now, the aspirant purifying his knowledge through nine stages of Vipassanā, insight, comes to the threshold of the Noble Path (Gotrabhu) and leaving his mundane personality, enters into that of the supramundane (—Ariya-bhūmi) (*Paṭipadā-Ñāṇa-Visuddhi*).

There he comes to the first stage of *Ñāṇadassana-Visuddhi*, to the Path of Stream-winning (Sotāpatti), and eliminating three of the ten fetters, self-view, doubts, and the belief in religious rites and ceremonies, sees Nibbāna for the first time as the visible fruit of his practice. If he does not

proceed further in the same life time, within seven births he will complete his course.

When he does proceed further he comes to the second path that of Once-returning, *Sakadāgāmi-magga*; attenuating two more of the fetters, of sensuous passion and ill-will, he sees *Nibbāna* as the Fruit. If he does not make further effort, he will have one more birth in the plane of sensuous experience. Hence this Path is called *Sakadāgāmi*.

In the third path, called *Anāgāmi*, Non-returning, with the complete elimination of sensuous desire and ill-will he experiences *Nibbāna* as the fruit of the path. If then he does not reach the final attainment, Arahantship, in his present life, he is said to be reborn in one of the four Pure-abodes, *Suddhāvāsa* of the Brahma-world, when he does not return to the plane of the senses, but in due time attains *Parinibbāna*, final release, on passing away from *Suddhāvāsa*.

The aspirant applies himself to the complete elimination of the remaining five fetters, attachment to life in the material and the immaterial realms, pride, restlessness and delusion. In the next movement he becomes an Arahant, a Worthy and Perfect One, who is free from all impurities, released from the burden, one who has attained the final deliverance and won the Supreme Goal, the Bliss of *Nibbāna*.

This final emancipation, attained through the systematic development of the knowledge of the Four Noble Paths marks the culmination of the threefold training of virtue (*Sīla*), concentration (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Paññā*); and it is the consummation of the extensive course of holy life expounded by the Buddha in the Middle Path, as the means of self-enlightenment, the only way to the supreme destiny of man.

This Nibbāna is called Kilesa-Parinibbāna, the extinction of impure dhammas, and it is Sopādisesa, Nibbāna experienced in life. The Arahant during his life experiences the Bliss of Nibbāna with perception and feeling while attending to his duties for the happiness of others, or he will be in the entire ecstasy of Nibbāna, nullifying feeling and perception in *Nirodhasamāpatti*, complete cessation of his mental flow. When the Arahant dies his Nibbāna is Anupādisesa, Nibbāna without life-substratum.

Thus Nibbāna is one as Asankhatadhātu, the Uncompounded Element: it is twofold as Sopādisesa and Anupādisesa; threefold according to the three entrances (*Vimokkha-mukha*), that is, one of the three contemplations, Anicca, Dukkha, and Anattā. It is fourfold in accordance with the four Paths. It is fivefold with reference to the elimination of the fivefold attachment to the five senses, and sixfold as it is attained by extinction of the sixfold craving pertaining to the six sense objects.

It is the question of what happens to the Arahant at death that has given rise to most discussion. At the death of an Arahant all his physical and mental aggregates cease together with all attributes relating to phenomenal existence. Hence the Arahant's death is called Khandha-parinibbāna, the extinction of aggregates in the Asankhatadhātu, the Unborn, Unformed, purified Element, and it is the release from Sankhata, that which is born and formed. Referring to this, the Buddha said: "Monks, there is an unborn, unmade, unoriginated, and unformed. Were there not such a state there would be no escape from that which is born, made, originated and formed. Since, Monks, there is this state of the unborn, there is an escape from the born, made, originated and formed" (Udana, 80).

It was to find out and to proclaim this unborn state that the Bodhisatta endeavoured to attain enlightenment. "It is for the sake of attaining the unconditioned state of Nibbāna that the religious life in the Buddha Dhamma is lived," and this was the reply of that great Arahant Punna to the question of the Great Arahant Sāriputta, the Captain of the Faith, who questioned him about the purpose of living the holy life in the Buddha.

The argument hinges upon such expression as "extinction" or "blown out as a lamp," which are frequent in the Scriptures, as is seen in the following :

" The old craving exhausted, no fresh craving rises,
Freed from thought of future becoming
They like barren seeds do not spring again,
But are blown out just as a lamp." (Sn. ver. 235)

A logically minded critic may venture to ask : "Whether the Arahant exists after death, whether he does not exist, or whether he is both in existence and non-existence." The Buddha has answered this kind of topsy-turvy argument by noble silence, knowing that it does not tend to any profit, but to more confusion.

There is neither an existent, nor non-existent object, called Nibbāna, which we have to enter for the destruction of suffering. If there were a phenomenal object called Nibbāna then it must be subject to destruction, and none could have attained the eternal and immutable state. On the other hand, Nibbāna cannot be explained as being the annihilation of the individual and the world, for if we judge by the standard of absolute truth (Paramattha), we find that the self and the world are mere illusions in so far as they have no existence apart from our consciousness. Here, an idealist may conceive that there is something like that what Schopenhauer called "Will" or "Mastermind",

standing between the self and the world. We should leave him to study the formula of Nāma-rūpa, mind-and-matter, in the Buddha's doctrine of Paṭicca-Samuppāda, the law of *dependent origination*. The idea of self (atta-diṭṭhi) and its connection with the world does not cease until ignorance (avijjā) ceases. The evil resulting from ignorance being withdrawn, the twelve links that constitute Paṭicca Samuppāda, the chain of existence, are loosened. The fabric of the world and the 'self' break up, leaving only the infinite, the element uncreated and unformed. This is the state of Nibbāna that the finite mind cannot grasp.

The question is: "If the self and the world are mere illusions having no real existence, how is it possible to say that they undergo destruction"? Just as a man who has no head cannot be afflicted by a headache, so also the world and self which never had any independent existence cannot in any sense lose it. In fact, it is a mere contradiction in terms to say that the world and self undergo annihilation when it is asserted that they have no real existence.

Nibbāna is not existence, and it cannot be non-existence. It lies totally beyond both existence and non-existence. Existence and non-existence are both conditional and relative to each other. Nibbāna which is "Absolute" cannot be designated as being either existence or non-existence. Nibbāna which is incomprehensible and profound can only be realized by those who have attained it and have thus passed beyond both limitations, existence and non-existence.

"But where does this Nibbāna exist?" was the question raised by King Milinda. The Venerable Nāgasena replied: "There is no place in the East, the West, the South, the North, above, below or beyond, where Nibbāna is situated.

Yet there is Nibbāna, for he who is pure in virtue and possesses right insight, realizes it, whether he is in Greece, Alexandria, Kosala or China.” (Mil. pp. 323–26).

Just as the fire is not stored up in a particular place but rises when the necessary conditions are present, so Nibbāna is not said to exist in a particular place, but it is attained when and wherever the necessary qualities are fulfilled. Nibbāna therefore, is not a heavenly place like the Egyptian “Amenti”, *i.e.*, the West, or the Greek Elysium, or the Hebrew Paradise, or the Christian Heaven, or the Vedic svarga.

When the deity Rohitassa asked “Where does the world’s end exist?” the Buddha said: “It is in this fathom-long body with consciousness that I declare the existence of the world, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation.” Thus Nibbāna does not exist as a locality in space: it is to be realized as that which transcends the world.

Let us turn to our friends of the Mahāyāna School to see what they think about this Asankhatadhātu. Nāgārjuna, who was supposed to be a saint and the founder of the Mādhyamika school explained Nibbāna as “Sunyatā”, Voidness. He condemned all the degrees of Realism of the Sarvasti-vādins and asserted the ‘māyāvic’ nature of existence. He denied the existence of the self and the world, and proclaimed the essential oneness of Saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa. In the Visuddhimagga Buddhaghosa Thera says: ‘The Third Truth, the cessation of suffering, *i.e.*, Nibbāna, is void of attā, self or soul, but is full of the essence of durability, goodness, and its essential characteristic is “Santi,” peace. This shows how he has opposed the idea that Nirvāṇa and Saṁsāra are one, for these characteristics are not to be found in Saṁsāra.

The Sarvastī-vādins, discriminating between saṃsāric manifestation and the essence of pure Dhammas or elements, assert that Asankhatadhātu, Nibbāna, is an entity but without consciousness or rebirth.

In the Theravāda Canon there are references which assert that Nibbāna is the consciousness liberated from all worldly objects and thoughts, as is stated in the Dīghanikāya. “Nibbānaṃ-Viññāṇaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ”. Nibbāna is the consciousness that has no sign perceptible to the senses and it is immeasurable, the purest and a state wherein all connection with the elements ceases, leaving no trace (asesaṃ uparujjhati). (D. i. 223)

In the Three-kāya Doctrine of Mahāyāna, which was systematized later by Asvaghosha, Nibbāna is identified with the Buddha’s Sambhoga-kāya, the “Bliss-body” as distinct from the Dharmakāya and Nirmānakāya. That Doctrine teaches that each and all of us have three kāya, our individualities constituting the Nirmāna Kāya, and that our existence as part of the universal whole is our Dharmakāya, while the influence we exert on those around us is our Sambhogakāya.

Endless are these opinions. They are for an ardent student to study. When we have attained Nibbāna and have realized the truth for ourselves all the quibbles of human thoughts will be vanished once and for ever, as it is said :

“ When in deep, silent hours of thought,
To the Truth the holy sage attains;
Then is he free from joy and pain,
From form and formless states alike.
Where water, earth, heat, air no footing find,
There burn no lighting stars, nor shines the sun,
The moon sheds not her radiant beams,
But the home of darkness is not there.” (Udāna)

It is this final emancipation and eternal Peace, unruffled by the illusion of phenomenal existence, that Nibbāna means to us Buddhists. The very word Nibbāna is sacred to us, it is our last aspiration at the end of all our good action. Nibbāna is not to be discussed, committing it to dead words, but to be realized for oneself by oneself. Words are but imperfect manifestations of the thoughts of mundane minds, and Nibbāna cannot be touched by them. Hence it is well said: "What is to be heard, what is to be said about a Dharma, a State of Supreme Bliss that has no letters of the alphabet!"

In conclusion let me quote from "The Light of Asia" of that illustrious poet, Sir Edwin Arnold:

"If any teach Nirvāṇa is to cease,
Say unto such they lie.

If any teach Nirvāṇa is to live,
Say unto them they err; not knowing this,
Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,
Nor lifeless, timeless, bliss.

Enter the path! there is no grief like hate!
No pains like passion, no deceit like sense!
Enter the path! far hath he gone whose foot
Treads down one fond offence.

Enter the path! There spring the healing streams
Quenching all thirst! there bloom th' immortal flowers,
Carpeting all the way with joy! there throng
Swiftest and sweetest hours."



NIBBĀNA

by

Francis Story

Author's Note :

There is only one Nibbāna (Skr.: *Nirvāṇa*) and it is the same for a Supreme Buddha, a Silent Buddha and an Arahāt. It is the extinction of the fires of Greed, Ill-will and Delusion; the attainment of Realisation-by-Insight which destroys craving and so brings rebirth in conditioned existence to an end.

But two aspects of Nirvāṇa are distinguished. The first is *Sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*, the Nirvāṇa that is experienced in Samādhi while the Arahāt is still living. This establishes the state of unchanging mental equanimity and bliss that can come about only when all forms of craving have ceased and the anxieties, fears and hatreds engendered by desire no longer trouble the mind.

The second is *Anupādisesa-nibbāna* or *Parinibbāna*, the final Nibbāna reached at the end of the Arahāt's life, from which no further process of contingent 'becoming' can arise.

It is the second of these which I have chiefly discussed in the following pages.

F. S.

NIBBĀNA

THE ultimate goal of the Buddhist life is the attainment of Nibbāna, but many people do not feel certain as to what Nibbāna really is.

One view, for which there is no support whatever in Buddhist doctrine, is that it is eternal life. The opposite is that it is annihilation. There is more reason for holding the latter view, but nevertheless it conveys a false idea.

It is not surprising that there should be such misunderstandings, because by what we are accustomed to call 'common sense' reasoning it must be either the one or the other.

But it is precisely these two pitfalls that the Buddha took great care that we should avoid. That is why most of the references to Nibbāna are in negative terms. Wherever the Buddha used terms with a positive meaning, such as *Amata*, the deathless, and *Dhuvā*, the Permanent, to describe Nibbāna He did so in a more or less metaphorical sense. As descriptions the words are true, but they must not be taken in exactly the same sense as that in which we ordinarily use them. Nibbāna is without death because it is without birth; it is permanent because it is not subject to time and conditionality.

In order to form an idea of what Nibbāna really means we must first of all understand what is meant by the words 'life' and 'living'; and that, to begin with, is not so easy as it may appear. We may have a ready-made definition, but find that it does not apply in all circumstances, or that it does not cover everything we mean. What exactly are the characteristics of a living being, and what is the nature of the characteristics themselves?

By 'living' we normally mean being conscious, being aware of our own identity, of our surroundings and of events taking place around us. It is that which makes the difference between a living person and a dead body; the one is conscious, the other is not. This does not mean that an unconscious person or thing is always dead; but a dead body is always unconscious. There are many ways of being alive yet not conscious, as in the case of plants, but that is not what we usually mean by living; it is little more than existing, as a lifeless object does. Life of this kind consists simply of organic growth and decay. To be exact, a living organism is any aggregation of cells that sustain themselves, grow and multiply, by drawing nourishment from their environment. But this, at its simplest, is merely vegetable existence. Usually, when we speak of 'life' we think of it in terms of consciousness, the awareness of selfhood that may be ascribed even to an insect, but which is lacking in a plant. Thus we instinctively connect the idea of life with the experience of pleasure and pain. Sensations that emerge into consciousness are an inseparable part of our idea of living, and they contribute, also, to our sense of identity and separateness. We may tell ourselves incessantly that all life is one; but so long as we have not experienced the liberation from a body that feels sensations which others do not feel, and a mind that thinks as others do not, we cannot experience the idea of oneness as a reality. It amounts to claiming a transcendent position with regard to the world, without having had a transcendental experience, on the mere basis of an intellectual attitude. At the beginning, the notion that one can attain realisation by repeating formulas is a charming one; but repeated collision with the brute facts of a life in which every being is distinct from all others makes the attitude difficult to hold. This is perhaps the commonest cause of

disappointment to those who have not understood that Nibbāna is something for which we have to strive, and that if we only try to persuade ourselves that we have already reached it, we are leading ourselves up a spiritual cul-de-sac.

When we say 'life' we mean in general the quality of being conscious and aware of what is going on. Having this kind of awareness means that the living being is also conscious of time, because events cannot occur without a time-sequence. For anything to happen there must be the past, before it happened; the time of its happening, which we may call the present, and the time after it happened, which is the future. Thus we see that if life is consciousness it must be consciousness of something that is existing or happening in time. It is only in contrast to being conscious of 'something' that we can be conscious of 'nothing', so that the 'something', whatever it may be, is always present in consciousness, either in the past, present or future.

Now that 'something', when everything is brought down to a single fact, is *change*. The future does not exist until it becomes the present; then on the instant it becomes the past, and again does not exist, except in memory. Even our knowledge of the difference between one thing and another, as between trees and houses, comes from our awareness of a change in our consciousness when we turn our attention from one to the other. The differences between light and dark, heat and cold, are also based on change, the change that takes place in our sensations when light gives place to darkness, heat to cold. And so it is with everything we associate with 'life'.

There is continual change going on in our bodies as well as in our minds, just as there is in the organic life of plants. Nothing ever remains the same for very long, but

one state is continually moving into another in a ceaseless flow. So we see that change is one of the essential characteristics of life; without change, or impermanence, there is no life as we understand it. Death itself is only another kind of change, in which the body ceases to function and breaks down into its chemical elements, while the craving-force (*Bhava-taṇhā*, the will to live) and the Karma of the past produce a new being from the mental life of the former one. Death and rebirth are both part of the process of incessant change.

This continual flux of transformations consists, really, of the perishing of the old and the arising of the new; it is not the changing of *things*, but rather an unbroken succession of *events*, that constitutes *anicca*, the impermanence of Samsara. And whether it be the changing modes of our consciousness, or the unconscious changes going on in our bodies, it never finds any permanent point of rest. It seems to indicate a chronic state of dissatisfaction; the body and the mind both seem to be always wanting to become something other than what they are from moment to moment. It is like a journey to nowhere in particular. If the mind is satisfied at any point it cannot remain so for long. When we are feeling extremely happy we should like that state of mind to remain with us for ever, but we find that after a time the happiness passes and some other mental sensation takes its place. Everybody knows that we cannot cling to happiness; its fleeting nature has been a subject for poets to lament over ever since poets first began stringing words together.

If we make a serious attempt to find out why this is, we come to see that it is due to that essential condition of life by which nothing can remain static for long; and also to another law which always accompanies the law of change, namely that we can experience one thing only by contrast

with its opposite. We should never know what happiness was if we could not also experience misery. And if we experienced happiness unchanging for an extremely long time, without anxieties or painful sensations of any kind, we should finally forget what unhappiness was like. Then our happiness would cease to exist because we should be taking that state for granted, and should no longer be aware that we were happy. So it is obvious that a living being can be happy only if it is also capable of being unhappy. Happiness and misery, like heat and cold, light and dark, are things that exist only by way of contrast, and the contrast is an indispensable part of this process we call living.

Now most thoughtful people, especially those who are capable of feeling the pain and unhappiness of others in a sympathetic way, are agreed that on the average there is more suffering than happiness in life. The great mass of living beings in the world are experiencing a life that is on the whole more painful than pleasurable. They are sustained chiefly by the hope, which is another feature of life and an indispensable one, that their condition will improve and that they will be happy at some future time. But the element of change which they rely upon to bring them happiness is also bound to destroy that happiness after a time, even if at last it comes, as we have already noticed.

So, taking everything together, we see that life, which is perpetual change, is on the whole unsatisfactory. When we are happy we may feel that life is good, like Robert Browning with his nonsensical 'God's in his heaven; all's right with the world'; but when we are suffering either mental or physical pain we are inclined to take the view that 'life is not worth living'! Our feeling about life is therefore entirely subjective unless we can get away from

our personal feelings for a time and look at it in a larger context. Then if we review our own total experience, and add it to what we can see of the total experience of other people, to say nothing of animals — which after all are living beings as well — we must admit that on the whole life is a very sorry business indeed. Not for nothing is it said that man lives by hope. And it has been observed often enough that in many instances the hope is better than the realisation. If we could be happy long enough to get thoroughly accustomed to it, we should no longer be happy. The heaven of delight would become a hell of boredom.

In this connection we may recall that the early Christian Fathers held that the happiness of the blessed in Paradise would be greatly enhanced by the sight of the damned, eternally burning in the nether regions. Their authority for this was the parable of Dives and Lazarus in Luke 16; 20–31. It was before it had become fashionable to dismiss everything we do not like in ancient scriptures as being symbolic, and not to be taken literally; and in more recent times the good Fathers have been reproached with an excessive zeal for revenge. But they may also have had it in mind that Lazarus, in the bosom of Abraham, would be in need of some distraction to relieve the appalling monotony of his eternal life. Heaven, they may have recognised, was woefully deficient in the element of contrast which man requires for a full appreciation of his happiness. Either he must suffer himself at times, to make his happiness known to him, or he must see someone else suffering. It is a condition imposed by his own nature. Eternal, unchanging bliss requires for its maintenance a state utterly unlike any that can be associated with ordinary human consciousness.

• • •

Consciousness, as we have been discussing it, includes sensations and perception, but personality to be complete needs another factor, that of willing. We are not only conscious of the outside world, but also feel an urge to act on it in some way, and this will to act comes from the desire to achieve some particular object. The manner in which we tend to act constitutes our character, and it is formed by habits of thinking and acting in the past. There is nothing stable or fixed about this part of human personality, either; it is merely a tendency. So we notice that the man whom we have labelled 'selfish' because he is selfish in general, is not invariably so. Neither is the 'honest' man invariably honest. Human character is as fluid as any other part of the life-process. A good man may act badly at times, while a bad man may be capable of some very good impulses; and often these conflicting trends are so mixed up that it is impossible to decide what the predominant characteristics are. To labour this point may seem unnecessary, but it has an important bearing on our inquiry, because we are trying to find something in life that is not subject to change.

So far we have not found anything that does not alter. Looking at the overall picture of life we see that it has these features of impermanence or changeableness, by which it flows on from one state to another, and of unsatisfactoriness which can range from mild displeasure to acute misery. We see that there is nothing constant and abiding in it; therefore there is no essence to which we can point and say 'This is my Self', because the personality changes at different stages from infancy to old age, and indeed from one moment to another. The only connection that can be found between one state of the personality (or consciousness) and another is the fact that each one is caused by the one that existed prior to it, and that there is

a connecting link of memory between them. There is also the general proneness to think and act as we have been accustomed to do in the past; and this as we have seen, is no more than a tendency. It is a mistake to regard it as an unalterable part of oneself, or as the Self with a capital letter.

Now it is just this that Buddhism means when it says that life has three characteristics: impermanence, liability to suffering and lack of "selfness". And the striking truth becomes clear to us that every kind of life as we know it must have these same characteristics. If there were no change there would be no life. If there were no suffering there could be no happiness, and if there were a permanent self that never alters it would be equivalent to a state of no change—and therefore no life. In mathematical terms we may say that these three characteristics give us the co-ordinates which add up to what we understand by 'life'.

So eternal life, which could be nothing but eternal change, could never produce any lasting satisfaction. With continual birth and death following upon one another we already have 'eternal life', in fact, though not personal immortality. The question we should ask ourselves is: Is it desirable?

We may answer 'Yes' or 'No' according to our circumstances at the time. But whether the answer is yes or no, the fact that we have to face is that eternal life could not be in any conditions very much better than the life we are experiencing at present with its contrasts and alternations. If it were without these features it would not be 'life'.

A state which is without change and contrasts must be in all respects different from anything we can imagine from our own experience. We have nothing with which to

compare it and no framework of ideas to fit it into. For one thing, it would be timeless, because time exists only where there is change. It could also contain no distinctions, for the differences which make us conscious of 'myself' and 'others' could not exist without these conditions of contrast and transition. For the same reason, space as we conceive it could not exist, either. Unless, of course, we can visualise a space of one dimension, or a non-dimensional space. In any case, it is clear that the world of 'things' and of people simply could not come into being where there was no possibility of change. Therefore a personal immortality of eternal duration is out of the question.

At the same time, we have already seen that the idea of 'nothing' itself cannot exist without the opposite idea of 'something' being present, if only as a possibility. If Nibbāna were nothingness it would also be 'somethingness' by implication. Every affirmation depends upon the existence of a negation which is its opposite.

Our whole difficulty in conceiving Nibbāna lies in the fact that our thinking is bounded by opposites of this kind. We imagine that since Nibbāna is not eternal life it must be eternal death—the annihilation of 'something'. But death itself is only a part of the life-process, as we have seen; it is just one of the many different kinds of changes that are going on all the time, and which are inseparable from life. Eternal existence and eternal non-existence are opposites of the same kind as light and darkness, heat and cold; neither of them has any real or absolute meaning. They are concepts which depend upon one another: they are aspects of merely relative truth.

It is the same with 'beginning' and 'ending'. We know that there cannot be an ending of anything unless there has been a beginning. What is more difficult for us to grasp

Is that there equally cannot be a beginning unless there has also previously been an ending. Yet such is the fact. If we ask, How did the life-process begin? we can choose between two answers, both of equal truth. One is that it had no beginning; the other is that it has its beginning with every fresh moment of conscious existence. But try as we may, we cannot find any point at which life started from nothing, or was created out of nothing. If it was created at any stage, its creator must have been in existence before it, which leaves us still no nearer to finding the absolute beginning of life. It only pushes the inquiry further back, to no purpose.

In this situation we have to fall back upon the second answer as being the more manageable one for our discussion. If life begins at every new moment of conscious experience we see that its beginnings are dependent upon its previous endings, and this agrees with our already-formed picture of life as a flowing process, a flux of 'becoming' which never quite reaches the goal of 'being'. This helps us considerably, because it opens up the possibility of the life-process coming to an end. In other words it means that there can be a point at which, after ending, it can be prevented from beginning again. And since life is propagated by desire, the way to accomplish this is to eradicate the mental impulse of craving. So Nibbāna is the annihilation of craving, the extinction of the fires of Greed, Ill-will and Delusion.

This, then, is cessation of the life-process, which is not the same as the annihilation of a being. Where there has never been any real being there cannot be annihilation; but where only a process is concerned we can quite properly speak of its cessation. This is not a mere verbal quibble, but a distinction which points to something of tremendous importance.

With the attainment of Nibbāna it is a process of change that comes to an end, and with its ending there cease to arise all the other things which we have seen to be a consequence of that process, including suffering and the illusion of personality. So the Nibbāna that is entered into at the last passing away of a Buddha or Arahāt is a state absolutely devoid of all the features of life as we have seen it to be. To try to describe it in terms of what we have experienced in our life of change and of opposites would give a false and misleading conception of it. It is outside all of these categories; or, alternatively we may say that the categories have no basis for arising in it. If we choose to class all the categories of things, events and experiences of life as passing phases, and therefore unreal—or only temporarily and relatively real—then Nibbāna becomes the sole eternal (*Dhuvā*) reality. If they are considered negative, Nibbāna must be the only true positive.

To put the case in another way: Nibbāna is not just another opposite in all the categories of opposites that make up our thinking. It is itself the absolute opposite of those opposites, the state in which they cannot possibly arise.

* * *

Here it is pertinent to stop and consider two prepositions which have been put forward regarding Nibbāna. The first is that 'Nirvāna and Saṃsāra (the round of births and deaths) are one.'

To get this statement into perspective, it is necessary to distinguish between the experience of Nibbāna known to the Arahant while he is still living, and the Nibbāna after death. The first is called in Pāli, *Sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*: Nirvāna with all the components of individualized personality still present. The second is called *Anupādisesa-nibbāna*. It is Nirvāna without any substratum of

personality in the present, and without the possibility of its arising in the future. This is the Nibbāna in which present and future do not exist, since it is free from all conditionality.

It is clear, from the descriptions given of the lives of disciples subsequent to their attainment of Arahantship, that although they could induce the Nirvānic consciousness whenever they wished, they were not, in their ordinary state, exempt from the pains of the flesh. Only their minds remained unaffected. Physically, they suffered from sickness and injury, as all mortals must do. Even the Buddha himself endured much in this way, towards the end of his life. He told Ānanda that it was only when he withdrew his consciousness from the physical plane that he could obtain bodily ease.*

Sa-upādisesa-nibbāna, therefore, is only intermittent release from suffering; as a continual state of consciousness for a living being it would be incompatible with the maintenance of life. Remaining in it constantly, the physical organism would perish. Far from being 'one with Saṃsāra', it is the state in which all saṃsāric experience is suspended, so long as the Arahant remains in it. If he intends to live out his course, he has to emerge from the contemplation of Nirvāna so that he can again function within the modes, and according to the laws, of conditionality.

The Nibbāna after death is the same as that which the Arahant is capable of experiencing in life, but it is the absolute and final withdrawal from saṃsāric conditions. It is in this sense that it becomes 'permanent'. As the Buddha taught it, Nibbāna is desirable *because* it is the

* Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta; 'Last Days of the Buddha'; THE WHEEL No. 67/69.

cessation of births and deaths, and all the suffering they entail. One may live with the intellectual understanding that all existence is *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, and one may reach the full interior experience of it while still living; but neither of these is equivalent to that Nibbāna which is the total release from conditioned existence and its necessary suffering. A Bodhisatta is able to continue the round of rebirths while he qualifies himself to become a Supreme Buddha, but only by stopping short of the attainment of Arahantship. He does not experience Nibbāna and Samsāra as identical. To him, Nibbāna is certainty because he has confidence; but it is a certainty belonging to the future, not to his present condition and daily activities. It may indeed be said that Samsāra contains the potentiality of Nibbāna; but potential states and actual ones should not be confused. Nibbāna in its fullest sense means the complete extinction of Craving, not in one form only, but in all its manifold guises; and where Craving is extinguished, there can be no re-arising of samsāric existence. This is the whole point and essence of the Buddha's doctrine.

The second theory that has been advanced about Nibbāna—though never by instructed Asian Buddhists—is that it is in some way equivalent to God. Not, of course, to the personal God of Western tradition, but rather to something resembling the Paramātman or Nirguṇa Brahman of Vedānta. That is to say, an impersonal God devoid of attributes, but from whom (or rather, which) all things have emanated.

It is certain that this idea of God arose after the time of the Buddha.* It was in fact a rather desperate expedient to preserve the idea of a Supreme Power on a higher level

* L. M. Joshi *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*: THE WHEEL No. 150/151,

than the mythical Creator whom Buddhism had shown to be unnecessary. It is difficult to see why, if this is what the Buddha meant by Nibbāna, he did not say so, instead of leaving it to others. But actually, the authors of the Upanishads themselves did not say that Nibbāna was equivalent to the Nirguṇa Brahman. Their intention seems to have been only to free God from the limitations of personality which the Buddha had shown to be defects.

The chief objection to the theory is that, by definition, Nibbāna is the cessation of the world, whereas the Nirguṇa Brahman, at one remove, is still its origin and the cause of its perpetual re-creation. Because of this, he, or it, is responsible for all the obvious evils of the world, just as much as for whatever is good. The will to create, itself, implies desire on the part of the Supreme Power; and desire for anything argues a state of imperfection. If the Nirguṇa Brahman were complete unity and bliss, as it is represented, the emanation of the universe from it could only be a step down from perfection to imperfection. The idea that God created Saṃsāra, with all its ills, as a play-thing, from the emanations of his own divine essence, is inherently repulsive.

Apart from these considerations, Nibbāna, as we have seen, is described as the state of ultimate peace and security from ill. But the supposed Supreme Self is eternally agitated, being perpetually engaged in the creation, absorption and re-creation of the universe. In these circumstances there can be no release or unchanging peace for the individual self that becomes united with it. In this system of thought the term Moksha is used, rather than Nibbāna: but it seems to denote an exaltation of the self, rather than a release from its limitations. And here again we find the tendency to confuse potential states with existing ones, for the disciple is assured 'Thou art That', meaning the

Paramātman. But while every being has the possibility of making himself divine, a 'Deva by purification', as Buddhism has it, it is surely very unsafe to imagine oneself God while still subject to human cravings and moral imperfection.

Whatever meaning one may give to the word God, any attempt to make it inter-changeable with Nibbāna is totally unacceptable. One of the strongest points of Buddha Dhamma is that it has no need of theistic myths that create problems without really solving any. The central doctrine of a Creator who is responsible for the world has become a sore embarrassment to theistic religion today; so much so that in some quarters serious attempts are being made to discard it. On this account there is some envy of Buddhism, which has never been marred by such relics of primitive thinking and has remained uncontaminated by them through the centuries. If there were in fact such a Creator, or if he were necessary to explain the existence of the world, the unique Buddhist concept of Nibbāna would still stand above and beyond him, as something he has not yet attained.

When He was asked whether the Arahāt (one who has attained Nibbāna) exists or does not exist after death, the Buddha refused to answer the question. He said that it was wrongly put. And if we have followed the arguments just given we shall see that it was indeed wrongly put, because neither statement is applicable. When it was carried further, with the question whether the Arahāt neither existed nor did not exist after death, the Buddha still maintained the same silence.

And, rather than misrepresent the truth, He preserved His silence even when some people concluded that because He did not answer He did not know. But He gave an answer that was of a different order, and more convincing

than any fanciful description could be. He said : 'Practise the method of attaining Nibbāna that I have given in the Noble Eightfold Path. Then you will come to realise the truth for yourself.'

That is the only way in which we can really come to understand what Nirvāna is—by realising it ourselves and so seeing the truth face to face. We will then understand why it is that all questions relating to it, so long as they are couched in terms of opposites and alternatives, are wrongly put. Such questions puzzle us only because of the limitations of the mind bound by *Avijjā* (Ignorance) and the peculiar nature of life as we experience it.

But while the Buddha refused to describe or define Nibbāna, He never hesitated when asked to make a positive affirmation. The reply then was always "NIBBĀNA IS".

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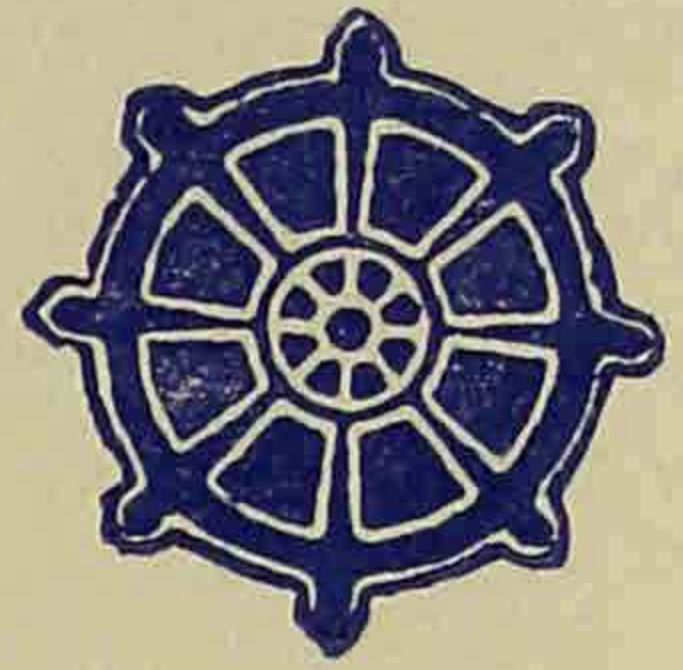
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A Guide to the Perplexed

THE SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA

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A GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXED, THE SATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA

In Buddhism there are two fundamental types of meditation. One aims at the development of tranquility (*samatha*) through the means of trance states or meditative absorptions (*jhāna*); the other strives for insight (*vipassanā*) into the true nature of things. These two forms of meditation are by no means mutually exclusive; however, insight meditation has traditionally been considered the higher of the two forms. In particular, the revival of interest in meditation practice in Theravāda Buddhist countries (viz. Ceylon, Burma, Thailand)) in the modern period has focused on *vipassanā* or insight practice.

Insight meditation has been summed up by the phrase, 'Be mindful!' or be mindful of your own mind.¹ Two crucial assumptions are made in this definition: that genuine awareness or mindfulness will lead to 'enlightenment' or an understanding of things as they really are; and that one's ontic condition or state of being depends upon the mind—"Mind harbours all: the world of suffering and its origin, and also Ill's final cessation and the path to it."² Buddhist meditation, then, offers the hope of insight not only in the sense of new knowledge but of new being. The promise is the oft heard phrase, "Know the truth and the truth will make you free." Knowledge and freedom presuppose each other; indeed, are necessary to each other; for the very reason that 'enlightenment' and 'new being' are two sides of the same coin.

‘The heart of Buddhist meditation’ is the development of mindfulness or awareness. The program of training in mindfulness is not arbitrary, but is based on one of the most popular texts in the Theravāda or Pāli canon known as the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta or the text on the foundation, arousing or setting up of mindfulness. Because of the significance of this text for all forms of Buddhist meditation this essay is an attempt to interpret some of its more salient aspects. Several English translations of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta are readily available,³ and those unfamiliar with the text may wish to consult one of them.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is, in essence, a paradigm for the attainment of insight (*vipassanā*) into the true nature of things through the vehicle of complete awareness (*sammāsaṃ*). It offers a suggested program, at once both natural and logical, which anyone may profitably follow. There is nothing esoteric or magical about the practice of mindfulness. On the contrary, the Sutta epitomizes the Theravāda concern for concrete instruction or the practical application of the principles upon which Buddha-Dhamma is based. Unlike certain forms of Buddhist meditation, practice in mindfulness or awareness stresses simplicity in the extreme. No props are utilized. Chanting, visual symbols, or the burning of incense are all disavowed. Rather, meditation subjects include the most commonplace of objects and events — breathing, the body, the feelings, consciousness, and mental objects. The utterly unadorned nature of *satipaṭṭhāna* illustrates one of the principle convictions concerning the Buddhist ideal: that the senses (including the mind) must be transformed for the truth to be perceived.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta is rooted in the assumption of the deluded condition of the ordinary worldling. Man,

in his usual state of being, is led fundamentally astray about the nature of things, in particular, the nature of his own existence. He inaccurately and incorrectly attributes to his own life and the world around him a permanence which, in fact, is not there. This belief stems from ignorance (*avijjā*) produced by sensory fallacies. The fundamental fallacy of sensory knowledge is that of permanence. Driven by an ego-centric cluster of desires (e.g., greed, hatred, lust, ambition) the senses construct an artificial and unreal world. It is a world in which the "self" and "self"-satisfactions are of utmost importance. Threatened by anything which challenges place, status and position, the senses perpetuate the illusion of a world in which there are "selves" living in a world of "things" with the capacity of guaranteeing happiness and bliss. Because of this delusion men are driven by ambition to destroy other man, and nation wars against nation in order to establish position, prestige and power.

The Sutta assumes, then, that most of us live in an illusory or unreal world; not in the sense that the mundane or phenomenal world does not really exist but that it does not really exist *as we perceive it*. The purpose of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, then, is to suggest a means or a way by which the true nature of things might be perceived. Such a task is not an easy one. Buddhist meditation is not mind-wandering reminiscing while contemplating a beautiful sunset. On the contrary, awareness meditation is a disciplined confrontation with the processes of life as they really are. It does not depend upon any outside stimuli, least of all the use of consciousness altering drugs. *Satipaṭṭhāna* minimizes or eliminates the sensory distortions controverting the truth about the nature of

things. It aims to provide an objective understanding of self and world through an analytical method in a controlled environment. For the person who perseveres, the rewards of meditation are great; yet, one does not meditate to gain anything. One meditates simply to be able to see things as they are, and, hence to *be* as one really is.

If you were to select one of the most natural occurrences for use as a meditation subject, what would you choose? Such a subject should be readily available, easily employed and appropriate to any set of circumstances. After some reflection you would probably agree that our breathing fits all of these requirements, thereby, making an ideal meditation subject. Indeed, in Indian-religions the concept of breath has been an ubiquitous feature. In ancient mythological texts the breath was referred to as a cosmogonic element and, hence, endowed with creative force. It is no wonder that on an individual level in Indian Yogic traditions the breath should also be looked upon as possessing creative power. In Haṭha Yoga the disciplining of respiration (*prāṇāyāma*) is a specific exercise with the purpose of unifying the consciousness in order to penetrate levels of awareness unavailable to the ordinary man.⁴ Buddhism, as part of the greater Indian religious tradition, is an inheritor of the important role of breath, especially in relationship to Yogic or meditative techniques. Frequent references are made to mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna-sati*) in Theravāda Buddhist texts and an entire Sutta of the Majjhima-Nikāya (No. 118) is devoted to this subject.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta begins, appropriately, with mindfulness of breathing. It is the specific exercise designed to produce awareness of the body and bodily processes. It is important to note that meditative

awareness in Theravāda Buddhism does not utilize the abstract or general as a means of controlling the consciousness or producing insight. Rather, the concrete and specific provides the locus of mental training. Instruction in bodily awareness, consequently, does not begin with the vague assertion that the meditator should contemplate the nature of the body as a physical organism. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta instructs the monk (*bhikkhu*) to go to a quiet place, bend his legs in a crosswise position on his lap, keep his body erect and use his breath as a meditation object. “Mindful, he breathes in, and mindful, he breathes out. He, thinking, ‘I breathe in long,’ understands when he is breathing in long; or thinking, ‘I breathe out long,’ he understands when he is breathing out long; or thinking, ‘I breathe in short,’ he understands when he is breathing in short; or thinking, ‘I breathe out short,’ he understands when he is breathing out short.”⁵

Consciousness of the breath through the simple exercise of attentiveness to long and short inhalations and exhalations produces a twofold result: a perception of the nature of the entire body and a calming of bodily activities. The incoming and outgoing of the breath accompanied by the rise and fall of the abdomen vividly illustrates the transient and fluctuating nature of the bodily organism. The activities of the body come into being and pass away time and again. There is obviously nothing inherently permanent about the physical body. Not only is there ongoing ageing eventuating in death; each moment of conscious life is an ebb and flow process as seen in the rise and fall of the breath.

The awareness of the nature of the body accompanies a state of calmness resulting from the posture of a detached observer. Think for a moment what the con-

sequences would be if every act you performed was done with conscious attention to every moment, feeling and thought. Such consciousness is not a procedure of rational investigation and conceptualization but simple awareness of everything occurring internally and externally, a conscious noting-without-attachment of all mental and physical events.

As the Sutta on breathing-mindfulness in the Middle-Length Dialogues makes evident, being aware of respiration and the mechanism of breathing is not only an exercise in and of itself. In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta attention to breathing is the first exercise designed to lead the meditator to insight. In this regard, it is seen as the initial step of a regular program of training and development. In the Ānāpānasati Sutta, however, every aspect of the meditative process is accompanied by respiration mindfulness, or, it might be put the other way around. Thus, contemplating the body, feelings, mind or mental objects is accomplished as part of awareness of the breath. For example, "Experiencing the mind, I shall breathe in, thus he trains himself; experiencing the mind, I shall breathe out, thus he trains himself . . . Contemplating impermanence, I shall breathe in, thus he trains himself; contemplating impermanence, I shall breathe out, thus he trains himself . . . " etc.⁶ In sum, the text states that the perfection of the four foundations of mindfulness (i.e., body, feelings, mind or consciousness and mental objects or ideas) is brought about through respiration-mindfulness.

In the Sutta we are investigating, respiration mindfulness in only one aspect of other forms of bodily awareness. It is followed by even more analytical modes of observation in which every type of bodily activity is

carefully scrutinized: "And further, O bhikkhus, when he is going, a bhikkhu understands: 'I am going'; when he is standing he understands: 'I am standing'; when he is sitting, he understands: 'I am sitting'; when he is lying down, he understands: 'I am lying down' or just as his body is disposed so he understands it."⁷ The individual striving for insight is to clearly comprehend (*sampajāna*) every movement and act from "behind and stretching" to "wearing the shoulder cloak, the (other two) robes (and) the bowl" to "what is eaten, drunk, chewed and savoured".⁸ In sum, nothing one does is to go unnoted or unobserved. Acts which for the average person are subconsciously motivated become part of one's conscious life. All physical activity is understood in the sense that it is subject to bare awareness. Such scrutinizing does not mean that the mind endlessly involves itself in discovering reasons and motives for particular acts. Rather, the effort aims to eliminate the bondage of unreflective habituation through the development of a state of total, alert awareness.

Insight meditation, as we can see, places a high degree of confidence in the ability of the human mind to extract the individual from the throes of ignorance. Ignorance is attachment to sensory objects and a fundamental lack of understanding of the nature of sensate existence. According to the commentary on the Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta true awareness of the body and all its activities leads to only one conclusion: "There is the body, but there is no being, no person, no woman, no man, no soul, nothing pertaining to a soul, no 'I', nothing that is mine, no one, and nothing belonging to anyone."⁹ And again in more poetic form:

Just as a ship goes on by winds impelled,
Just as a shaft goes by the bowstring's force,
So goes this body in its forward course
Full driven by the vibrant thrust of air,
As to the puppet's back the dodge-thread's tied
So to the body-doll the mind is joined
And pulled by that the body moves, stands, sits.
Where is the living being that can stand,
Or walk, by force of its own inner strength,
Without conditions that give it support?¹⁰

Insight meditation achieves, therefore, a full understanding of the conditions of existence. With that understanding the illusion of a self is eliminated.

From mindfulness of breathing and conscious awareness of all forms of bodily activity, insight meditation then moves to examine the body in terms of its constituent parts. Our Sutta admonishes the meditator to reflect upon the parts of the body from the soles of the feet to the crown of the head, and with a characteristic explicitness delineates the body in terms of hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, stomach, bowels, intestines; excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, serum, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, and urine. This list may offend some readers. Its purpose is, of course, not to paint an attractive picture of the body but to re-enforce the notion that the body is but a collection of rather repulsive parts. What is there in the body worthy of attachment and desire?—nothing! The mindfulness of the monk is established with the thought that the body *simply exists*. In this manner “he lives independent and clings to naught in the world.”¹¹

The text establishes two mutually interdependent tendencies in regard to mindfulness of the body: the analytical nature of insightful awareness and the reduction of attachment. The first tendency develops beyond the mere examination of the traditional thirty-two bodily parts. The meditator is instructed to consider the body as a composite of the four primary material elements of earth, water, heat and air. This effort to reduce the body to component elements is an integral part of Theravāda Buddhist psychology and philosophy. Other analyses of the psycho-physical being include the five aggregates *khandha* (body, sensation, perception, consciousness and volitional constituents) and the six sense-bases (*āyatana*) not to mention the extensive analytical categorization found in Buddhist scholastic texts.¹²

The analytical process in which the meditator is involved while examining the body is itself training in controlling the mind. Definitions in this instance are limiting, not in a logically or linguistic sense, but as a mind-focusing exercise. It might be said that the Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta establishes a rigorous context for the mind rather than the usual one of undisciplined, uncontrolled and untrained mental responses to the human situation. Yet, the reduction of the individual to fundamental elements or constituent parts is primarily intended to eliminate ego-attachment. If there is no ego or self, how can one be attached to it? The commentary elaborates this meaning with the following simile:

“Just as if some cow-butcher or a cow-butcher’s apprentice, a man who works for his keep, having killed a cow and made it into parts, were sitting at a four-cross-road, just so, a bhikkhu reflects by way of the (bodily) modes (or parts), on the body, in any one of the four postures thus:

‘There are in this body the modes of extension (earth), cohesion (water), caloricity (heat) and oscillation (air).’”

“The cow-butcher does not get rid of the cow-percept while feeding the cow, driving it to the place of slaughter, tying it and putting it up there, killing it, and even when seeing the dead carcass of the cow; not until he cuts it up and divides it into parts does the cow-percept disappear. To that butcher sitting (with the meat before him) after cutting up the cow, however, the cow-percept disappears, and the perception of flesh comes into being. To him there is not this thought: ‘I am selling the cow; these people are taking away the cow.’ But to him, indeed, there occurs this thought: ‘I am selling flesh; these people indeed, are taking away flesh’”¹³

Reduction of attachment to the body is furthered in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta by what are referred to as the eight cemetery contemplations. These are descriptive pictures of the body in varying degrees of decay and dissolution after death—certainly not a very happy thought! The directness of this portion of the text needs no elaboration: “And further, O bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu, in whatever way, sees a body dead, one, two, or three⁷ days; swollen, blue, and festering, thrown into the charnel ground, he thinks of his own body thus: ‘Verily, this body of mine too is of the same nature as that body, is going to be like that body, and has not got past the condition of becoming like that body.’”¹⁴ The remaining cemetery contemplations speak of the body being eaten by animals, as a skeleton held together by fleshy remains and so on. Each of the descriptions varies slightly but consistently includes the refraining passages of internal and external contemplation of the body in terms of the cycle of origination

and dissolution. Such contemplation aims at freeing the meditator from clinging to things in the world and producing a state of independence.

The term, independence, which occurs again and again in the Sutta is a most appropriate one. To a profound degree the practice of Buddhist meditation aims to bring into reality a new state of being characterized by total freedom. The old condition of existence, by way of contrast, was one of bondage, or in the terminology of Buddhism, clinging and attachment to the things of the senses. It is in this context that the cemetery contemplations should be seen. In and of themselves they are repulsive, and, indeed, they are intended to be. They should, nevertheless, be read with the thought in mind that one of the "Four Sights" motivating Siddhartha Gautama to begin his spiritual pilgrimage was a dead man; and, it should also be remembered that the famous Buddhist formula descriptive of sentient existence, the cycle of Dependent Origination, concludes with old age and death. Thus it is that the concept of death prevails on many levels of Buddhist thought and should not be taken as especially startling in the context of Satipaṭṭhāna.

The experience of death in Buddhism plays a double role as it does in other religious traditions. There is, on the one hand, the notion that physical death is the characteristic *par excellence* of mundane existence. On the other hand, however, there is the idea that death is the entrance into new life. For example, one of the prime attributes of the initiatory *rite de passage* is the reenactment of a symbolic death scene prior to admittance to full membership into the tribe or society; certainly the act of submersion in Christian baptism was intended to symbolize not only moral purification but dying to an old

way of life and entrance into the new life of the church, the body of Christ; and in the Buddhist tradition the use of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as a funeral breviary or the Zen notion of the "great death" experience prior to enlightenment all offer evidence of the positive role the symbol of death plays in differing religious experiences around the world. In this regard it is significant to note that the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, while a manual for meditation, was also used as a death-bed discourse. Thus, although the text describes the death of the physical body in gruesome detail, the course of training the Sutta prescribes is one of death to the life of attachment and bondage and rebirth in a mode of existence characterized by perfect freedom.

Earlier we referred to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as a paradigm for insight meditation practice. Within the body of the text itself, the elaboration of the mindfulness of the body which we have just outlined is something of an implicit model for other forms of awareness meditation. You will recall that these include awareness of the feelings, the mind or consciousness and mental objects or ideas. None of these receive the extensive treatment given to the mindfulness of the body, perhaps as we have suggested, because the form of mental investigation has already been established. The three remaining meditation subjects taken together constitute the non-corporeal or non-material aspects of existence designated by the rubric, *nāma* (lit. name). Hence, one of the earliest references in the Pāli texts to the structure of individuality is, *nāma-rūpa* (lit. name and form) or corporeality and non-corporeality. The term eventually comes to be identified with the formula of the Five Aggregates used to describe the components of a human being.

The contemplation of feeling (*vedanā*) is described by the commentary on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as the easiest of the non-material subjects of mindfulness. In the Sutta it is categorized into three kinds or classes: pleasurable, painful and neutral or neither pleasurable nor painful. The discourse in the commentary is worth quoting at some length :

“... the Blessed One speaking of the non-material or mental subject of meditation speaks by way of feeling. While expounding by way of sense-impression or consciousness the subject of meditation does not become clear. It seems dark. But by way of feeling it becomes clear. Why? Because of the clearness of the arising of feeling. Indeed the arising of pleasant or painful feeling is clear. When pleasant feeling arises spreading through and flowing over the whole body making one to utter the words: ‘Ah ‘tis joy,’ it is like causing one to eat fresh clarified butter cooled in very cold water a hundred times after being melted again and again, also a hundred times; it is like causing one to be massaged with an emollient oil with a hundred pieces; and it is like causing one to be cooled of a burning fever with a thousand pots of cold water.”

“When painful feeling arises spreading through and flowing over the whole body making one to bewail with the words, “Alas, what woe,” it is like the applying on one of a heated ploughshare; it is like the sprinkling upon one of molten copper; and it is comparable to the hurling into dried grass and trees, in the forest, of bundles of wood firebrands.”

“Thus the arising of pleasant or painful feeling becomes clear, but the arising of neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling is dark, and unclear.”

“The neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling becomes clear to one who grasps it methodically thinking: ‘At the disappearance of pleasure and pain, by way of contrariety, to the pleasant and the unpleasant, is the neutral neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling.’”

“To what is it comparable? To a deerhunter following the hoofmarks of a deer which midway having gone up a flat rock is fleeing. The hunter after seeing the hoofmarks on the hither and thither side of the rock, without seeing any trace in the middle, knows by inference: ‘Here the animal went up and, here, it went down; in the middle, on the flat rock, possibly it went through this part.’”

“Like the hoofmark at the place of going up the arising of pleasurable feeling becomes clear. Like the hoofmark at the place of descent the arising of painful feeling becomes clear. Like the grasping through inference of the part traversed over the rock by the deer is the laying hold of the neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling methodically with the thought: ‘At the disappearance of pleasure and pain, by way of contrariety to the pleasant and the unpleasant, is the neutral neither-pleasant-nor painful feeling!’”¹⁵

This lengthy exposition provides an insight into the nature of commentarial literature with its somewhat scholastic, analytic flavour and the extensive use of description, analogy and simile. It does not, however, provide much practical information in regard to the way in which the feelings might be used as a subject of mindfulness. A consistent interpretation by such contemporary meditation teachers as Sobhana Dhammasudhi of Thailand is not to let feelings entering the consciousness

become obstructive to attentive awareness. In order to overcome persistent, interruptive feelings it is sometimes necessary to use them as temporary meditation subjects themselves. As Dhammasudi frequently insists in his lectures to Western Meditators, in insight meditation everything is to be understood for what it really is. Therefore, if a meditator is bothered by pleasurable or painful feelings, rather than trying to reject or dismiss them, he should become aware of what they are, their arising and passing away.

Such awareness of non-corporeal meditation subjects readily leads to a conclusion which forms an important part of Buddhist teaching, namely, the interdependence of mind and body. For example, western student meditators report that meditation postures are difficult. Often the lotus or half-lotus position proves to be very painful, especially in the beginning days. Obviously, the feeling of pain is not an isolated or independent phenomenon, but is directly related to discomfort in sitting in an unaccustomed posture for long periods of time. Some students discover that being aware of the feeling of pain seems miraculously to alleviate it or ease the source of pain. In ordinary parlance today we might refer to such a phenomena as the power of mind over matter, but from the Buddhist viewpoint it is an illustration of the interdependence of the mental and the material. A familiar analogy employed by the commentator, Buddhaghosa, makes the point as follows:

“... a man born blind and a stool-crawling cripple wanted to go somewhere. The blind man said to the cripple, ‘Look, I can do what should be done by legs, but I have no eyes with which to see what is rough and smooth.’ The cripple said, ‘Look, I can do what should

be done by eyes, but I have no leg with which to go and come.' The blind man was delighted, and he made the cripple climb upon his shoulder. Sitting on the blind man's shoulder the cripple spoke thus, 'Leave the left, take the right; leave the right, take the left.'"

"Herein, the blind man has no efficient power; he is impotent; he cannot travel by his own efficient power, by his own strength. And the cripple has no efficient power; he is impotent; he cannot travel by his own efficient power, by his own strength. But there is nothing to prevent their going when they support each other. So too, mentality has no efficient power; it does not arise or occur in such and such functions by its own efficient power. But there is nothing to prevent their occurrence when they support each other."¹⁶

The interdependence of the mental and the material has more far-reaching consequences than the possibility of dispelling pain by being aware of the feeling of the pain. It indicates the Buddhist concern for the whole man. To some, Buddhist meditation may seem, in its own way, to be overly cerebral. That is, it appears to be primarily mental training. Although such an interpretation is not without justification, it is also obvious that the successful meditator has been able to train his body to sit for long periods without undue discomfort. On a higher level, Buddhist meditation teachers both past and present insist that only a person of high moral character will be able to focus his attention and train his mind to a sufficient degree to gain true wisdom. Also and perhaps most significantly, the meditator who has gained genuine insight is a changed person. There is a definite moral dimension to the practice of insight meditation even though the state of enlightenment transcends moral

categories. The freedom gained by one who has penetrated to the truth of the nature of things has an ontic significance with profound implications for a person's attitudes and the way he acts.

The third meditation subject discussed in the Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta is *citta*—mind, consciousness or, perhaps, thought. Here the text follows a now familiar pattern of delineation: “Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu understands the consciousness with lust, as with lust; the consciousness without lust as without lust; the consciousness with hate, as with hate; the consciousness without hate as without hate; the consciousness with ignorance as with ignorance as with ignorance; the consciousness without ignorance as without ignorance; the shrunken state of consciousness as the shrunken state; the distracted state of consciousness as the distracted state; the state of consciousness become great as the state become great; the state of consciousness not become great as the state not become great; the state of consciousness with some other mental state superior to it as the state with something mentally higher; the state of consciousness with no other mental state superior to it as the state with nothing mentally higher; the quieted state of consciousness as the quiet state; the state of consciousness not quieted as the state not quieted; the freed state of consciousness as freed; and the unfreed state of consciousness as unfreed.”¹⁷

The text does not say that the meditator who is aware of lust, hatred, ignorance, smallness, mental inferiority, agitation or bondage should feel guilty for such thoughts or that he should make an immediate effort to eliminate them through sheer dint of will. Indeed, to become embroiled in the agony of guilt for failing to think only the right thoughts is itself a form of attachment to be

overcome. The Sutta simply instructs the meditator to be conscious of these negative qualities as well as of positive traits. From the Buddhist viewpoint way lust, hatred and ignorance could be overcome through the awareness that they exist. It must be remembered, that the Buddhist assertion about the power of awareness is made within the context of the practical discipline of attentive, insight meditation practice.

The last section of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta deals with the topic of *dhamma*, one of the most elusive terms in Buddhism. In this context it carries the meaning of mental objects or, as translated by T. W. Rhys Davids –ideas. The ideas which the Sutta discusses in this rather lengthy section include some of the fundamental teachings of Theravāda Buddhism: the Five *Nīvaranas* or hindrances (i.e., sensuality, anger, sloth and torpor, agitation and worry, doubt), the Five Aggregates of Grasping (i. e., material form, sensation, perception, volitional elements, consciousness), the Āyatanas or sense bases, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment and the Four Noble Truths. In and of themselves these formulae offer a near synopsis of Buddhist teachings. In one sense, it is precisely the truth of these teachings which the Buddhist meditator comes to understand. Yet, in another sense, these teachings as stated are merely mental objects, ideas of which one is to be aware but not attached. If one achieves true insight the ideas as formulated are not differentiated from the awareness of them. They are ultimately, therefore, not *dhammā* in the denotation of mental objects but *dhamma* as the truth. “Know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” To know the truth in the fullest sense, is to be the truth. It is not to know a set of propositions or to memorize a few formulae.

Insight meditation aims at nothing less than making the truth and me one. It is not an easy task although some may have more aptitude and ability than others—or should we say, more intuitive insight.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta sets forth a means to gain enlightenment. It does so through describing the application of *sati* or awareness to four aspects of human life—body, feelings, consciousness and ideas. The importance of this particular method can hardly be exaggerated and its place in the Buddhist scheme of meditation training is forever guaranteed. For those who merely read the text there is no personal validation that its claims are true. The Buddha admonished his followers to accept no teaching, even his own, without testing, and we must be similarly admonished in order to test the truth of the Buddha's claim: 'This is the only way, O Bhikkhus, for the purification of beings; for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely, the Four Arousings of mindfulness.'¹⁸

Footnotes

1. Nyāṇaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (London, Rider & Co., 1962), p. 79.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Acknowledgment is made to Soma Thera's translation of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and commentary published as *The Way of Mindfulness* (Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1967) and Nyanaponika Thera's discussion of Satipaṭṭhāna in *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. See also '*The Foundations of Mindfulness*' tr. by Nyanasatta Thera (The Wheel No. 19; Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

4. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), p. 56.
5. *The Way of Mindfulness*, trans. Soma Thera (Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1967), p. 1,
6. *Mindfulness of Breathing*, trans. Nāṇamoli Thera, (2nd ed.; Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1964), p. 7.
7. *The Way of Mindfulness*, p. 2.
8. *Ibid*, p. 3.
9. *Ibid*, p. 51.
10. *Ibid*, p. 56.
11. *Ibid*, p. 2.
12. See *Compendium of Philosophy*, trans. Shwe Zan Aung (London, Luzac & Co., 1963).
13. *The Way of Mindfulness*, p. 100.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 107 - 108.
16. Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification*, trans. Nāṇamoli Thera, (Colombo, R. Sēmage, 1956), p. 691.
17. *The Way of Mindfulness*, pp. 9 - 10,
18. *Ibid.*, p. 1.



On Meditation

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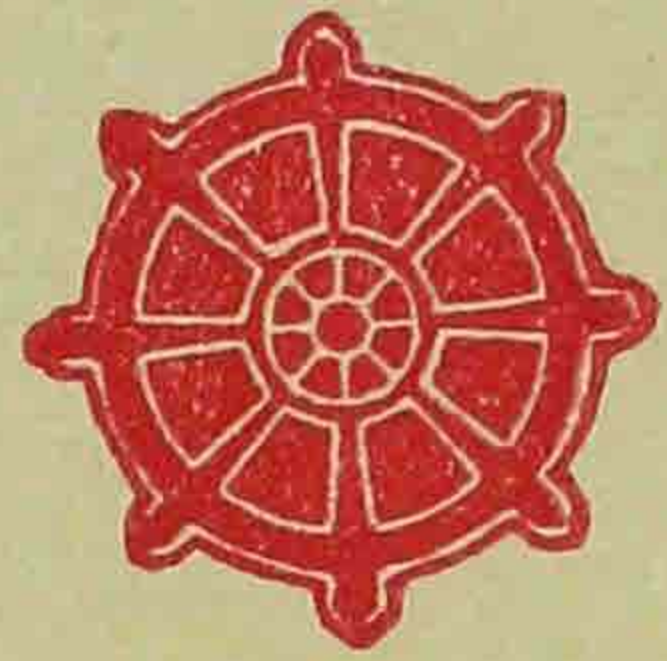
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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF BUDDHISM

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The Psychological
ASPECT OF BUDDHISM

By

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Vajirarama, Colombo, Ceylon.

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF BUDDHISM

I am happy to be here in response to the invitation of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association to deliver the fifth Sir Baron Jayatilaka Memorial Lecture. Let me, at the outset, speak a few words about Sir Baron Jayatilaka who was the President of the Y. M. B. A. for forty six years, that is from almost from its inception until his death in 1944.

A self-willed individual who toiled his way upwards from small beginnings, unaided by patronage and unsupported by the influence of friends, Sir Baron Jayatilaka is in every respect a self-made man. The story of his life richly illustrates the power of the human mind. It is appropriate, therefore, on an occasion like this when we recall the flights of his many-sided career, to devote an hour or so to what the Buddha, the Supremely Enlightened Master, has said about the power of the human mind. In other words let us dwell on "*The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism*".

A dispassionate student of Buddhism who carefully reads through the books of early Buddhism is confronted with a dynamic personality, a religious teacher, who had attained supreme enlightenment and security from bondage through moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection, a teacher with an indefatigable zeal and steel determination for propagating the truth he had realized. That dynamic personality is none other than Siddhattha Gotama (Sanskrit, Siddhārtha Gautama) popularly known as the Buddha. This teacher who did not claim to be other than a human being was not one more philosopher among many others, but a

teacher of a way of life, who set in motion the matchless "Wheel of Truth" (*dharma-cakra*) which was to revolutionize the thought and life of the human race. His self-sacrificing zeal, large love, kindliness and tolerance combined with his remarkable personality, aroused the Indians from their slumber of ignorance and inspired them.

The Buddha spoke to all men and for all time. His teaching, the Dhamma, is for all men, whatever language they speak, whatever clothes they wear, whatever country they call 'home'—the Buddha's language is truth. He was clothed in truth, and the whole world was his home; for truth is everywhere for all time to be realized by each one individually. This is what is meant by the universality of the Dhamma.

Truth is not conceptual, and therefore, cannot be passed on by means of words or other symbols. An Enlightened One could guide us by showing the way to truth, but we ourselves should pursue the method of self-inquiry called meditation in Buddhism so that the hidden workings of the mind could be revealed, truth realized, and power within contacted.

What the Buddha taught during a period of forty-five years is so vast, its aspects so varied and fascinating that scholars called Buddhism a religion; a philosophy; an ethical code; a religio-philosophical system; and ethical idealism. But one has still to find a religion where psychology looms so large as in Buddhism. The commonly called academical psychology—like other academical sciences—defined mind in static terms, whereas Buddhist psychology defines mental life in dynamic terms. However, after many struggles and persistent efforts modern psychology has left the dilapidated abode of orthodox schools, and is rediscovering the old

doctrine of a dynamic mind. There are some variations no doubt, but the basic principle is one. Today many a psychologist accepts the dynamic nature of the human mind, and modern text books of psychology have abandoned the concept of a soul, and are regarding psychology as the science of human behaviour. Let us hope that it will not deviate from its well-found track.

To the Buddhist even the question of religion and its origin is not a metaphysical one, but a psychological and intellectual one. To him religion is no mere creed or code of revelation or fear of the unknown, fear of a supernatural being who rewards and punishes the good deeds and ill deeds of his creatures. It is not a theological concern, but rather a psychological and intellectual concern resulting from the experience of *dukkha*, that is, suffering, conflicts, unsatisfactoriness of the empirical existence, of the nature of life.

When we consider the doctrinal contents of Buddhism we are necessarily compelled to regard the Buddha's teaching as distinguished and different from other systems of religion where the central feature is the concept of a creator God. It is correct to say that there is much religion in Buddhism, but it cannot be included among the many religions in existence today, at least in the sense in which anthropologists understand the word religion. Generally the concept of religion is associated with a system centred around God and supernatural forces. Buddhism, however, does not advocate any prescribed system of ritual and worship and supplication of deities, or gods. There is no recognition, on the part of man, of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny. In Buddhism, man attributes all his attainments and achievements to

human effort and human understanding. Buddhism is anthropocentric and not theocentric. Thus to a Buddhist, religion is a way of life, in the sense of a way of moral, spiritual and intellectual training leading to complete freedom of the mind, highest attainment of Insight which puts an end to all sufferings and repeated existence.

Looked at from the point of view of philosophy, the Buddha was not concerned with the problems that have worried philosophers both of the East and West from the beginning of history. He was not concerned with metaphysical problems which only confused man and upset his mental equilibrium. Their solution, he knew, will not free mankind from suffering, from the unsatisfactory nature of life. That was why the Buddha hesitated to answer such questions, and at times, refrained from explaining those which were often wrongly formulated. He was not ready to answer such questions as : Is the world eternal or not? Is it finite or infinite? Has the world an end or not? What is the origin of the world? At times the Buddha was silent to such seemingly important but futile questions, because silence was the best answer to such speculations and meaningless questions. The only way to resolve these doubts and difficulties is by exploring the innermost recesses of the human mind which can only be effected by deep self-introspection based on purity of conduct and consequent meditation.

All the principal tenets of Buddhism like the doctrine of *kamma* (skt. karma), volitional activities or moral causation, and rebirth, meditation and the resultant mental attainments are best studied and investigated as workings of the human mind, and therefore, Buddhism can most fittingly be described as a study of the highest psychology.

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* of the Buddhist Canon gives a very comprehensive account of the mind and the mental factors in a manner so as to help the Buddhist way of life. However, a close study of the dialogues, or the discourses of the Buddha, tends to produce the conviction that psychology plays a significant role in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, too. What the Buddha had to say with regard to the nature of the human mind, the method of cleansing it and the art of becoming its master and not its slave, is clearly enunciated in the discourses of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. In this respect the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*,¹ the discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, the *Vitakka Saṅṭhāna Sutta*,² the Removal of Distracting Thoughts, and such other cardinal discourses are glaring examples.

Buddhism is the most psychological of religions. It is significant that the intricate workings of the human mind are more fully dealt with in Buddhism rather than in any other religion, and therefore, psychology works hand in hand more with Buddhism than with any other religion.

Is Buddhism related to modern psychology? one may ask: Yes, but with some difference. Buddhism is more concerned with the curative rather than analysis. Buddhism helps us to get beyond the intellect to the actual experience of life itself. Through meditation the Buddha had discovered the deeper universal maladies of the human heart and mind. The remarkable insight into the workings of the mind makes the Buddha a psychologist and scientist of the highest eminence. Admittedly his way of arriving at these truths

1. Translated in the 'Wheel' series, No. 19, also read *The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and Its Application to Modern Life, V. F. Gunaratna, No. 60.

2. Wheel series, No. 21, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.

of mental life is not that of an experimentalist, yet what the Buddha had discovered remains true, and in fact has been corroborated by the experimentalist. But the purpose in engaging in these inquiries is quite different from that of the scientist. The statements of the Buddha about the nature of the mind and matter are directed towards specific ends. They are simply the deliverance of man, supreme security from bondage. The Buddha places so much emphasis on mind and mental phenomena because of the crucial role that our inner life occupies in the genesis of human action. In theistic religions the basis is God. In Buddhism, which is non-theistic, the mind is the basis.

The Christian Bible begins by saying, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" whereas in the Dhammapada, which may be regarded as the Buddhist Bible, the opening lines read: '*Manopubangamā dhammā mano seṭṭhā manomayā,*' 'Mind precedes things; mind dominates them; mind creates them'; The words of the Christian God, as a matter of fact, the words of Gods of all theistic religions point the way to God and heaven, to the Beyond. The Buddha gives the greatest importance to mind in the scheme of deliverance, directs man to the ways of discrimination and research, and urges him to get busy with the real task of developing the inner forces and qualities of the mind. The Buddha says: "You yourselves should put forth the necessary effort, and work out your deliverance; the Buddhas only show the way." 1

In order to understand fully the ideal of freedom of the mind, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of the mind. If there is no proper understanding of the importance of the human mind, we cannot appreciate to its fullest

1. *Dhammapada*, 275.

extent the reason why it is so necessary to develop and safeguard the freedom of the mind.

Of all forces the force of the mind is the most potent, it predominates every other force. It is a power by itself and within itself. Any attempt to thwart the growth of this force is a step in the wrong direction. No one has understood the power of the mind so clearly as the Buddha.

Buddhism, while not denying the world of matter and the great effect that the physical world has on mental life, emphasises the very great importance of the human mind. Once a monk asked the Buddha: 'Pray, Venerable Sir, by what is the world led? By what is the world drawn along? Under the sway of what one dhamma have all gone? The Buddha's answer is categorical: "*Well, monk, the world is led by mind (thought); by mind the world is drawn along; all have gone under the sway of the mind, the one dhamma*"¹ The Buddhist point of view is that the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death are not attributed to any external agency. They are the results of our own thoughts and their resultant actions.

The Buddhist way of life is an intense process of cleansing one's speech, action and thought. It is self-development and self-purification resulting in self-realization. The emphasis is on practical results and not on mere philosophical speculation, logical abstraction or even mere cogitation. The Buddhist ethos and psychology is built on the eternal truth of *dukkha*, the unsatisfactoriness of all

1. Anguttara Nikāya, II. p. 177

sentient beings, all emprirical existence. The Buddha said :

*“One thing only do I teach
Suffering and its end to reach”*¹

To understand this unequivocal saying is to understand Buddhism; for the entire teaching of the Buddha is nothing else than the application of this one principle. It seems to me that what can be called the discovery of a Buddha, is just the Four Noble Truths: namely *dukkha*, the arising or the cause of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, and the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. And the rest are logical developments and more detailed explanations of the four truths. ‘This is the typical teaching of the Buddhas of all ages.’²

The Buddha was a practical teacher. He was more concerned with beings than with inanimate nature. His sole object was to unravel the mystery of existence, to solve the problem of becoming. This he did by comprehending in all their fullness the four truths, the eternal verities of life. To those who listened to him, he explained in its detail the problem of *dukkha*, the universal fact of life, and tried to make people feel its full force, and convince them of it. He had definitely told us what he explains and what he does not. To one who views the world, and all it holds, in its proper perspective, the primary concern of life is not mere speculation or vain voyaging into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from *dukkha*, unsatisfactoriness. To him true knowledge depends on the central

1. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I. 22.

2. *Vinaya Mahāvagga* i. 16, ii. 156; *Digha* N. i. 110; *Majjhima* N. i. 380; *Anguttara* N, iv. 186.

question: Can this learning be of use to us in the conquest of mental peace and tranquillity, of real happiness? The Buddha says: “*In this very body, a fathom long, with its consciousness and perception I declare are the world, its cessation and the path that leads to the cessation of the world.*” Here the word ‘world’ denotes *dukkha*.

According to his teaching, suffering cannot be separated from the five aggregates, from this fathom long body with a mind. The five aggregates and suffering are same, and not two different things. “What is suffering? The Buddha asks, and answers: “It should be said that it is the five aggregates of clinging.¹

Now it becomes clear that to understand the first truth *dukkha* as well as the other three truths, it is essential to have a clear idea of the five aggregates that comprise man. In ordinary parlance we speak of a “being,” but in the ultimate sense there is no such “being” there is only a manifestation of ever-changing psycho-physical forces or energies. These forces or energies form the aggregates, and what we call a being is nothing but a combination of these everchanging five aggregates. Now what are the five aggregates?

According to Buddhism man is a psycho-physical combination of mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*). The components of the “mind” are classified into four groups, namely: feeling (*vedanā*); perceptions, that is sense-impressions, images or ideas and concepts (*saññā*); mental formations¹ or conative ideas and their concomitants (*sankhāra*); and consciousness, (*viññāna*). These four mental groups which are the non-physical factors in man are collectively

¹. *Samyutta* N. iii. 158.

regarded as mind (*nāma*). With the physical factor body (*rūpa*), the so-called man comes to be known as the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) composing an individuality.

In our study of psychology, Buddhist or otherwise, we feel obliged to ask whether the mind and the brain are different from each other. It is true that there is a close connection between mind and brain. Mental actions are related to brain charges. Mind is not something that can be handled, that can be submitted to any chemical test. It is invisible, intangible and as such cannot be discerned by the five senses. It lies outside the realm of the physical world; we can however form some idea of its nature and structure and how it works as a whole. But the brain is otherwise. We can speak of its actual position, its structure and also its function.

The mind, whilst not impervious to external influences, is not under the control of other factors, but it is the master of them. It is with a man's mind that he seeks truth, that he probes into the inner meaning of things, by which he learns their secret and significance.

In this talk I do not intend to go into details regarding the aggregate of material form or body as the subject is "The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism." In brief, matter, the physical body of man, contains and comprises the Four Great Primaries (*Cattāri mahābhūtāni*) which are traditionally known as solidity, fluidity, heat or temperature and motion or vibration (*paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*). In this context, they are not simply earth, water, fire and wind, though conventionally they may be so called. In Buddhist thought, especially in the *Abhidhamma* teaching, they are more than that. Very briefly *paṭhavi* or solidity is the

element of expansion. *Āpo* or fluidity is the element of cohesion. *Tejo* is the element of heat or temperature. *Vāyo* is the element of motion, it is displacement. Every material object is made up of the four Great Primaries though one or other seems to preponderate.

As discussed earlier, the four non-physical factors of man, all his mental and emotional processes, are included in the word mind. Students of Buddhism are familiar with the three pāli terms; *mano citta*, and *viññāna*. These terms are often translated as mind in some context or other, although a more discriminating student will translate *viññāna* as consciousness or cognitive consciousness. The English word mind does not adequately convey the meaning of the pāli words *mano* or *citta*. These three terms, *mano citta* and *viññāna*, however, are synonyms (*yaṃ ca kho bhikkhave vuccati cittam itipi mano, itipi viññānam*),¹ but they have their distinct and special uses in certain contexts and with all their different shades of meaning they indicate the psychological aspects of Buddhism.

The term *viññāna*, has a deeper connotation in Buddhist psychology. In western psychology mind is generally defined as: "The organised totality of psychical structures and processes, conscious, unconscious and endopsychic philosophically, rather than psychologically, the entity or substratum underlying these structures and processes."² According to philosophy: "Mind is used in two principal senses: (a) the individual mind is the self or subject which perceives, remembers, imagines, feels, conceives, reasons, wills, etc. and which is functionally related to an individual bodily organism. (b) Mind, generically considered, is a

1. *Samyutta* N. ii, 94.

2. *A Dictionary of Psychology*, James Drever, Penguin Books.

metaphysical substance which pervades all individual mind and which is contrasted with matter or material substance.”¹

Let us now discuss the four aggregates *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra* and *viññāna* which form the psychical parts of the mind.

Vedanā is the aggregate of feeling which accompanies our impressions and ideas. Feelings are threefold: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. They are dependent on contact. Seeing a form or visible object, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching some tangible thing, cognizing a mental object (an idea or thought) man experiences feeling. These six kinds of feelings are experienced through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind, respectively (the faculty of mind, *manindriya*, is regarded as the sixth faculty in Buddhist psychology). When for instance, eye, form, and visual consciousness (*cakkhu viññāna*) come together, it is their coincidence that is called contact. Contact means the combination of the organ of sense, the object of sense, and sense consciousness. When these are all present together there is no power or force that can prevent the arising of feeling.

Next comes the aggregate of Perception (*saññā-khandha*). The function of perception in Buddhist psychology is recognition (*saṃjānana*) of objects, both physical and mental. Perception, like feeling, also is six-fold: perception of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily contacts and mental objects. Perception in Buddhism is not used in the sense that Western philosophers like Bacon, Descartes,

1. *Dictionary of Philosophy* edited by Dagobert D. Runes, Littlefield, Adams & Co. New Jersey.

Spinoza and Leibnitz used the term, but as a mere sense perception. Extra-sensory forms of perception such as telepathy and clairvoyance are also included in the aggregate of perception.

There is a certain affinity between awareness (*vi jānana*), which is the function of consciousness, and recognition (*samjānana*), the function of perception. While consciousness becomes aware of an object, simultaneously perception takes the distinctive mark of the object and thus distinguishes it from other objects. This distinctive mark is instrumental in cognizing the object a second and a third time, and in fact, every time we become aware of the object. Thus it is perception, *saññā* that brings about memory.

It is important to note that perceptions often deceive us. Then they become known as illusion or perversity of perceptions (*saññā vipallāsa*). It is always when we fail to see the true nature of things that our views become clouded; because of our preconceived notions, our attachment and aversion, our likes and dislikes (*anurodha, virodha*)¹, we fail to see the sense organs and sense objects in their respective and objective natures, and go after mirages and deceptions. The sense organs delude and mislead us, and then we fail to see things in their true light, in their proper perspective, so our way of seeing things become perverted (*viparīta dassana*). Right understanding alone removes these illusions and helps man to cognize the real nature that underlies all appearances. It is only when man come out of this cloud of illusions and perversions that he shines with true wisdom like the full moon that emerges brilliant from behind a black cloud.

1. *Mājjhīma* N. i. 266.

When a particular perception, perverted or not, occurs frequently, it grows stronger and grips our mind. Then it becomes difficult to get rid of that perception, and the result is well explained in this verse of the *suttanipāta* (verse 847).

“Who is free from sense perceptions
In him no more bonds exist;
Who by Insight freedom gains
All delusions cease in him;
But who clings to sense perceptions
And to view-points wrong and false
He lives wrangling in this world.”

Perception is followed by the Aggregate of Mental (volitional) Formations (*saṃkhāra*). It is good to keep in mind that volitional formations is the popular term for the word *saṃkhāra* in the list of the five aggregates. In other contexts *saṃkhāra* does signify anything conditioned and compounded. In the statement ‘*sabbe saṃkhārā aniccā*’ or ‘*aniccā vata saṃkhārā*’ (all compounded things are impermanent), the term *saṃkhāra* applies to all compounded and conditioned things, i. e., all things that come into being as the effect of causes and conditions and which, themselves act as causes and conditions in turn again to give rise to other effects.

In this group of mental formations (*saṃkhāra*) are included all mental factors except feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) mentioned earlier. The Abhidhamma speaks of fifty two mental concomitants or factors (*cetasika*). Feeling and perceptions are two of them, but they are not volitional formations. The remaining fifty are collectively

known as *saṃkhāra*, mental or volitional formations. Volition plays a vital role in the mental realm, and we shall discuss this when we deal with the psychology of *karma*.

The aggregate of consciousness (*viññānakkhandha*) is the most important of the five aggregates which comprise man. Now what is the function of consciousness? Like feeling, perception and volitional formations, consciousness also has six types and its function is varied. It has its basis and objects.

All our feelings are experienced through the contact of sense faculties with the external world. The faculty of mind which cognizes mental objects is not something tangible and perceptible like the other five faculties which cognize the external world. The eye cognizes the world of colours (*vaṇṇa*) or visible objects, the ear audible sounds, and so forth. The mind, however, cognizes the world of ideas and thoughts. When it comes to the world of thoughts and ideas, the faculty of the mind is lord over the mental realm. The eye cannot think thoughts, and collect ideas, but it is instrumental in seeing visible forms, the world of colours.

It is very important to understand the function of consciousness. Although there is this functional relationship between the faculties and their objects, for instance, eye with forms, ear with sounds, and so forth, awareness come through consciousness. In other words, sense objects cannot be experienced with the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness. When the three things: eye, form and visual consciousness come together, it is their coincidence that is called contact. From contact comes

feeling and so on as explained in the dependent origination or conditioned genesis (*paṭicca samuppāda*).¹

When it is said that consciousness arises through the interaction of the sense organs and objects (*indriya* and *ārammana*), it does not mean that consciousness is something created by the sense organ and object which are purely physical. Otherwise we will be subscribing to the theory of the materialistic schools which believed that consciousness is a mere by-product of matter. The function of *viññāna*, consciousness, is to become aware of objects (*vijānana*). The human eye may come in contact with the visible object, but unless there is awareness we are not conscious of the object. Consciousness also is conditioned and subject to change, and so it is not a spirit or soul opposed to matter, nor a projection, an offspring of matter.

The concept of *viññāna* occupy a very high place in the teachings of the Buddha, but it is not studied or understood by many in all its aspects; it is the least understood. To many, *viññāna* is just one of the five aggregates, which becomes aware of sense objects. Its deeper interpretation, the broader aspects involved, are ignored. When we discuss the concept of *viññāna* in relation to the doctrine of survival or the rebirth process of beings, it becomes clear that consciousness plays an important role in the process of becoming (*punabbhava*).

This fact is clearly brought out in the *paṭicca samuppāda: sankhāra paccayā viññānaṃ*, dependent on the *kamma* or good and evil actions (*sankhāra*) of the past

1. See *Dependent Origination*, Piyadassi Thera, Wheel No. 15, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon.

births is conditioned the conscious life in this present birth. Consciousness, therefore, is the first factor (*nidāna*) or first of the conditioning links belonging to the present existence. As this consciousness or *viññāna* is the first of the stream of consciousness (*viññāna-sota*) belonging to one single existence (*bhava*), it is also known as *paṭisandhi viññāna*, relinking or rebirth consciousness. *Samkhāra*, in the form of *kamma*, is the 'motive force' that causes rebirth. We must understand the dynamic importance of the two psychic factors, *saṃkhāra* and *viññāna*. *Samkhāra* means *karma*, good and evil actions, all actions, physical, verbal and mental (*kāya saṃkhāra*, *vacī saṃkhāra*, *citta saṃkhāra*) which will bring out reactions giving rise to rebirth. Thus *saṃkhāra* determines that part of consciousness in the next life influencing the new personality.

What we call life here is the functioning of the five aggregates which we have already discussed, or the functioning of mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*) which are only energies or forces. They are never the same for two consecutive moments, and in this conflux of mind and body we do not see anything permanent. The grown-up man is neither the child nor quite a different person; there is only a relationship of continuity. The conflux of mind and body, or mental and physical energy, is not lost at death, for no force or energy is ever lost. It undergoes change. It resets, reforms in new conditions. This is called rebirth, re-existence or re-becoming (*punabbhava*). Karmic process (*kammabhava*) is the energy that out of a present life conditions a future life in unending sequence. In this process there is nothing that passes or transmigrates from one life to another. It is only a movement that continues unbroken. The 'being' who passes away here and takes

birth elsewhere is neither the same person, nor a totally different one (*na ca so na ca añño*).¹

There is the last moment of consciousness (*cui viññāna* or *cuti citta*) belonging to the immediately previous life; immediately next, upon the cessation of that consciousness, but conditioned by it, there arises the first moment of consciousness of the present birth which is called (*paṭi-sandhi viññāna*) relinking or rebirth consciousness, the first stirring of mental life in the newly begun individual. Similarly the last thought moment in this life conditions the first thought moment in the next life. In this way consciousness comes into being and passes away yielding place to new consciousness. Thus the perpetual stream of consciousness (*viññāna sota*) goes on until existence ceases through the eradication of the root causes leading to becoming or existence (*bhava*). The root causes are: lust hate and delusion (*rāga, dosa, moha*).² Existence, in a way, is consciousness, the will to live.

The Pali word *paṭi-sandhi viññāna* is a term found only in the Abhidhamma literature, and a detail account of the term is found in the commentaries and treatises on the Abhidhamma. *Paṭisandhi* or Sanskrit *pratisandhi* literally means re-linking, re-uniting, re-joining. It is called re-uniting through its being the thing which links one existence to another (the succeeding one). *Paṭisandhi-viññāna* is the resultant consciousness (*vipāka-viññāna*) present at rebirth, or owing to the presence of which at the moment of rebirth the new existence is connected with the immediately preceding existence, and through that with the entire past of the individual reborn. This resultant

1. *Milinda Pañha*, P. T. S. p. 40

2. See below.

consciousness is due to previous re-birth producing mental factor *saṁkhāra*, volitional formations, or *kamma*.¹

It is interesting to note that the counterpart of the Abhidhamma term '*Paṭi-sandhi Viññāna*' is found in the Sutta Pitaka. In the *Ānenjasappāya Sutta* (106) of the Majjhima Nikaya, this *vipāka viññāna* is referred to as the *saṁvattanikaṁ viññānaṁ*, the consciousness that goes on, that proceeds from one life to another as *vipāka*. The consciousness that evolves into the next life. But be it noted that this consciousness, is not an unchanging entity. Dependent on consciousness arises mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*), the psycho-physical personality. Consciousness, on the other hand, is conditioned by mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa paccayā viññānaṁ, viññāna paccayā nāma-rūpaṁ*).² They are mutually dependent and the two together form a new being. In the *Maha Nidāna Sutta* of the Dīgha Nikāya the question was raised by the Buddha in the course of a discussion with his attendant disciple Ananda Thera as to whether the *nāma-rūpa* will develop, and grow into maturity if *viññāna* were not to descend into the mother's womb (*mātukucchiṁhi na okkamissatha*), or being entered into the mother's womb were to leave (*okkamitvā vokkamissatha*). Ananda Thera's reply was in the negative: 'Lord, the development of the embryo will not be successful'. The answer was approved by the Buddha.

According to modern biology, "A new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with the egg shell or ovum within the mother " This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of

1. Vide *Vibhāvinī Tīkā*.

2. *Samyutta Nikaya* ii. 104.

only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factor which is purely psychic.

As the *Mahāīānāsankhaya Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya points out, a conception (*gabbhassa avakkanti*) of a being takes place by the conjunction of three factors. If the mother and father come together (there should be coitus of parents), and it is the mother's proper season (the mother should have her period), and the *gandhabba* is also present (*paccupaṭṭhito hoti*) then a germ of life is planted there.

The third factor *gandhabba* is simply a term for the *viññāna*, or *paṭisandhi viññāna*, or the *saṃvattanika viññāna*, rebirth consciousness. According to Ācariya Buddhaghosa, the Commentator, *gandhabba* means the being about to enter the womb (*paccupaṭṭhito hoti*). What is meant is that a *satta*, a being, about to be born in that situation, is being driven on by the mechanism of *kamma*. It should be clearly understood that this *gandhabba* is neither a "semi-god who presides over child-conception",¹ nor a 'discarnate spirit' as implied by the Vedic *gandharva*. It is quite clear from the early Buddhist texts that there is no spirit or soul, or ego-entity going from birth to birth. It is the *viññāna* conditioned by *saṃkhāras* or *kamma* formations, that brings about the rebirth of an individual after his death.

Consciousness which is the psychic factor that determines the rebirth of an individual or being, is not something permanent in the form of a self or soul or an ego-entity. Even consciousness is conditioned and subject to change. There were many during the time of the Buddha who

1. Pali Text Society's *Pali-English Dictionary*, under the word *gandhabba*.

thought, and there are many who continue to think, that consciousness in the form of a permanent, enduring self or soul exists in man, continues through life, and at death transmigrates from one life to another, and binds life together. During the Buddha's time some metaphysicians held the view: "whatever there is to be called *citta* or *mano* or *viññāna*, that is the soul, permanent, constant, eternal, unchanging".¹

We also see a glaring instance of this in the thirty-eight discourse of the Majjhima Nikaya. One of the Buddha's own disciples, Sāti by name, held the following view: "In so far as I understand the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, it is the same consciousness, *viññāna* that fares on and continues (*sandhāvati saṃsarati*) that transmigrates and wanders about (in rebirth)". When Sāti intimated his point of view to the Buddha, the Master questioned him: "What is this consciousness, Sāti?" "It is that which expresses, which feels and experiences (*vado vedeyyo*) the result of good and evil deeds now here now there". The Buddha, however, dispelled his erroneous belief by explaining to him that apart from conditions there is no arising of consciousness, that consciousness arises depending on conditions.

Sāti erred when he said that the same consciousness continues as speaker and experiencer thus regarding consciousness as an agent behind all mental activities.

Now this consciousness referred to as the stream of consciousness (*viññāna sota*)² is not a unity that abides

1. *Dīgha Nikāya*.

2. *Dīgha Nikāya*, iii. 105, cp. *Sutta-nipāta*, 1055. Also stream of becoming (*bhava-sota*), *Samyutta Nikaya*, iv. 291.

unchanged, and continues in the same state without perishing throughout the cycle of existence. Consciousness also is conditioned, and therefore, is not permanent. It does not, as Sāti thought, transmigrate from one life to another.

The eminent American psychologist, William James, only echoes the words of the Buddha when he writes referring to consciousness: "It is nothing jointed. It flows. A 'river' or 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described . . . *Let us call it the stream of thoughts, the stream of consciousness or of subjective life*".¹ (the italics are his)

If I do not even make a passing reference to the Bhavanga aspect of Buddhist psychology I shall not be doing justice to the subject. *Bhavanga citta* or *Bhavanga sota* plays an important role in the mental life of man.

Modern psychology postulates three levels of the mind: the Conscious, the Sub-conscious, the Unconscious. The Conscious level is one of awareness. During our waking life the conscious mind works through the five channels known as the five sense faculties.

Sub-conscious stratum of the mind is the area which holds those memories that we can recall at will. It is said that the subconscious level of mental life which lies immediately below that of the conscious is a repository of memories which can be brought back into consciousness at will. The level of the unconscious is a store-house for all past experiences that cannot be recalled at will, but can, at times, on its own, manifest itself in the conscious level without any external stimulation, or under such special methods as hypnosis.

1. *Psychology: Briefer Course*, see chapter on "The stream of Consciousness".

Sigmund Freud who was chiefly concerned with the unconscious mind as the store-house of mental causes for a nervous breakdown, gives in "*Psychopathology of Every Day Life*" numerous examples of the fact of unconscious activity. Though some local scholars identify the Bhavanga citta with the sub-conscious or unconscious mind, I do not see a complete parallel. In Buddhist psychology there are no such levels of consciousness. Abhidhamma speaks of two types of mind. The *Vīti-citta* and *Bhavanga-citta*, *Vīthi-citta* is a thought process which occurs always at conscious level, that is during waking life. It works through the five sense faculties. The Bhavanga-citta operates during waking life as well as in the dreamless state of deep sleep, and therefore, it may be said that it functions below the level of consciousness. It can also be called a sub-conscious or an unconscious mental process not identical with the full range of the western concept of the sub-conscious or unconscious mind. It does not cover the entire ground of the Western conception of the sub-conscious or unconscious mind. ..

The Bhavanga which is made up of '*bhava*' (becoming or existence) and '*anga*' (cause or instrumental, rather than factor) is an essential condition for continued existence. 'Life continuum' is the closest English equivalent for the pali word Bhavanga. By reason of the existence of the Bhavanga citta, the stream of consciousness is kept going without interruption.

If our present birth here is the beginning, and our death is the end of this life, there is hardly any need to worry, and try to understand from a psychological point of view the problem of *dukkha*, the unsatisfactoriness of all empirical existence. A moral order in the universe, the reality of right and wrong, may not be of any practical

significance to us. To enjoy and gratify the senses at any cost may seem to be the sensible thing to do during this brief span of life. This view, however, does not explain the inequality of mankind. An inquiring mind will always strive to seek the cause of this inequality.

There are two principal teaching of the Buddha which should be studied from a psychological point of view. They are *kamma* and *rebirth*. Kamma is the law of moral causation that shapes the destiny of beings and brings about rebirth. Basically it is volition (*cetanā*), action prompted by will. The Buddha says: "Volition, O monks, I declare is kamma, having willed man acts by deed, word and thought."¹ Volition which is will, is the deciding factor in all our activities, good or ill. *Kamma* is the action or seed. The reaction, the effect, or fruit is known as *kamma-vipāka*. Volition may be good or bad, so actions may be wholesome or unwholesome according to their results. This endless play of action and reaction, cause and effect, seed and fruit, continues in perpetual motion, and this is becoming (*bhava*), — a continually changing process of the psycho-physical phenomena of existence discussed earlier.

Man acts through body, speech and mind; actions bring about reactions. Craving (*tanhā* skt. *trishnā*), our thirst, which is a factor of the mind, gives rise to deeds, deeds produce results, results in turn bring about new desires, new craving and thirsting. The process of cause and effect, actions and reactions, is natural law. It is a law in itself with no need for a law giver. An external agency that rewards and punishes the good and evil deeds of man has no place in Buddhist thought. Man is always changing either for good or for ill. This changing is unavoidable and

1. *Anguttara Nikāya*, iii. 415.

depends entirely on his own will and action. "This is merely the universal natural law of the conservation of energy extended to the moral domain."

It may be observed, from a psychological point of view, that Buddhism does not support the idea of repentance, for it will not do any good to oneself or others. According to Buddhism wrong doing is not regarded as a 'sin', for that word is foreign to the teaching of the Buddha. There is no such things as 'breaking the Buddha's law' because he was not a law-giver, an arbitrator or potentate who punished the bad and rewarded the good deeds of beings. The doer of the deed is responsible for his own actions; he suffers or enjoys the consequences of deeds, and it is his concern either to do good or to do bad. It must also be stated that all actions, good or ill, do not necessarily mature. One's good kamma may suppress the evil kamma and vice versa.

We must also understand that the Buddhist doctrine of kamma is not fatalism, is not a philosophical doctrine to the effect that human action is not free, but necessarily determined by motives which are regarded as external forces acting upon the will, or predetermined by God. The Buddha neither subscribed to the theory that all things are unalterably fixed; that all things happen by inevitable necessity, that is Strict Determinism (*niyati-vāda*) nor did he uphold the theory of Complete Indeterminism (*adicca-samuppanna*).

According to Buddhism there is no life after death or life before birth independent of kamma or volitional actions. Kamma is the corollary of rebirth, rebirth, on the other hand, is the corollary of kamma. Birth precedes death, and death on the other hand, precedes birth, and the pair thus accompany each other in unbroken succession. Still there

is no permanent self or soul or fixed entity that passes from birth to birth. Though man comprises a psycho-physical unit of mind and matter, the 'psyche' or mind is not a soul or self, in the sense of an enduring entity, something ready made and permanent. It is a force, a dynamic continuum, capable of storing up memories not only of this life but also of past lives.

To the scientist matter is energy in a state of stress, change without real substance. To the psychologist the 'psyche' is no more a fixed entity. And when the Buddha emphatically stressed that the so called 'being' or 'individual' is but a combination of physical and mental forces or energies, a change with continuity, did he not antedate modern science and psychology by twenty five centuries?

An individual existence is thus a succession of change, something that comes into being and passes away not remaining the same for two consecutive moments. This psycho-physical organism though undergoes incessant changes creates new psycho-physical processes every instant, thus preserving the potentiality for future organic processes and leaving no gap between one moment and the other. We live and die every moment of our lives. It is merely a coming into being and passing away like the waves of the sea.

This change of continuity which is patent to us in this life does not cease at death. The mind flux continues incessantly. It is the dynamic mind-flux that is termed as kammic energy. This mighty force, this will to live, keeps life going. Thus this perpetual stream of consciousness (*viññāna-sota*) goes on without end so long as that myriad-face thirst (*tanhā*) in the company of ignorance (*avijjā*), the crowning corruption of all our madness, generate it.

All forms of appetite are included in *tanhā*: greed, thirst, lust, burning, yearning, longing, inclination, affection, household love are some of the many terms that denote *tanhā* which in the word of the Buddha, leads to becoming (*bhava-ñetti*). Becoming which manifests itself as *dukkha*, as suffering, frustration, conflicts, painful excitement, unsatisfactoriness, is our own experience. Beings in their intense thirst for either possession, or the satisfaction of desires, become bound to the wheel of existence, are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, and securely close the door to final deliverance.

The enemy of the whole world is lust through which all evil come to living beings. It is not only greed for and attachment to pleasure caused by the senses, wealth and property, and by the wish to defeat others and conquer countries, but also attachment to ideas, views, opinions and beliefs (*dhamma-tanhā*) which often leads to calamity, and destruction and brings untold suffering to whole nations, in fact to the whole world. This *tanhā*, this craving of man, is three-fold, and the mind is urged to act under the influence of these three types of *tanhā*. Whenever craving for objects is connected with sense pleasures it is called Sensuous Craving (*kāma-tanhā*). When it is associated with the belief in eternal personal existence, then it is called Craving for Existence, for Becoming (*bhava-tanha*). It is the desire for continuing, to exist for ever, self-preservation (*jīviṇ-kāma*). When craving is associated with the belief in Self Annihilation it is called craving for non-existence, for destruction (*vibhava-tanhā*). The three-fold *tanha* or craving may be compared with that of the Freudian conception of the *eros*, *libido*, and *thanatos*.

According to Buddhism many are the defilements (*kilesa*) of the mind, but the root causes of all evil are: lust or

craving; hatred or ill-will; delusion or ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*). They are the motive forces by which man acts. Actions performed through these defilements bring about repeated existence, for it is said “without abandoning lust hate and delusion one is not free from birth.¹ When a person totally eradicates the trio he is liberated from the shackles of *samsāra*, repeated existence. He is free in the full sense of the word. He no longer has any quality which will cause him to be reborn as a living being, because he has realized Nibbana, the entire cessation of becoming (*bhava-nirodha*); he has transcended common or worldly activities, and has raised himself to a state above the world while yet living in the world; his actions are issueless, are kammically ineffective; for they are not motivated by the trio, by mental defilements. He is immune to all evil, to all defilements of the heart. In him there are no motivating underlying tendencies (*anusaya*); he has given up both good and evil (*puñña pāpa pahīna*)²; he is not worried by the past, the future; nor even the present. He clings to nothing in the world, and so is not troubled. He is not perturbed by the vicissitudes of life. His mind is unshaken by contact with worldly contingencies; he is sorrowless, taintless and secure (*asokaṃ, virajaṃ, khemaṃ*)³. Thus Nibbana is a ‘state’ realizable in this very life (*diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbāna*). The thinker, the inquiring mind, will not find it difficult to understand this state which can be postulated only of the Arahāt and not of any other being either in this world or in the realm of heavenly enjoyment.

1. *Anguttara Nikaya*. ii. i. 6

2. *Dhammapada*, 39.

3. *Mangala sutta, Sutta-nipāta*, 270.

As the Buddha has so clearly pointed out: “*Whatever there is of evil, connected with evil, belonging to evil, all issue from mind* (literally, mind precedes them all : *mano-pubbangamā*)”. “*Whatever there is of good, connected with good, belonging to good, all issue from mind*”.¹

Hence the need for man to scrutinize his own mind with a view to understanding how the human mind works, how thoughts arise and pass away. As sigmund Freud says: “Psychological changes only come about very slowly. If they occur quickly and suddenly it is a bad sign”. Knowing good thoughts as good, and evil as evil an attempt should be made to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome thoughts not yet arisen; to abandon the evil thoughts already arisen; to produce and develop good thoughts that have not yet arisen; and to maintain the good thoughts already arisen. This is the function of Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*), a doing in the mind: to prevent, to abandon, to develop and maintain (*samvara, paṇāna, bhāvanā anurakkhana*).² Thus in Buddhism even ethics is studied from the psychological point of view. This emphasis on right effort by the Buddha explains in unmistakable language that Buddhism is not a philosophy of pessimism, a teaching for the feeble-minded who looks at things from the most unfavourable point of view, but that it is a true warrior's religion.

Hard it is to give up what lures, and holds us in thrall, and hard it is to exorcise the evil spirits that haunt the human heart in the shape of unwholesome thoughts. These evils are the manifestation of lust hate and delusion discussed earlier. Until one attains the very crest of purity by constant training of the mind, one cannot defeat these hosts

1. *Anguttara Nikaya*. p. II

2. *Anguttara N.* ii. 15 *suttas* 13, 14.

completely. The mere abandoning of outward things, fasting and so forth, these do not tend to purify a man; these things do not make a man holy and harmless. Self-torture is one extreme which the Buddha in his first proclamation of the dhamma cast off as wrong, and so also did he reject sensual indulgence calling it ignoble. Avoiding these two extremes the Buddha revealed to the world the Middle Way, the Ancient Path, which still beckons the weary pilgrim to the haven of Nirvana's security and peace.

Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom or Insight (*sīla*, *samādhi paññā*) are the cardinal teaching which when fully cultivated raise man from lower to higher levels of mental life; lead him from darkness to light; from passion to dispassion; from turmoil to tranquillity. These three are not isolated reactions, but integral parts of the path. This idea is crystallized in that oft-quoted but ever fresh admonition of the Buddhas of all ages (Dhammapada, 183).

*“Sabba pāpassa akaranam
Kusalassa upasampadā
Sacitta pariyodapanam
Etaṃ Buddhānasāsanam”*

*“The giving up of all evil
The cultivation of the good
The cleansing of one's mind
This is the Buddhas' teaching.”*

I think we have now sufficiently dealt with *“The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism”*. In conclusion I wish to take your minds back to the introductory paragraph in this talk where I stated that the life story of Sir Baron Jayatilaka richly illustrates the power of the human mind. The one lesson that we all can learn from his unique life is that we

can improve and develop our minds on the lines indicated in Buddhist psychology. Mere learning bereft of the elevating and purifying influence of a mind trained in the Buddhist way of life carries us no where. Let us hope that the life story of Sir Baron Jayatilaka, and this talk inspired by that life story, will help us to rise above the passions and prejudices, great and small, which beset us at every turn in life, and introduce us to those higher realms of noble living which the Buddha has been at pains to emphasize. May we all leading that higher life attain the bliss of nibbana.

Be loving and be pitiful
And well controlled in virtue's ways,
Strenuous, bent upon the goal,
And onward ever bravely press.

That danger doth in dalliance lie:-
That earnestness is sure and safe :-
This when you see, then cultivate
The Eightfold Path, so shall ye touch,¹
So make your own, the Deathless Way.

—*Psalms of the Brethren*, 979, 980

1. 'Touch' — i. e. 'realize'.

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WE OF TODAY, in view of this wonderful gift of the Dhamma that has been vouchsafed to us, cannot be merely recipients. We must be givers too. We have had the lofty privilege of coming to know something of the Teachings of the Buddha. We live in a Buddha-era, that is at a time when the Teachings of a Buddha are still remembered and are of significance. This alone would make it incumbent on us to spread this Teaching of Peace, inner and outer, as far and wide and as faithfully as we can.

I. B. Horner

President,

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The Buddha's Teaching on Unselfish Joy

Four Essays

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M U D I T A

The Buddha's Teaching on Unselfish Joy

Essays by

**Nyanaponika Thera, Natasha Jackson,
C. F. Knight, L. R. Oates**

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The Sublime State of Unselfish Joy (Muditā-Brahmavihāra)

THE AWAKENED ONE, THE BUDDHA, SAID :

Here, o Monks, a disciple lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Unselfish Joy, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, everywhere and equally, he continues to pervade with a heart of Unselfish Joy, abundant, grown great, measureless, without hostility or ill-will.

Introduction

IS UNSELFISH JOY PRACTICABLE ?

Nyanaponika Thera

THE virtue of MUDITĀ *, i. e., finding joy in the happiness and success of others, has not received sufficient attention either in expositions of Buddhist ethics, or in the meditative development of the four Sublime States (brahma-vihāra), of which Muditā is one. It was, therefore, thought desirable to compile this little book of essays and texts and to mention in this introduction a few supplementary features of this rather neglected subject.

It has been rightly stated that it is relatively easier for man to feel compassion or friendliness in situations which demand them, than to cherish a spontaneous feeling of shared joy, outside a narrow circle of one's family and friends. It mostly requires a deliberate effort to identify oneself with the joys and success of others. Yet, the capacity of doing so has psychological roots in man's nature which may be even deeper than his compassionate responses. There is firstly the fact that people *do* like to feel happy (with—or without—good reason) and would prefer it to the shared sadness of compassion. Man's gregarious nature (his 'sociability') already gives him some familiarity with shared emotions and shared pleasure, though mostly on a much lower

* Usually rendered by Unselfish, Sympathetic or Altruistic Joy.

level than that of our present concern. There is also in man (and in some animals) not only an aggressive impulse, but also a natural bent towards mutual aid and co-operative action. Furthermore, there is the fact that happiness is infectious and an unselfish joy can easily grow out of it. Children readily respond by their own smiles and happy mood to smiling faces and happiness around them. Though children can be quite jealous and envious at times, they also can visibly enjoy it when they have made a play mate happy by a little gift and they are then quite pleased with themselves. Let parents and educators wisely encourage this potential in the child. Then this seed will quite naturally grow into a strong plant in the adolescent and the adult, maturing from impulsive and simple manifestations into the Sublime State of Unselfish Joy (*muditā-brahmavihāra*). Thus, here too, the child may become 'the father of man'. Such education towards joy with others should, of course, not be given in a dry didactic manner, but chiefly in a practical way by gently making the child observe, appreciate and enjoy the happiness and success of others, and by trying himself to create a little joy in others. This can be aided by acquainting the child with examples of selfless lives and actions for his joyful admiration of them (and these, of course, should not be limited to Buddhist history). This feature should not be absent in Buddhist youth literature and school books, throughout all age groups. And this theme should be continued in Buddhist magazines and literature for adults.

Admittedly, the negative impulses in man, like aggression, envy, jealousy etc., are much more in evidence than his positive tendencies towards communal

service, mutual aid, unselfish joy, generous appreciation of the good qualities of his fellow-men, etc. Yet, as all these positive features are definitely found in man (though rarely developed), it is quite realistic to appeal to them, and activate and develop that potential by whatever means we can, in our personal relationships, in education, etc. "If it were impossible to cultivate the Good, I would not tell you to do so," said the Buddha. This is, indeed, a positive, optimistic assurance.

If this potential for unselfish joy is widely and methodically encouraged and developed, starting with the Buddhist child (or: for that matter, with any child) and continued with adults (individuals and Buddhist groups, including the Sangha), the seed of *Muditā* can grow into a strong plant which will blossom forth and find fruition in many other virtues, as a kind of beneficial 'chain reaction': magnanimity, tolerance, generosity (of both heart and purse), friendliness and compassion. When unselfish joy grows, many noxious weeds in the human heart will die a natural death (or will, at least, shrink): jealousy and envy, ill-will in various degrees and manifestations, cold-heartedness, miserliness (also in one's concern for others), and so forth. Unselfish joy can, indeed, act as a powerful agent in releasing dormant forces of the Good in the human heart.

We know very well how envy and jealousy (the chief opponents of unselfish joy) can poison a man's character as well as the social relationships on many levels of his life. They can paralyze the productivity of society, on governmental, professional, industrial and commercial levels. Should not, therefore, all effort be made to cultivate their antidote, that is *Muditā*?

Muditā will also vitalize and ennoble charitable and social work. While compassion (*karuṇā*) is, or should be, the inspiration for it, unselfish joy should be its boon companion. Muditā will prevent compassionate action from being marred by a condescending and patronizing attitude which often repels or hurts the recipient. Also, when active compassion and unselfish joy go together, it will be less likely that works of service turn into dead routine performed indifferently. Indifference, listlessness, boredom (all nuances of the Pāli term *arati*) are said to be the 'distant enemies' of Muditā. They can be vanquished by an alliance of compassion and unselfish joy.

In him who gives and helps, the joy he finds in such action will enhance the blessings imparted by these wholesome deeds: unselfishness will become more and more natural to him, and such ethical unselfishness will help him towards a better appreciation and the final realization of the Buddha's central doctrine of No-self (*Anattā*). He will also find it confirmed that he who is joyful in his heart will gain easier the serenity of a concentrated mind. These are, indeed, great blessings with the cultivation of joy with others' happiness can bestow !

Nowadays, moral exhortations fall increasingly on deaf ears, whether they are motivated theologically or otherwise. Preaching morals with an admonishing finger is now widely resented and rejected. This fact worries greatly the churches and educators in the West. But there are ample indications that this may, more or less, happen also in the Buddhist countries of the East where ethics is still taught and preached in the old hortatory

style and mostly in a rather stereotype and unimaginative way, with little reference to present-day moral and social problems. Hence modern youth will increasingly feel that such “moralizings” are not their concern. In fact, within the frame of the Buddhist teachings which do not rely on the authoritarian commandments of God and church, but on man’s innate capacity for self-purification, such conventionalized presentation of ethics which chiefly relies on over-worked scriptural references, must appear quite incongruous and will prove increasingly ineffective for young and old alike. The need for reform in this field is urgent and of vital importance.

It was also with this situation in view, that the preceding observations have stressed the fact that a virtue like unselfish and altruistic joy has its natural roots in the human heart and can be of immediate benefit to the individual and society. In other words, the approach to a modern presentation of Buddhist ethics should be pragmatic and contemporary, enlivened by a genuine and warm-hearted human concern.

In this troubled world of ours, there are plenty of opportunities for thoughts and deeds of compassion; but there seem to be all too few for sharing in others’ joy. Hence it is necessary for us to *create* new opportunities for *unselfish joy*, by the active practice of *loving-kindness* (*Mettā*) and *compassion* (*Karunā*), in deeds, words and meditative thought. Yet, in a world that can never be without disappointments and failures, we must also arm ourselves with the *equanimity* (*Upekkhā*) which will protect us from discouragement and feelings of frustration, should we encounter difficulties in our efforts to expand the realm of Unselfish Joy.

UNSELFISH JOY : A NEGLECTED VIRTUE

by

Natasha Jackson

Muditā, Unselfish or Sympathetic Joy is one of the most neglected topics within the whole range of the Buddha Dhamma, probably because of its subtlety and of the wealth of nuances latent within it. Besides getting honourable mention within the context of The Four Divine Abidings (Brahma Vihāras), few commentators have had much more to say about it apart from explaining that it means “sympathetic joy at the good fortune or success of others”. Only one notable writer, Conze (in “Buddhist Thought in India”), has had the insight to suggest that *Muditā*, i. e. sympathy, is a pre-requisite of *Mettā* (loving-kindness) and of *Karuṇā* (compassion). He thus names appreciation as one of the components of *Muditā*. How right he is! For one cannot appreciate another person without seeing some good in him. If one does not appreciate the other person in the slightest degree, one would be hard put to it to experience joy at any stroke of good fortune or success that may befall him. To simulate feelings of pleasure when, in fact, one feels none, would be the grossest of hypocrisy. Thus, *Muditā* tacitly implies looking for the good in others and learning to recognize and admire what good there is.

Likewise, if one has a misanthropic view of mankind, regarding people as essentially evil and not worth being concerned about, one cannot, on the face of it, make much headway with any of The Four Divine

Abidings. To have a sympathetic attitude towards human beings does not betoken an idealization of man, but rather a realistic appraisal: that, though often in error and grievously at fault, man has, nevertheless, the potential to rise above his darkness and ignorance into the light of knowledge and even to undreamed of heights of Nirvana. Unless one has that measure of faith and confidence in mankind which the Buddha himself had, the practice of Mettā and Karuṇā is impossible. Thus, the broadest and most simple aspect of Muditā as sympathy towards mankind, is also the most basic and important.

To regard Muditā as being relevant only on certain relatively rare occasions when our friends and acquaintances come into a bonanza of some kind, is to fragment it and render it trivial, thereby missing the essential matrix. It should not be regarded as a matter of turning on a tap from which Muditā will gush forth. There should be, in a certain sense, a quiet stream of sympathy and understanding flowing within the individual all the time. Though, to be sure, it does also mean developing the capacity to participate in another person's finest hour and doing so spontaneously and sincerely. It is indeed a depressing fact that people are much more ready to sympathize with the misfortunes of others than to rejoice with them, a psychological quirk in people which wrung from Montaigne the ironic statement :

“There is something altogether not too displeasing in the misfortunes of our friends”.

Turning back to the essential matrix of Muditā as sympathy towards mankind, faith in its potential for good and acceptance of its worthwhileness, this is precisely what is lacking in the world today. There is

abroad a kind of cosmic gloom and, among some large sections of people, a feeling of defeatism. Probably the scene is largely coloured by the shadow of the hydrogen bomb and the various other horrible weapons of destruction which we know the nations are so busy in manufacturing. All in all, too much has happened in too short a time. More scientific and technological discoveries have been telescoped into the last fifty (or is it thirty?) years than in the previous five hundred, and the total result is, at the moment, of dubious benefit to humanity as a whole, though of inestimable worth to the new millionaires who have managed to muscle in on the expanding economy. Electric and nuclear power, the spectacular forging ahead of communication, transport and industry have brought in their wake such negative by-products as over-population, more and more urbanization into colossal, concentrated centres, such as Tokyo, New York and London (and even Sydney and Melbourne), which, in turn, has given rise to other unfortunate results, both physical and psychological: pollution from industrial waste, destruction of natural resources; individual de-socialization, alienation, stress, as evidenced by the delinquency figures, the drift to drugs, character disorders, feelings of the meaninglessness of life, rise in crime, wanton destructiveness (a sure symptom of frustration and an un-lived life), despair, suicide. We know that such ills have always existed in society, and that probably they always will to some degree, but the frightening thing about the present situation is that they are insidiously increasing, in spite of the fact that many people, and especially the youth, have never had it so good. As it is, man feels more insecure than ever, more uncertain and lost. Viewing these symptoms, many people throughout the world have

drawn the conclusion that man has arrived at the period of moral decline and disintegration and that humanity has become so depraved as to be hopelessly beyond redemption or recall. Such a view has always been characteristic of old age. We can, with a certain degree of amusement read the lines:

“To whom do I speak today ?

Brothers are evil,

Friends today are not of love.

To whom do I speak today ?

Hearts are thievish,

Every man seizes his neighbour's goods.

To whom do I speak today ?

The gentle man perishes,

The bold-faced goes everywhere . . .

To whom do I speak today ?

When a man should arouse wrath by his evil conduct,

He stirs all men to mirth, although his iniquity
is wicked . . .”

The above admonition was composed in Ancient Egypt during the Middle Kingdom, thousands of years ago, but the words are those which every generation hears.

There is a proneness in periods of crisis and transition, to conjure up in the mind a phantasy of a previous golden age, when people were of sterling worth and life was lived in accordance with the noble virtues. But, we may well ask, when was there such an age, and where? If people who harbour such quaint notions were to read history, they would realize that such a belief is just about as valid as that there ever was a time “when flowers bloomed for ever and sweethearts were

always true", in the words of the old song. Ancient history and the Middle Ages are definitely OUT as far as morality is concerned. Without going so far back, merely a couple of hundred years, Smollett wrote this of eighteenth century England :

"Commerce and manufacture flourished to such a degree of increase as has never been known in this island; but this advantage was attended with an irresistible tide of luxury and excess which flowed through all degrees of the people, breaking down all the bounds of civil policy, and opening a way for licentiousness and immorality. The highways were infested with rapine and assassination; the cities teemed with the brutal votaries of lewdness, intemperance and profligacy."

In the nineteenth century (relatively recently), Wordsworth wrote :

"The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore.

Plain living and high thinking are no more;
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws."

And James Hemming, a modern writer in his book "Individual Morality" :

"Nineteenth-century London was frequently shaken by the destructive antics of informally organized hooligan gangs of young aristocrats. Those young roughs,

having idled away their days, spent their nights beating people up, smashing up coffee stalls, alarming women and such like—the Bucks, the Corinthians, and all their imitators and hangers-on. Such bands were following, somewhat less cruelly, in the tradition of the nefarious Mohocks, who terrorized eighteenth-century London.”

Sexual propriety? Quoting again from Hemming:

“Brothels in the nineteenth century were big business, and laws to forbid living on the immoral earnings of women, after several rebuffs in Parliament, did not reach the statute books till 1885.”.

But this was in England, the most progressive country in Europe. There is no evidence for believing that conditions were better on the Continent.

Understandably, twenty-five years after World War II, we are still appalled by the memory of the Nazi gas-chambers and the genocide which was their aim. This is by no means an isolated instance of genocide. History bears witness to similar incidents of destructive hate, culminating in mass murder. The Albigenses were wiped out to a man, and in 1572, at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, thousands of Huguenots were slaughtered, Pope Gregory XIII commanding bonfires to be lit and a medal to be struck in celebration! The idea that the mass destruction of one's ideological enemies is justified was already old in the days of the Old Testament. Saul was commanded:

“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass,”

All of the foregoing is not intended as apologetics justifying violence, bloodbaths or individual or collective acts of immorality but merely to dispel the myth that there was ever a previous idyllic phase, when man could have said with some semblance of truth:

“God’s in His Heaven
And all’s right with the world.”

So, let us lay to rest forever the belief that in the past men were truer, kinder, more upright and generally more worthy than they are today. Let us give that piece of romantic fiction the respectable funeral that it deserves. Our ancestors and predecessors were no better than we are, and we are certainly not worse than they were. In many respects we have improved considerably on the ways of our forbears. Actually, there has been a great deal of progress, considering that slavery hung on in England until 1772, in America till 1863, serfdom in Russia till 1861. And, inspite of the injustices and lack of moral scruples that still exist, there is more awareness, kindness and sensitivity in many human societies than there has ever been before. Today when a national disaster of great magnitude occurs in a country, quite often the rest of the world rallies around and helps - perhaps not to the extent that it should, but none the less, to *some* extent. Such a broadening expansion of the human conscience would have been deemed a Utopian ideal in former times and impossible.

When acts of genocide were perpetrated in the past, people just accepted it: that was that, and there was nothing to be done about it. In our time, the whole world was revolted by the Nazi-gas-chambers, eventually

rose against the loathsome disease of Fascism and smashed it, even though it took the combined might of the Allied forces five years of bitter conflict to do so.

However, in the past, without exception, whatever was inflicted upon a people, they mostly took. Today they don't—they protest, they demonstrate, they kick up a fuss. They have become articulate because they have realized that the greatest evil of all is not poverty, racialism or war but powerlessness. Naturally, such an unexpected show of interest in public affairs is embarrassing to governments accustomed to an inert and docile population and there is some wistful talk by die-hards of "the silent majority", but the present indications are that "the silent majority" is likely to become a silent minority in the face of such urgent problems as over-population, and destruction of natural resources, which, if left unchecked, will make the earth uninhabitable within a foreseeable future. However, against this general tendency is the lamentable fact that nothing was done about the rape of Tibet, and even now there are no large-scale or forceful protests being made about the genocide that is being practised in that country by the Chinese.

So, far from feeling dejected and dispirited about mankind, we should be hopeful and buoyant. There would be infinitely more cause for alarm and despair if people were as easy to manipulate as sheep or merely apathetic. The arguing and the restlessness throughout the world is about the principles on which we should run our lives, a struggle for values other than the profit motive, for ways and means to make possible greater co-operation between individuals and nations, and for

moral maturity in coping with man's new powers and responsibilities. People discuss, argue, petition, protest, demonstrate because of their sympathy, compassion and love for mankind. It is very difficult to differentiate between the three or to recognize precisely the line of demarcation where one ends and the other begins, because they are illimitables. There are, of course, others who see in these conflicts only hatred but this view is hardly tenable because it is much easier and much more comfortable to remain uninvolved, drifting with the current, not swimming against it.

The Ven. Nyanaponika has summed up the interdependence of the Four Divine Abidings in the following quotation :

“Love imparts to Equanimity its selflessness, its boundless nature and even its fervour . . .

Compassion guards Equanimity from falling into cold indifference and keeps it from indolent or selfish isolation. Until Equanimity has reached perfection, Compassion urges it to enter again and again into the battlefields of the world.

Sympathetic Joy gives to Equanimity the mild serenity that softens its stern appearance. It is the divine smile on the face of the Enlightened One.”

From “The Four Sublime States” in “The Wheel” No. 6.

*From METTA, The Journal of the
Buddhist Federation of Australia,
Vol. 12, No. 2.*

MUDITA

C. F. Knight

A feature of the Buddha-Dhamma is cognizance of the pairs of opposites in the training to get beyond them. The Buddha's method of mental training and development was to teach by first defining unwholesome or unskilful thoughts, words, and deeds, or practices which characterize many of man's proclivities, and then to propound their opposites of a wholesome or skilful nature as an achievement to be sought after for the abolition of them both, eventually, when even the good must be left behind as well as the evil; when even the Raft of Dhamma is to be abandoned—*after* crossing the Flood of Samsara. The trouble with so many of the unwise is their desire to abandon the Raft of Dhamma *before* reaching the further shore. The Buddha's method of expounding the negative and the positive, the passive and the dynamic aspects of behaviour, in both abstract and concrete terms, is obviously to create awareness of what is to be sought after and nurtured.

The basic ignorance featured in Buddhism is not so much a rejection of the truth as it is a failure to perceive it. It is, as it were, a "blind spot" in our perception akin to the physical damage of a section of the brain or the nervous system which results in impaired vision or locomotion. In other words, the depth of our ignorance may be measured by our lack of consciousness of it.

This is why it is so necessary that we should see and recognise our failings and short-comings if we are to eradicate them. It is also important that we should be

mindful of “the good that has arisen”, and to foster and develop it to the point of perfection. To realize our imperfections is the beginning of wisdom—the first light to shine on the darkness of our ignorance. While we are blissfully unaware of unwholesome states of mind within ourselves, such states will continue to flourish, and their roots will dig deeper into our very being. Just so too, in our relationships with our fellowmen, the unperceived evils will be repeated unconsciously and unrecognized, building up a cumulative unhappy future for us under the retributive causal law of karma.

In dealing with *muditā*, or altruistic joy, we are once more to some extent frustrated with the inadequacy of translations for “brahma-vihāra” or “appamañña”—the former as “sublime or divine abode”, and the latter as “boundless state”. To reduce either of these terms to modern idiom is difficult. The four characteristics grouped under these terms are: loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity, extended to universal application. In their perfection they *are* “sublime” and “boundless”, and to be “dwelt in” as one speaks of “dwelling in peace”, so we will leave it at that.

As with all perfections, these four desirable characteristics are the antidotes to the poisons of their opposite imperfections, and here is where the recognition of their opposites is apposite. Less has been said or written of *muditā* than of the other three of these four characteristics, perhaps, again, because of its somewhat clumsy translation. While loving-kindness and compassion are objective, reaching out to all sentient beings, *muditā* and equanimity are subjective, or personal in their application.

It may seem strange at first, until we critically examine the source, to speak of either selfish or unselfish joy. Joy is an emotional ecstasy arising from pleasure. It is something intensely personal. While we can and do share our pleasures to some extent with others, the resultant impact of them on various personalities will vary as widely as the personalities. At times what may give rise to rapturous joy in us, when shared, may give rise to positive aversion in another.

A pertinent example of this would be the reactionary effect of certain music on people of differing tastes. While it is not uncommon for some of the modern generation to literally swoon in ecstasy under the influence of the combination of discordant and dissonant notes and chords, others find them anything but entertaining or pleasurable. Here we have what might be termed "selfish joy" on the part of the participants, by those who have to suffer most unwilling participation. For all that, within the group enjoying it, there is a reciprocity of delight, happiness, and rapture between the entertainers and the entertained. Superficially, then, we could say it is not the phenomenon of joy in itself, that is either selfish or altruistic by nature, but that time, place, and circumstance must all be considered in relation one to the others.

However, to bring *muditā* within the ambit of the Buddha-Dhamma we need to go deeper into the necessity for cultivating this perfection. What are the opposites to be eliminated by its cultivation?

We never tire of asserting the interdependence of every aspect of the Buddha-Dhamma, no matter which particular facet is being discussed. We have already

stated that ignorance is failure of perception, and it is true that greed and hatred do arise through the non-perception of their source and subsequent results; that basically craving born of ignorance is the culprit, and that the purpose of the Buddha-Dhamma is to eliminate craving. It is craving that gives rise to jealousy, envy, covetousness, avarice, and greed in all of its manifestations. Here it is that *muditā* when practised and developed becomes a “sublime” and “boundless” state of mind to be “dwelt in” as a corrective characteristic for their removal.

One of the most frequently used similes by the Buddha was that of fire. At times it was the destructive quality of fire that was likened to the destructive nature of the passions. At other times it was the ardent nature of fire that was to be emulated in the pursuance of the path to holiness. In its uncontrolled existence fire is a destructive danger. Under control it is one of man's greatest boons and blessings. In either case it was a motivating force to be reckoned with, at all times active, potent, and energetic.

The three roots of evil, greed, hatred, and delusion, are also known as “the three fires”. On one occasion the Buddha and his band of monks were for the time staying on Gaya Head, a mountain near the city of Gaya. From their elevated position they watched one of the great fires that from time to time ravaged the countryside. This inspired what is known as “The Fire Sermon”, which is the third recorded discourse delivered by the Buddha subsequent to his Enlightenment, and at the beginning of his long ministry. To the Buddha, the world of Samsara was like the flaming plains below.

“Everything is burning”, said the Buddha, “burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of stupidity.” (Vin. 21).

It is these three fires that gives rise to jealousy, envy, covetousness, avarice and greed. The craving for possessions, the craving for sensual pleasures, the begrudged success of others, the hatred that is begotten by the gains of others, the odious comparison of greater status compared with our humble circumstances, these are the “fires” that burn within us to our undoing.

It is now evident why *muditā* is such an important characteristic to be cultivated. When we can view the success of others with the same equanimity, and to the same extent, as we would extend *mettā* and *karuṇā*—loving-kindness and compassion—to those who suffer grief and distress, sadness and tribulation, sorrow and mourning, then we are beginning to exercise *muditā*, and are in the process of eradicating greed and craving. Developed still further, we can reach the stage of sharing with others their joy of possession, their financial or social successes, their elevation to positions of civic or national importance, or their receipt of titles and honorifics. In such a manner *muditā* is counteractive to conceits of all kinds, and its growth and development checks craving’s grip.

Until we have developed this subjective characteristic within ourselves how can we develop the objective characteristics of *mettā* and *karuṇā*? The accumulated possessions, results of our greed, may give us the pleasure and the happiness of the miser gloating over his hoard of gold. The happiness born of shared

pleasures, shared love, shared possessions, shared delights in another's success, will surpass the meagre selfish happiness of the miser.

Unselfish joy multiplies in ratio to the extention of its application, quite apart from its purifying effect on our own lives.

In Nyanamoli's translation of Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* he uses 'gladness' for *muditā*, with the footnote : "Muditā—gladness—as one of the divine abidings is always used in the sense of gladness at others' success". Buddhaghosa illustrates this by saying: "On seeing or hearing about a dear person being happy, cheerful and glad, gladness can be aroused thus: 'This being is indeed glad. How good ! How excellent !' Just as he would be glad on seeing a dear and beloved person, so he pervades all beings with gladness."

In "The Analysis of the Sixfold Sense-field" (*Maj-Nik.* 137) the Buddha speaks of the six joys connected with renunciation. While such joys are subjective by nature, they are devoid of any taint of egoistic craving that could give rise to the cankers of jealousy, envy, covetousness, or greed. These joys arise on the realization of the impermanence of material shapes, sounds, smells, flavours, touches, and mental states, and the renunciation of attachment to them.

From METTA, Vol. 12, No. 2

THE NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF "MUDITA"

L. R. Oates

Altruistic joy is one of the four "sublime states" of mind—friendliness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity—which together form one related group among the various spiritual or physical exercises generally described as meditation or contemplation. These all have as their common aim the attainment of mental calm or equanimity, which is intended in turn to foster the development of liberating insight. "A still mind, like still water, yields a clear reflection of what is before it." This is why this particular series ends with equanimity, but the route by which it is attained in this case is different from that traversed for the most of the other themes used as a focus for concentration.

The others, such a meditation on the breath, on death, on visual objects (*kasīṇa*) or on the Buddha, the Doctrine and Order of the Enlightened One, are entirely concerned with the self-cultivation of the meditator. Most of these themes are abstract or inanimate, while the Buddha and the Order (in the strict sense applicable here) have transcended any power of ours to help or hinder them. So the only person concerned or affected in these forms of training is the meditator. It was doubtless to encourage those wrestling by these means with their own inner weaknesses or conflicts that the following verse of the *Dhammapada* were uttered:

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“Let no one neglect his own task for the sake of another’s, however great; let him, after he has discerned his own task, devote himself to his task.”

(verse 166.)

But if this were the whole story it would be difficult for such self-cultivation to serve in turn as a basis for the freedom from bondage to the self-concept, which is the main characteristic of the development of insight. Indeed, it was the recognition of the dangers of self-preoccupation, or self-righteousness, liable to arise in these often acute struggles for self-discipline, that impelled the more extreme exponents of the Pure Land school of Buddhism to abandon self-cultivation in favour of the less exacting path of reliance on the Buddha’s transforming grace. But the cultivation of the “sublime states” represents a less radical form of compensation which, while compatible with other practices, can help to broaden the meditator’s perspective in order to achieve a mode of equanimity which does not imply withdrawal into oneself or indifference to others.

The starting point here, of course, is on the ethical plane in the practice of generosity in practical ways (*dāna*) which, in order to become interiorized and thereby go beyond mere outward form, must be grounded in an attitude of friendliness (*mettā*) for all beings without distinction. Since this outlook implies the recognition that all beings are subject to joys and sorrows just as we are, it finds a natural development in sympathy, that is to say, compassion for their sorrows and joy in their blessings.

The former of these seems much the easier to achieve, since it is possible to feel compassion for suffering even in the absence of any positive friendliness for the sufferer, whereas it is only possible to share genuinely in another's joy if there is some element of true affection or friendliness present. This is perhaps why, on a much lower level of sensitivity, the reporting of news seems so heavily concentrated on the side of crimes and disasters, which are perhaps felt more likely to arouse interest than happier events and deeds. If the latter arouse any interest at all, it is likely to be spiced with envy or cynicism.

Not only does genuine joy in the prosperity of others require some element of affection—it requires this to be of a quite high order. A great deal of what passes for love is really aimed at mere emotional gratification on the part of the lover, for whom the “beloved” is little more than a prop for acting out some drama satisfying a purely subjective need—the beloved's own needs being treated less seriously. Indeed, even apart from outright commercialization, a certain habit of bargaining with affections seems remarkably widespread, when one begins to take notice of it.

In the light of this, the ability to feel a genuine joy in another's happiness, equal to one's satisfaction with one's own, represents a truly ‘sublime state’. So it is not surprising that in the history of Buddhism, which cultivated this attitude systematically, there arose an aspiration to share with others not only one's material resources, but the spiritual resources described as merit. This aspiration follows naturally enough from the basic theory as to what merit is. Merit is the accumulation of

tendencies resulting from enlightened deeds which, according to the law of moral causation (the law of karma), conduce to the future happiness of the doer.

“Here he is joyful, hereafter he is joyful, in both worlds the well-doer is joyful. ‘I have done good’ is the thought that makes him happy. Still greater is his joy when he goes to states of bliss.”

If the doer is still in a state where only purely personal forms of satisfaction are possible, the fruits of merit can only take this form. But suppose he loves even one being so much that, if that being is in some state of deprivation, he can only be made happy by the improvement of that being's lot, then the merit which is due to him can only take effect by benefitting him through that other's welfare. The wider his altruism expands, so that purely personal gratifications no longer adequately satisfy him, the wider must be the range of the benefit which his own merit would need to bring to others if it is to fulfil its defined function of bringing happiness to him. At the same time, his altruistic tendencies will ensure that he will have vastly more merit due to him, so his resources will tend to become commensurate with the aspirations, for example, of Santideva, when he says :

“May I be an alleviator of the sorrows of all beings and a divine medicine to those afflicted by disease. May I be the benefactor and bringer of peace to them until all their bodily ailments and mental tribulations are at the end.”

The principle of the sharing or transference of merit, so much stressed in Mahayana Buddhism (though

not unknown in Theravadin practices) is sometimes objected to by Western Buddhists because of a superficial resemblance to the Christian doctrine of atonement, which they have rejected. But the principles entailed are not really identical, since the Christian doctrine is based on an essential distinction between the roles of the Creator and the created, while the Buddhist sharing of merit arises from a combination of the definition of merit and of the nature of altruistic joy.

It has a further importance too, in that it anticipates the emancipation to be derived from insight into the emptiness of the self-concept, that is to say, awakening to the emptiness of the concepts "I" and "mine" in terms of ultimate truth. On this level, the description "mine" as applied to merit will finally be seen to be as inapplicable as in the case of any other assumed possession. This was already explicitly set out in one of the Buddha's earliest discourses, "The Marks of the Not-self", in which he taught his first five disciples to contemplate each of the five components of personality in the terms: "This is not mine; this am I not; this is not my self." The fourth of these components is the aggregate of mental tendencies or activities, which include merit and demerit. Even on a lower plane than that of perfect insight, it can be seen that our deeds are not exclusively ours, because no one acts in absolute isolation, so that every act involves some stimulus or opportunity arising from activity of others. On the other hand, a too persistent insistence on the individual nature of merit can only impede the ultimate awakening to the Not-self.

This has some bearing, too, on the reason why friendliness, compassion, and altruistic joy are regarded

as leading to an equanimity which does not imply an indifference to the joys and sorrows of others. In the absence of such a conclusion, the alternate sharing of joys and sorrows, like these emotions arising on one's own account, would be as endless as the world-cycles which it is the Buddhist aspiration to transcend. The goal of the "divine states" is that the aspirant, who in process achieves the role of a Bodhisattva in a two-way empathy with others by his perfect sharing of their joys and sorrows, is in a position to radiate to them a stability which in turn will help them to be less subject to their own emotional vicissitudes. In this way, he and they are liberated together, each sustaining the other.

From METTA, Vol. 12, No. 2

THE MEDITATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF UNSELFISH JOY

From "The Path of Purification"

(Visuddhi-Magga)

One who begins the development of Unselfish Joy should not start with a dearly beloved person, a neutral person or a hostile person. For it is not the mere fact that a person is dearly beloved, which makes him an immediate cause of developing Unselfish Joy, and still less so a neutral or hostile person. Persons of the opposite sex and those who are dead are not suitable subjects for this meditation.

A very close friend, however, can be a suitable subject. One who is called in the commentaries an affectionate companion; for he is always in a joyous mood: he laughs first and speaks afterwards. He should be the first to be pervaded with Unselfish Joy. Or on seeing or hearing about a dear person being happy, cheerful and joyous, Unselfish Joy can be aroused thus: 'This being, verily, is happy! How good, how excellent!' For this is what is referred to in the Vibhanga: "And how does a bhikkhu dwell pervading one direction with his heart endued with unselfish joy? Just as he would be joyful on seeing a dear and beloved person, so he pervades all beings with unselfish joy" (Vibhanga 274).

But if his affectionate friend or the dear person was happy in the past but is now unlucky and unfortunate, then unselfish joy can still be aroused by remembering his past happiness; or by anticipating that he will be happy and successful again in the future.

Having thus aroused Unselfish Joy with respect to a dear person, the meditator can then direct it towards a neutral one, and after that towards a hostile one.

But if resentment towards the hostile one arises in him, he should make it subside in the same way as described under the exposition of Loving-kindness.

He should then break down the barriers by means of impartiality towards the four, that is, towards these three and himself. And by cultivating the sign (or after-image, obtained in concentration), developing and repeatedly practising it, he should increase the absorption to triple or (according to the Abhidhammā division) quadruple Jhāna.

Next, the versatility (in this meditation) should be understood in the same way as stated under Loving-kindness. It consists in

(a) unspecified pervasion in these five ways:

“May all beings all breathing things all creatures . . . all persons . . . all those who have a personality be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily !”

(b) specified pervasion in these seven ways:

“May all women . . . all men . . . all Noble Ones . . . all not Noble Ones . . . all deities . . . all human beings . . . all in states of misery (in lower worlds) be free from enmity, etc.

(c) directional pervasion in these ten ways:

“May all beings (all breathing things etc.; all women, etc.) in the eastern direction in the western . . . northern . . . southern direction . . . in the intermediate eastern, western, northern and southern direction . . . in the downward direction in the upward direction be free from enmity, etc.”

This versatility is successful only in one whose mind has reached absorption (jhāna).

When this meditator develops the mind-deliverance of unselfish joy through any of these kinds of absorption he obtains these eleven advantages : he sleeps in comfort, wakes in comfort, and dreams no evil dreams, he is dear to human beings, dear to non-human beings, deities guard him, fire and poison and weapons do not

affect him, his mind is easily concentrated, the expression of his face is serene, he dies unconfused, if he penetrates no higher he will be reborn in the Brahmā World (Anguttara Nikāya V, 342).



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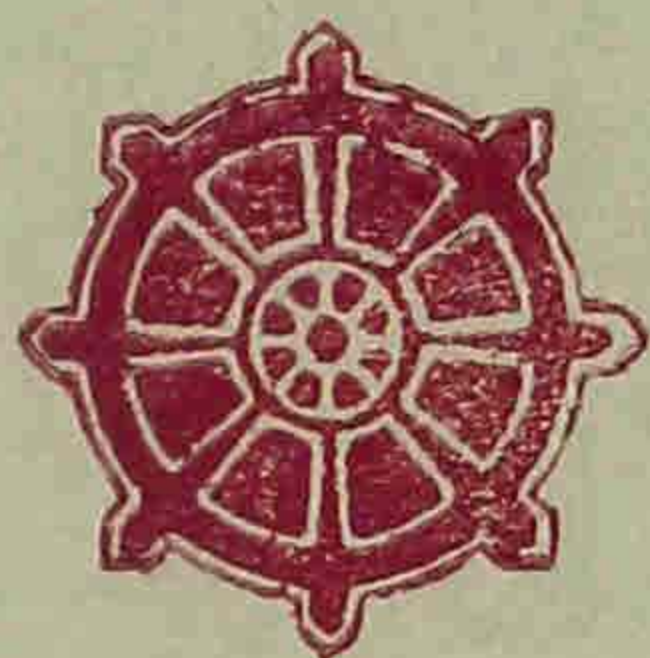
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‘Unto them that stand mid-stream
— so said the Venerable Kappa,

When the frightful floods flow forth
To them in **Decay** and **Death** forlorn
An island, sire, may you proclaim
An island which none else excels
Yea, such an isle — pray tell me sire’.....

— *Sn.* V. 1092

List of Abbreviations

<i>A.</i>	Anguttara Nikāya
<i>AA.</i>	Anguttara Nikāya Commentary
<i>D.</i>	Dīgha Nikāya
<i>Dhp.</i>	Dhammapada
<i>Dhp A.</i>	Dhammapada Commentary
<i>Itiv.</i>	Itivuttaka
<i>M.</i>	Majjhima Nikāya
<i>M.A.</i>	Majjhima Nikāya Commentary
<i>M.A.A.</i>	Majjhima Nikāya Tīkā (Burmese ed.)
<i>M.L.S.</i>	Middle Length Sayings
<i>Nd 1.</i>	Mahā-Niddeśa
<i>Netti A.</i>	Nettippakaraṇa Commentary
<i>S.</i>	Saṃyutta Nikāya
<i>S.A.</i>	Saṃyutta Nikāya Commentary
<i>Sn.</i>	Sutta Nipāta
<i>Thag.</i>	Theragāthā
<i>Thig.</i>	Therīgāthā
<i>Ud.</i>	Udāna

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INTRODUCTION

Bhaddekaratta Sutta

The *Bhaddekaratta Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (No.131) consists of a 'summary' (*uddesa*) in four verses and an 'exposition' (*vibhaṅga*) dealing with some doctrinal points of considerable psychological and ethical import. The theme set out by the Buddha in this discourse, recurs in three others—*Ānanda bhaddekaratta Sutta*, *Mahākaccāna bhaddekaratta Sutta* and *Lomasakaṅgiya bhaddekaratta Sutta*—in which the disciples of these names figure prominently. These four consecutive suttas (Nos. 131-134) are thus made conspicuous among the discourses of the *Majjhima Nikāya* and one can well infer that this bespeaks of the importance attached to their theme. That the theme was highly esteemed is clearly revealed by the framework of the two suttas, *Mahākaccāna bhaddekaratta* and *Lomasakaṅgiya bhaddekaratta*. In both, one finds a deity appearing before a monk and recommending to him the learning of the 'summary' and 'exposition' of the '*Bhaddekaratta*', as follows:

“Monk, you learn the summary and exposition of the '*Bhaddekaratta*'. Monk, you master the summary and exposition of the '*Bhaddekaratta*'. Monk, you bear in mind the summary and exposition of the '*Bhaddekaratta*'. Monk, the summary and exposition of the '*Bhaddekaratta*' is beneficial; it pertains to the elements of the Holy Life.”

The Title—a puzzle

Although the theme of these four discourses was thus held in high esteem, there is, unfortunately, a formidable obstacle to a proper appreciation of its significance. The title '*Bhaddekaratta*' which is also the main key-word, remains more or less a puzzle. In none of the four suttas is the word commented upon, despite the fact that the venerables *Ānanda* and *Mahākaccāna* also contribute to the exposition of the theme. This is probably because the early disciples were already familiar with the expression as such. Even the two monks *Samiddhi* and *Lomasakaṅgiya* who confessed their ignorance of the summary and exposition of the *Bhaddekaratta* when questioned by the deities, have not thought it fit to get this puzzling word clarified for us, when they later went to the Buddha for instruction on the subject.

In the commentaries there is an attempt to explain the meaning of '*bhaddekaratta*', but some scholars have questioned the validity of the interpretation given in them. What these interpretations are, and on what grounds they are found to be inadequate, can be gleaned from the following comments by I. B. Horner and the venerable Nāṇamoli:

I. 'Stas, 131-134 all have the term *Bhaddekaratta* as part of their title; and this presents something of a puzzle. *M. A. v. 1.* attempts an explanation of this word by saying: *vipassanānuyoga-samannāgatattā bhaddakassa* (v. 1., *bhaddassa*) *ekarattassa*, "of one who is happy (? auspicious) for one night because he is possessed of intentness of insight." Neumann

renders the term by “Gl-ucksāligeinsam,” lonely blissfulness. But *ekatta* is loneliness; *ekaratta* usually means ‘‘for one night.’’ But the *Bhaddekaratta Suttas* do not appear to envisage withdrawal from thoughts of the past, future and present for so little as one night. On the contrary, the verses that form the *mātikā* say that the person to be called *bhaddekaratta* is he who abides ardently and unweariedly day and night, that is surely, for some consecutive time lasting longer than “one night.” I thought it best to translate only the first part of the baffling compound, and have rendered *bhadda* by “auspicious,” not in its sense of betokening success but in that of prosperous, prospering. For the sage, who comes to be at peace has prospered by not following after the past, by not desiring the future to be such or so and by cultivating a right attitude to present things. His position is not due to luck, a happy chance or fortune’s favours; it is due to his own successful efforts, determined resolution and shunning of indolence, (I. B. Horner. *M. L. S.* III, Introduction, pp. xxvi—xxvii)

II. ‘One who has one fortunate attachment:’

(Introductory Note). ‘There are four consecutive suttas in the *Majjhima Nikāya* with the name BHADDEKARATTA, each based on the same verse.

This term has elsewhere been translated by “True Saint” and like phrases, which, however, quite miss the point.

The commentary says only this: “*Bhaddekarattassa*’ means ‘of one who is fortunate (*bhadda*) in having

one (*eka*) attachment (*ratta* or *ratti*)'; this is because of his possessing application to insight " The sub-commentary resolves the compound *ekaratta* (one-attachment) into *ekā ratti*, and says only that " '*Bhaddekaratta*' means one who has a fortunate single attachment (*bhaddo ekaratto etassa*), and it is a term for a person who is cultivating insight."

The *Mahā Niddesa* (commentary on *Sutta Nipāta* v. 964) alludes to these suttas without throwing any light on them. There appears to be no other mention of the term elsewhere in the Canon and its commentaries.

The Pāli word *ratta* (adj.) or *ratti* (s.) in this instance is from the root *raj* (*rañjati*, *rajjati*: "to take pleasure in"—e.g. "*ettha me rañjati mano*: here my mind delights"—*Suttanipāta* v. 424). So the "*Bhaddekaratta*" appears as one who is applying himself invincibly, unshakably to know and to study the present state as it occurs (see verse). This application or attachment is auspicious or fortunate because it leads to liberation. The much more common meaning of the Pāli word *ratti* is "night" (Skt. *rātra*). But (neither the commentary nor sub-c. decides the point) if we attempt to interpret the term *Bhaddekaratta* as "one who has a single auspicious night" and the commentarial passages accordingly (*.. grammatically possible), it is hard to make satisfactory sense of the context. It might be supposed that the expression "*Bhaddekaratta*" was a popular phrase taken over by the Buddha and given a special sense by him, as was not infrequently

... * ... The word is illegible in the MS.

done, but there seems no reason to do so and there is no evidence for it in this case. It is more likely to be a term coined by Buddha himself to describe a certain aspect of development. Such terms are *ukkhittapaligha* (One who has lifted the Bar – *M.* 22), *ditthippatta* (One who has attained Vision – *M.* 70), and many more.

(Venerable *Ñāṇamoli*: Translation of the
Majjhima Nikāya - unpublished)

III. 'It is not clear precisely what *bhaddekaratta* (the name of 4 successive Suttas in the *Majjhima Nikāya* means. *Netti A* (p. 203) says '*Evam paṭipannattā bhaddo ekaratto assāti bhaddekaratta*' (= *M. A. V. 3*). *MA. A.* adds '*Ekā ratti ekaratto, bhaddo ekaratto etassāti bhaddekarattam vipassanam paribrūhento puggalo; etenāha* "vipassanānuyogasamannāgatattā"' (*MA. v. 1.*) *taṁ uddissa pavattiyā pana bhaddekarattasahacaranato bhaddekaratto; ten'āha bhagavā* "Bhaddekarattassa vo bhikkhave uddesañca vibhaṅgañca desissāmi (*M. iii, 187*) *ti*'' (*MAA. 368*, *Burm. ed*), *Netti Tikā* offers nothing. The only other mention, referring to these 4 suttas, is at *Nd. 1. 484*, namely '*bhaddekarattavihāram*' in an explanation of '*jāgariyānuyogapariyanto*'. The *NdA.* has nothing enlightening. All these comments seem to take the *ratt* element as representing *ratti* ('night' = skr. *rātri*), and so the literal translation would then be 'one who has an auspicious one (i.e., entire) night' (i.e., 'the night spent as one entirely in insight') and the Burmese transcript of the *Majjhima Nikāya* gives the same sense to '*bhaddekaratta*' as to '*ahorattam*' ('by day, by night') two lines higher. But these explanations are all

grammatical and avoid the meaning. The term might — it has been suggested, but this is entirely speculative — have been a popular one for, say, the Hindu *Sivarātri* (the last night of waning moon, and devoted by Brahmans to meditation), which was purposely given a new sense here by the Buddha, as he did with many other current terms. (*Ekara-ttivāso* at *Sn.* 19 has apparently no connection with this, being simply the opposite of *samānavāso* at *Sn.* 18). An alternative derivation might be that *ratt* stands for *ratto* or *ratti* from *Vrañj* ‘to desire, to lust’ : cf. *dhamma-rāga* (*A.* iv. 423) or *tathāgata-rañjita* (§ 59); of the ‘profitable craving’ and ‘profitable conceit’ (§§ 506-7), though there is apparently no example of *ratti* from this root in Pali (cf. Skr. *rakti*). This interpretation has been adopted in the translation here as more trenchant (i. e., ‘attachment’ to insight. which leads to non-attachment), though neither seems quite safe, and the meaning remains unsettled.’

(Venerable *Ñāṇamoli*: *The Guide*
pp. 198 - 99. fn. 821/3.).

A possible solution.

The ‘*Theranāmo Sutta*’ of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (*S.* II 282f) gives the case of a monk who was a lone-dweller and who also recommended the same mode of living to others. As the title of the sutta—‘The Elder-named’—suggests, he was known to his fellow monks simply as ‘the Elder’. Whether this was in deference to his love of anonymity or whether it had any pejorative associations for the more sociable of his fellow monks, we do not know. Nevertheless,

we seem to get a caricature of his character in the following sentences of the sutta:

‘Tena kho pana samayena aññataro bhikkhu Thera-nāmakō ekavihāri ceva hoti ekavihārassa ca vaṇṇavādī So eko gāmaṃ piṇḍāya pavisati, eko paṭikkamati, eko raho nisīdati, eko caṅkamaṃ adhiṭṭhāti (ib, p. 282).

“At that time a certain monk called ‘The Elder’, was a lone-dweller and he also spoke in praise of lone-dwelling. Alone, he enters the village for alms; alone he returns; alone he sits in seclusion; alone, he paces up and down.”

Some of his fellow monks who might have thought his behaviour to be rather peculiar, report about him to the Buddha. The Buddha summons ‘the Thera’ who thereupon confirms that report about his partiality for lone-dwelling. When questioned as to how exactly he upholds the precept and practice of lone-dwelling, he explains to the Buddha his daily routine after the manner given above:

“Here, Lord, alone, I enter the village for alms; alone, I return; alone, I sit in seclusion and alone I pace up and down. It is thus, Lord, that I am a lone-dweller and an exponent of lone-dwelling.”

The Buddha’s remarks in this instance, were neither those of condemnation nor of unqualified praise. He says: “There is, Thera, this type of lone-dwelling; I do not deny it. But, Thera, I shall tell you the manner, in which lone-dwelling is fulfilled in all its details, Listen attentively to it.” And then he goes on to explain it in the following words:

*‘‘Idha Thera yaṃ atītaṃ taṃ paḥītaṃ, Yaṃ anāga-
taṃ paṭinissaṭṭaṃ. Paccuppannesu ca attabhāvaapaṭilā-
bhesu chandarāgo suppaṭivinito. Evaṃ kho Thera ekavihāro
vitthārena paripuṇṇo hoti.’’*

“Herein, Elder, whatever is past, that is abandoned, Whatever is yet-to-come (i.e. future), that is relinquished. And the desire-and-lust for the present modes of personality is well under control. It is thus, Elder, that (the ideal of) lone-dwelling becomes fulfilled in all its details.”

In order to make it clear that the Ideal Lone-dweller who fully conforms to the above requirements is the arahant himself, the Buddha sums up his discourse with this verse:

*Sabbābhihhuṃ sabbaviduṃ sumedhaṃ
Sabbesu dhammesu anūpalittaṃ
Sabbamjaham tanhakkhaye vimuttaṃ
Tamahaṃ naraṃ ekavihārīti brūmi.*

“Surmounting” all, knowing all,
The wise-one, unsoiled in all,
Is well-released renouncing all
When craving is outworn.
That man I would fain make known
As ‘One – who – dwells - all - alone’.

Now, this ideal of lone-dwelling as set out in the *Theranāma Sutta*, seems to find an echo in the verses which make up the ‘summary’ of the *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*. One can compare the Buddha’s definition of the perfect lone-dweller in the former sutta with the following lines occurring in the latter:

*‘Atītaṃ nānvāgameyya — nappatīkaṅkhe anāgataṃ
Yadatītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ — appattañca anāgataṃ
paccuppannañca yo dhammaṃ — tattha tattha vipassati’*

‘Let one not trace back the past
Or yearn for the future—yet—to—come
That which is past is left behind
The ‘yet—to—come’ is unattained
And that which is present he discerns
With insight as and when it comes.’

We saw above how the *Theranāmo Sutta* expounds the true ideal of solitude (*ekavihāro*) as against the popular and commonplace concept of solitude. The true ideal is depicted as a ‘solitude’ of mind, gained by giving up everything belonging to the past and the future and by disciplining well the desire-and-lust for one’s present modes of personality. The concluding verse makes it clear that the ideal lone-dweller is unsoiled as to all phenomena and is ‘well released, renouncing all’. This reminds us of the term ‘*upadhiviveka*’ (detachment from all assets or substrata) denoting Nibbāna, which is the highest-mental-solitude (*citta viveka*, *citta vūpakāsa*) to which all attempts at physical solitude (*kāyaviveka*, *kāyavūpakāsa*) should be properly harnessed. As for this latter, the popular conception is always one of dwelling ‘a-lone’, all by oneself. It conjures up in the ascetic mind the prospect of peace in being away from the ‘madding-crowd’. No doubt, this physical solitude is often upheld by the Buddha as an essential pre-requisite for detachment. Thus at the end of one of the most forceful perorations in favour of this type of solitude. he confesses to his

attendant, the venerable *Nāgita* with remarkable candour, that he is quite at ease even in answering calls of nature, when he sees none in front of or behind him while journeying all alone: “*Yasmāhaṃ Nāgita samaye addhānamaggapaṭipanno na kañci passāmi purato vā pacchato vā, phāsu me Nāgita tasmim samaye hoti, antamaso uccārapassāvakkammāyāti*” —A. III 344, and we find in the *Theragāthā* a similar expression of the ease of solitude in the words of *Ekavihāriya Thera* (The Elder ‘Lone-dweller’):

‘*Purato pacchato vāpi — aparō ce na vijjati
Atīva phāsu bhavati — ekassa vasato vane*’

— *Thag.* v. 537.

‘When there is none to be seen in front or behind, one is greatly at ease as one dwells in the forest all alone.’

Just as much as the physical-solitude is associated with the satisfaction of not seeing any one before or behind oneself, the mental-solitude too is characterised by the absence of anxious glances forward or backwards. Having abandoned everything past (‘*yaṃ atitaṃ taṃ paḥīnaṃ*’ — *Theranāmakō S.*; ‘*Yadatītaṃ paḥīnaṃ taṃ*’ — *Bhaddekaratta S.*), one does not trace back or relive the past (‘*atītaṃ nānvāgameyya*’ — *Bh. S.*). Having given up what pertains to the future (‘*Yaṃ anāgataṃ taṃ paṭinisaṭṭhaṃ*’ — *Th. S.*), one is no longer anxious about the future (‘*Nappaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṃ*’ — *Bh. S.*). This concept of the past and future brings spatial and temporal modes of thinking much closer to each other — the ‘before’ and the ‘behind’ of physical solitude

and the 'past' and the 'future' of mental solitude. However, the freedom from these two distracting elements in itself does not constitute the perfect 'ease' that is the ideal of solitude. There is also a third element of distraction to be eliminated. One has to be 'care-free'—whether the solitude aimed at is pyhsical or mental. Hence any deep attachment to one's 'belongings'—be they material or mental—is the third element of distraction. Having brought under complete control the 'desire-and-lust' regarding one's present modes of personality (*'paccuppannesu ca attabhāva-paṭilābhesu chandarāgo suppaṭivṇito'*—*Th. S.*), one discerns what is present with penetrative insight (*'paccuppannañca yo dhammaṃ tattha tattha vipassati'*—*Bh.S.*) as impermanent (*anicca*), sorrow-fraught (*dukkha*) and not one's own (*anattā*).

The two suttas, '*Theranāmo*' and '*Bhaddekaratta*', thus concur with each other in pointing to a concept of 'solitude' far transcending its popular connotations. Nor are they without parallel in other portions of the Pāli canon, the following being a few of them:

(i) *Yo nāccasārī na paccasārī*
sabbaṃ accagamā imaṃ papañcaṃ
so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṃ
urago jiṇṇamiva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ

— *Sn. v. 8.*

'Who leaps not too far, nor lags behind
 And has transcended this prolific mind
 That monk forsakes the 'hither' and the 'thither'
 E'en as the snake its slough that doth wither.'

(ii) *Yassa pure ca pacchā ca
majjhe ca natthi kiñcanaṃ
akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ
tamahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*

— *Dhp. V. 421.*

‘Who has naught before or behind him
And naught in the centre — to call his own
Who owns naught and to naught will cling
Him do I call a Brahmin.’

(iii) *Muñca pure muñca pacchato
majjhe muñca bhavassa pāragū
Sabbattha vimuttamānaso
na puna jātijaraṃ upehisi*

— *Dhp. V. 348.*

‘Let go what has gone before
Let go that which comes after
Let go thy hold on the middle as well
And get beyond all existence
Thus with mind released in every way
Thou comest never more to birth and decay.¹

A comparative study of the two suttas in question would make it abundantly clear that both deal with

1. That the ambiguity in the Pāli words ‘*pure*’ (‘before’ or ‘in front’) and ‘*pacchā*’ (‘after’ or ‘behind’) can at times be effectively trenchant, is well depicted by the episode cited in the *Dhp. A.* in connection with this verse. The acrobat, *Uggasena* was standing on a bamboo-pole when the Buddha addressed him in this verse, and hence it must have come to him as a powerful paradox penetrating deep into his now concentrated mind, as he stood there precariously balanced on the bamboo-pole — a question of life and death for him. No wonder that he attained arahanthood then and there.

the same theme. But how are we to bring into proper alignment the 'baffling compound'—*Bhaddekaratta*? In the context of our discussion of the subject of solitude, the most outstanding element of this compound appears to be the middle word '*eka*' ('one', 'alone' 'single',). Owing to the rather generic character of the word, its significance has often been underestimated—hence the tendency to treat '*Bhaddekaratta*' as an elliptical expression. The word '*eka*' was more or less regarded as a blank cheque by some scholars, and resort was had to companion words like 'night' or 'attachment-to-solitude', in order to give it its full value. But it may be pointed out that the word '*eka*' enjoyed a privileged position in the terminology of the Pāli canon as a symbol of great significance for those of an ascetic temperament. It bore little ambiguity for them as it had all the connotations that go with the ascetic idealisation of solitude. For them, apparently, there was no 'mono-tony' in the word '*eka*' (see above—'caricature' of the elder), and hence we find it ringing through the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* (Sn. vv. 35—75) in the refrain: '*eko care khaggavisāṇakappo*' ('Wander alone—like the rhino horn') The *Muni Sutta* too, uses the word in connection with this 'faring-alone': '*ekam carantam munimappamattam*' (The diligent sage who wanders alone'—Sn. v. 213). It also occurs as many as six times in the verses of the venerable *Ekavihāriya* (Thag. vv. 537—546). To be 'alone without a second' '*(ekākiyo adutiyo*' — v. 541) in the depth of the forest, was the longing of his heart, and for this, he had won the approbation of the Buddha, in the following verse:

*ekāsanam ekaseyyam
eko caram atandito
eko damayam attānam
vanante ramito siyā*

—*Dhp.* v. 305.

‘A lonely seat — a lonely bed
And faring alone untiringly
Alone subduing himself he might —
In sylvan solitude find delight.’

The semantic difficulties in connection with the word ‘*eka*’ having been surmounted, we may now pass on to a discussion of its relation to the following word ‘*ratta*’. The expression ‘*ekaratta*’ was traditionally interpreted to mean ‘one night’ due to a rather superficial connection with the compound ‘*ahorattam*,’ as has been pointed out by the Venerable *Ñānamoli*. Enough has been said by him and by I. B. Horner to show that there is little justification for such an interpretation. Venerable *Ñānamoli* rightly suggests, as an alternative, that ‘*ratta*’ might be a derivation from *Vrañj*— (to desire, to lust, to get attached).¹ His hesitation to follow up the full implications of his hypothesis, might have been due to the difficulties he encountered in regard to the word ‘*eka*’. Now that this word has revealed its significance, we can proceed to appre-

1. Though he observes that ‘there is apparently no example of *ratti* from this root in Pāli (cf *Skt. rakti*)’ the expression ‘*bhaddekarattiyo gāthā*’ occurring in *Mahākaccāna*-and *Lamasakaṅgiya – Bhaddekaratta* Suttas, may very well be regarded as the required example. —

cf. ‘*na virāgaratto*’ (not attached to detachment’) — *Sn.* vs 795.

ciate the clues he had given, at their full value. The 'love-of-solitude' (see vs. above) was reckoned a type of 'profitable craving'—if one may use that expression prudently. For instance we get an express sanction for such an 'attachment' or 'delight' in the *Nālaka Sutta* (Sn.):

Ekāsanassa sikkheṭṭha—samaṇopāsanassa ca ekattaṃ monamakkhātā — eko ce abhiraṃsasi atha bhāsisī dasa disā —

(Sn. vv. 718—19).

'Let one train oneself in sitting alone and in the resort proper to a recluse. 'One-ness' (i.e. solitude) is called sageship, and if you will delight in being alone, then you will illuminate the ten quarters'

Or again, we find in the *Sāriputta Sutta* (ib.) the word '*rati*' (delight, attachment, lust) used in the qualified sense referred to above, in connection with the Buddha's love of solitude and renunciation:

'Sabbam tamam vinodetvā—eko'va ratimaṃjjhagā
(Sn. v. 956)

'Having dispelled all darkness—he found delight in being alone'

All this evidence would go to show that '*ekaratto*' in '*Bhaddekaratto*' meant 'the one attached to solitude', in other words, the 'lover of solitude.' We are now left with the adjective '*bhadda*' (auspicious', 'good', 'lofty'). As already mentioned in the discussion of the *Theranāmo Sutta*, mere being 'a-lone' physically,

is not the be-all of the concept of solitude advocated by the Buddha. It may be recalled that he was reserved in his remarks on the Thera's description of his daily routine, and that he proceeded to teach him the manner in which lone-dwelling is perfected in all its detail. One can also compare, in this respect, the *Migajāla Sutta* (S. IV 35 f) where he defines the two terms 'ekavihārī' and 'sadutiyavihārī':

“There are, *Migajāla*, forms cognizable by the eye, desirable, pleasant, agreeable, delightful, connected with sense-pleasures and alluring. Supposing a monk delights in them; asserts them; clings to them, then, even as he delights in, asserts and clings to them, there arises delight (*nandi*). When there is delight, he is lustful, and when he is lustful there is bondage, A monk who is fettered by the fetter of delight, *Migajāla*, is called, ‘One-who-dwells-with-a-second (*sadutiyavihārī*).’”

Having made a similar pronouncement in respect of the objects of the other senses, he sums up in the following words:

“A monk thus dwelling, *Migajāla*, even though he may resort to remote lodgings in the forest, where there is little sound, little noise, which are deserted of people and where one can remain undisturbed by men—lodgings fit for meditative seclusion—still, he is called ‘one—who—dwells—with—a—second; And why so? Because Craving is his ‘second’ (i.e. companion) and that is not abandoned by him, Hence he is called ‘One—who—dwells—with—a—second;’”

The lone—dweller (*‘ekavihāri’*) is then defined as the monk who does not delight in, assert or cling to the objects of the six—senses and is thus free from bondage to the fetter of delight. The Buddha’s summing-up in this case is no less forceful than his concluding remark in the *Nāgita Sutta*—the contradiction between them being only apparent, when examined within context:

“A monk thus dwelling, *Migajāla*, even though he may be dwelling in the village, in the midst of monks, nuns, male and female lay-followers, kings, royal ministers, teachers and disciples of other sects—still, he is called a lone-dweller’ And why so? Because craving is his ‘second’ and that is abandoned by him. Hence is he called: ‘Lone-dweller.’

The ideal type of solitude advocated by the two suttas *Theranāmo* and *Migajāla*, is also the theme of the *Bhaddekaratta Suttas*. There, the ‘summary’ and the ‘exposition’ concern the ‘*Bhaddekaratto*,’ whom we may now identify as the ‘Ideal (lit. Good)—lover-of-solitude.’ The distinction made by the Buddha between mere physical solitude and the ideal type of spiritual solitude, would amply justify the use of the epithet ‘*bhadda*,’¹ and in fact, the con-

¹ Cf i *bhadro* ‘*purisājāniyo*’—‘a good thoroughbred of a man’
—A. IV 400

ii. ‘*bhadramukha*’ — ‘auspicious — faced’ (as a form of address). S. I. 74

iii. ‘*bhaddako vatāyaṃ bhikkhu*’ — ‘Indeed, this is an ideal (‘nice’) monk’—S. II 210.

iv. *sāvaka yugam . . . aggam bhaddayugam*’ — a pair of disciples . . . , the chief and-ideal-Pair.’—D. II. 5.

cluding verse of the 'summary' attributes the compliment to the Buddha himself:

‘..... *Evamvihāriṃ ātāpiṃ — ahorattaṃ atanditaṃ
Taṃ ve bhaddekarattoṭi — santo ācikkhate muni*’

‘..... One who dwells thus ardently
By day, by night untiringly
Him the Tranquil sage has called—
‘The Ideal—Lover—of—solitude.’

The significance of the title, however, is not the sole point of interest in the *Bhaddekaratta Sutta*. Both the 'summary' and the 'exposition', despite their brevity, can well afford to represent the essence of the Dhamma in all its depth and significance. There is for instance, in the summary, the pair of difficult terms '*asamhiraṃ — asamkappaṃ*' with a significance of its own. But these points will be dealt with in the notes, since they could best be appreciated in the light of the Sutta itself.

I, BHADDEKARATTA SUTTA

(The Discourse on the Ideal Lover of Solitude).

Thus have I heard: At one time the Exalted One was living at *Sāvattthī* in the Jeta Grove, *Anāthapindikā*'s monastery. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks". "Revered One," the monks answered the Exalted One in assent. The Exalted One spoke thus: "Monks, I shall preach to you the summary and the exposition of the Ideal Lover of Solitude, Listen and give attention, I shall speak." "Even so, revered sir", the monks answered the Exalted One in assent. The Exalted One said this:

' Let one not trace back the past 1.
Or yearn for the future—yet-to-come. 2.
That which is past is left behind
Unattained is the 'yet-to-come.'
But that which is present he discerns—
With insight as and when it comes.
The Immovable — the-non-irritable. 3.
In that state should the wise-one grow
Today itself should one bestir
Tomorrow death may come — who knows?
For no bargain can we strike
With 'Death' who has his mighty hosts.
But one who dwells thus ardently
By day, by night, untiringly
Him the Tranquil Sage has called —
' The Ideal Lover of Solitude.'

And how, monks, does one trace back the past? He thinks: 'I was of such form in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of

such feeling in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such perception in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such formations in the past' and brings delight to bear on them. He thinks: 'I was of such consciousness in the past' and brings delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one traces back the past.

And how, monks, does one not trace back the past? He thinks: 'I was of such form in the past' but brings no delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I was of such feeling.....of such perception.....of such formations.....' He thinks: 'I was of such consciousness in the past' but brings no delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one does not trace back the past.

And how, monks, does one yearn for the future? He thinks: 'I may have such form in the future' and brings delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I may have such feeling.....such perception.....such formations.....' He thinks: 'I may have such consciousness in the future' and brings delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one yearns for the future.

And how, monks, does one not yearn for the future? He thinks: 'I may have such form in the future' but brings no delight to bear on it. He thinks: 'I may have such feeling.....such perception.....such formations.....' He thinks: 'I may have such consciousness in the future' but brings no delight to bear on it. That is how, monks, one does not yearn for the future.

And how is one drawn into present things. Herein, monks, an uninstructed ordinary man who takes no account of the Noble Ones, is unskilled in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, untrained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, taking no account of the good men, unskilled in the Dhamma of the good men, untrained in the Dhamma of the good men, looks upon form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form, He looks upon feeling as self, or self as possessed of feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling. He looks upon perception as self, or self as possessed of perception, or perception as in self, or self as in perception. He looks upon formations as self, or self as possessed of formations, or formations, as in self, or self as in formations. He looks upon consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how, monks, one is drawn into present things.

And how, monks, is one not drawn into present things? Herein, monks, an instructed Noble disciple who takes into account the Noble Ones, skilled in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, trained in the Dhamma of the Noble Ones, taking into account the good men, skilled in the Dhamma of the good men, trained in the Dhamma of the good men, does not look upon form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form. He does not look upon feeling as self He does not look upon perception as self He does not look upon formations as self He does not look upon consciousness as self, or self as possessed of

consciousness or consciousness as in self or self as in consciousness. That is how, monks, one is not drawn into present things.

‘Let one not trace back the past’

(..... *as above*)

Him the Tranquil Sage has called—
The Ideal Lover of Solitude.

So it was with reference to this that it was said:
“Monks, I shall preach to you the summary and the exposition of the Ideal Lover of Solitude.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. Delighted, those monks rejoiced in what the Exalted One had said.

II. An Excerpt from —
MAHAKACCĀNA BHADDEKARATTA SUTTA
(Venerable Mahākaccāna's Exposition of the 'Summary').

‘In regard to that summary, friends,
that the Exalted One recited in brief but the mean-
ing of which he had not expounded in detail when
he rose from his seat and went into his dwelling :

‘Let one not trace back the past

... ..

... ..

... ..

Him the Tranquil Sage has called
The Ideal Lover of Solitude’.

Of this summary that was recited by the Exalted One in brief but the meaning of which he did not expound in detail, I, friends, understand the detail-
ed meaning thus :

And how, friends, does one trace back the past? He thinks: ‘Such was my eye in the past, such were forms’ and his consciousness is bound fast there by desire-and-lust. Because his consciousness is bound fast with desire-and-lust, he delights in it; delighting in it he traces back the past. He thinks: ‘Such was my ear in the past, such were sounds such was my nose in the past, such were smells such was my tongue in the past, such were flavours such was my body in the past, such were tangibles such was my mind in the past, such were ideas,’ and his consciousness is bound fast there by desire-and-lust. Because his consciousness is bound fast by desire-and-lust, he delights in it; delighting in it he traces back the past. That is how, friends, one traces back the past.

And how, friends, does one not trace back the past? He thinks; 'Such was my eye in the past, such were forms' but without his consciousness being bound fast there by desire-and-lust. Because his consciousness is not bound fast by desire-and-lust, he does not delight in it; not delighting in it, he does not trace back the past. He thinks: 'Such was my ear in the past, such were sounds nose smells tongue flavours body tangibles 'Such was my mind in the past, such were ideas' but without his consciousness being bound fast there by desire-and-lust. Because his consciousness is not bound fast by desire-and-lust, he does not delight in it; not delighting in it, he does not trace back the past. That is how, friends, one does not trace back the past.

And how, friends, does one yearn for the future? He thinks; 'My eye may be such in the future, forms such' and sets his heart on obtaining what is not yet obtained; because he so sets his heart, he delights in that, delighting in that. he yearns for the future. He thinks: My ear may be such in the future, sounds such nose smells tongue flavours body tangibles He thinks: 'My mind may be such in the future, ideas such' and sets his heart on obtaining what is not yet obtained; because he so sets his heart, he delights in that; delighting in that he yearns for the future, That is how, friends, one yearns for the future.

And how, friends, does one not yearn for the future? He thinks: 'My eye may be such in the future, forms such' but does not set his heart on

obtaining what is not yet obtained, because he does not so set his heart, he does not delight in that; not delighting in that, he does not yearn for the future. He thinks: 'My ear.....My mind may be such in the future, ideas such' but does not set his heart on obtaining what is not yet obtained; because he does not so set his heart, he does not delight in that; not delighting in that, he does not yearn for the future. That is how, friends one does not yearn for the future.

And how, friends, is one drawn into present things? Whatever eye and forms there are, friends, both these are present and to that which is present his consciousness is bound fast by desire-and-lust; because his consciousness is bound fast by desire-and-lust he delights in that; delighting in that he is drawn into present things. Whatever ear and sounds nose and smells.....tongue and flavours.....body and tangibles..... whatever mind and ideas there are, friends, both these are present and to that which is present his consciousness is bound fast by desire-and-lust; because his consciousness is bound fast by desire-and-lust, he delights in that; delighting in that he is drawn into present things. That is how, friends, one is drawn into present things.

And how, friends, is one not drawn into present things? Whatever eye and forms there are, friends, both these are present and to that which is present his consciousness is not bound fast by desire-and-lust; because his consciousness is not bound fast by desire-and-lust; he does not delight in that; not delighting

in that he is not drawn into present things, whatever
ear and sounds..... . nose and smells.....tongue
and flavours..... .. body and tangibles.....whatever
present and mind and ideas there are, friends, both
these are to that which is present his consciousness is
not bound fast by desire-and-lust; because his conscious-
ness is not bound fast by desire-and-lust, he does not
delight in that; not delighting in that, he is not drawn
into present things. That is how, friends, one is not
drawn into present things.

In regard to that summary, friends, that the Exalt-
ed One recited in brief but the meaning of which he
had not expounded in detail when he rose from his
seat and went in to his dwelling:

‘Let one not trace back the past

.....

Him the Tranquil Sage has called—
The Ideal Lover of Solitude.

Of this summary that was recited by the Exalted
one in brief but the meaning of which he did not ex-
pound in detail, I, friends, understand the detailed
meaning thus *

* This exposition of the ‘summary’ with reference to the
twelve sense-bases was later commended and ratified by the
Buddha (*ibid.*) since it does not contradict his own exposition
in terms of the five aggregates.

III NOTES

1. '*Atītaṃ Nānvāgameyya*': This phrase helps us to understand the significance of the Buddha's constant advice to 'let-go' the past. The exposition clearly reveals that it is not so much the mere recollection of the past that is the bondage, as the element of delight (*nandi*) or 'desire-and-lust' (*chandarāga*).¹ one finds therein. It is the tendency to retrace, revive, relive and relish the past, that has to be eliminated and hence there comes in the necessity of detachment even with regard to thought processes.² There is, however, a notion in some philosophers—notably in Krishnamurthy—that it is the faculty of memory as such, that is to be blamed for man's psychological bondage.³ In an attempt to 'die to the past' he seems to regard memory as the villain-of-the-piece and advocate its obliteration while stressing the necessity of awareness. This contrasts with the Buddhist approach inasmuch as '*sati*', which is a term for awareness or 'mindfulness',⁴ is also the usual term for 'memory'. Thus, one comes across the following standard definition of '*satindriya*' (the spiritual faculty

1. 'Mind is not the bondage for ideas; ideas are not the bondage for the mind; but whatever desire-and-lust that arises therein dependent on them both—that is the bondage therein,'—S.IV 163 (*Koṭṭhika S.*). See also reference to *Migajāla Sutta* above (Introduction).

2. Cf *Bāhiya S.*, *Ud.* p. 8: '*Viññāte vññātamattam bhavissati*'—'in the thought, there will be just the thought.'

3. See, for instance, 'Talks by Krishnamurthy in Europe 1965' (Authentic Report) p. 95.

4. '*Sati*', though usually rendered by 'mindfulness', covers in general, the shades of meaning represented by its twin—'*sampajañña*' ('awareness', 'clear—comprehension').

of mindfulness) in the Pāli canon: “And what, monks, is the faculty of mindfulness? Herein, monks, a noble disciple is mindful and is endowed with the highest prudence in mindfulness; he is one who remembers and recollects even what is done or said long ago. This, monks, is called the faculty of mindfulness.” — S. v. 197. This recognition of the essential relationship between mindfulness and memory is understandable, since the keenness of the one naturally leads to the clarity of the other. The denial of its rightful place to the faculty of memory in the complex scheme of mental functions, might even give rise to a schizophrenic condition. The noble disciple, therefore, would not unscrupulously contradict himself or claim to have ‘forgotten’ what he has said and done earlier, on the flimsy ground of his devotion to the practice of ‘moment-to-moment awareness.’ On the contrary, he might, without inhibition, even develop his faculty of memory to such a degree that he could recollect his past lives and experiences in all their major and minor details (*‘Sākāraṃ sauddesaṃ pubbenivāsaṃ anussarati’* — *Sāmaññaphala S.*, D. I 81) What he aims at by his diligent practice of mindfulness is mastery over the pathways of thought currents, as the concluding lines of *Vitakkasaṅṭhāna Sutta* (‘Discourse on the adjustment of thoughts’) of the *Majjhima Nikāya* make it clear: “.....This monk is called, monks, ‘a master of the pathways of thought modes’ (*‘vasī vitakkapariyāyapathesu’*), and whatever thought he wishes to think, that he thinks; whatever thought he does not wish to think, that he does not think. He has cut off the craving, turned back the fetter and by fully understanding conceit, put an end to Ill ” — M. I 122.

The most distinctive feature of the Buddha's solution to the intricate problem of mindfulness and memory, is the emphasis on detachment. The elimination of the element of delight was the essential condition to be fulfilled, and to this end he oriented his exhortations to the monks so that often the finale turns out to be: "Impermanent, O monks, are formations. Unstable, O monks, are formations. Unsatisfying, O monks, are formations; so much so, monks, that this is enough for one to turn away from all formations: enough to get detached from them; enough to seek release from them."¹ The theme of impermanence runs even through his contemplation of mountains and rivers, which, for the average man, offer beautiful landscapes and lasting landmarks. Indeed, this emphasis on utter detachment based on the contemplation of universal impermanence is not so marked in other systems of thought purporting to solve the above problem and even in Krishnamurthy, too much stress is laid, for instance, on the beauty of 'marvellous' mountains, trees, rivers and sunsets.²

It is also significant that the Buddhist scheme of mind-training, while recognizing the role of mindfulness or awareness in the field of sense-restraint, assigns the function of transcendence to the faculty of wisdom (*Paññā*). As such, it does not find itself in the awkward position of being 'anti-memory' and 'pro awareness'. Though 'Sati' is helpful in temporarily stemming the swift currents of craving flowing in through the six sense-doors, the ultimate delive-

1. *D.* II 198; *A.* IV 100.

2. *op. cit* p. 39.

rance of the mind, is a matter for the penetrative faculty of '*paññā*' — whetted, as it were, on the three signata. *Paññā* is the 'dam' wherefrom all currents turn back.

*'Yāni sotāni lokasmim, Ajitāti Bhagavā
Sati tesam nivāraṇam
Sotānam saṃvaram brūmi
Paññāyete piṭhiyyare.'*

— Sn. V. 1035.

'Whatever streams there are in the world, *Ajita*,
— So said the Lord,

Mindfulness keeps them in check.

This I say is the restraint of streams
But by wisdom are they dammed.'

2. '*Nappaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṃ*': As in case of the past, so with regard to future too, it is the 'delight' or 'desire-and-lust' that gives rise to yearning or anxiety. The aspiration for acquisition is the condition for delight in this case and in being delighted one is yearning for the future (see part II). A simple expression of choice and wish in regard to future courses of action in the everyday life of the arahant, is not altogether denied. But it is the attitude which makes all the difference between such expressions and the hankerings and forebodings of a worldling relating to an uncertain future. The arahant, as his epithet '*tādi*' ('such-like') suggests, is endowed with the highest adaptability and resilience, due to his penetration into suchness (*Tathatā*). For him, anxiety and yearning with their corollaries vexation and disappointment, simply do not exist.

*‘Alatthaṃ yad idaṃ sādhu — nālatthaṃ kusalāmiti’
ubhayeneva so tādī — rukkhaṃva paṭinivattati*

— Sn. V 712

‘If he does get anything (i. e. alms) he thinks: ‘It is well’, and if he does not get anything, then also he thinks: ‘It is good’. In both circumstances he is ‘such’; and he turns back like one who went up to a tree (in search of fruits).’

3. *‘Asaṃhīraṃ asaṃkappaṃ’*: The stable and steady nature of the emancipated mind¹ is indicated by these two terms. Together they form an epithet of Nibbāna² that might be of interest to the student of psychology and ethics, in particular. Though it does not occur in the canonical list of 33 epithets of Nibbāna (S. IV 368 ff), it is represented there by the term *‘dhuvaṃ’* (‘The stable-state’). Its significance, however lies mainly in the nuances it conveys through the twin terms.

‘Asaṃhīra’ (grd. of *saṃ + vhr*) is a word often used in the Pali canon to enhance the sense of stability convey-

1. Cf *‘thitaṃ cittaṃ vipparamuttaṃ’* — ‘the mind is firm and well released —. A. III 379.

‘thitacittassa tādino’ — ‘of the such-like one, firm in mind’
— D. II. 157

2. *‘asaṃhīraṃ asaṃkappaṃ — yassa natthi upamaṃ kinci’*
‘The Immovable and non-irritable, for which there is no
comparison anywhere’ — Sn. V. 1149.

‘asaṃhīraṃ asaṃkappaṃ — cittaṃ āmodayāmaṃ’
‘I rejoice in a mind which is immovable and non-irritable’
— Thag. V. 649.

ed by a positive term such as '*thito*' (firm)¹ or '*cheko*' (expert).² The immovability, the ir-removability, the ability to stand one's ground,³ are some of the shades of meaning associated with the word. Hence *samhīrati* (pass.) when used in the positive sense as in the prose section of the sutta, would suggest the tendency to get attracted, enticed or drawn into. In this specific context, the twenty types of personality-view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) are interpreted as so many ways of being drawn into involvement in regard to present phenomena. By contrast, therefore, '*asamhīram*', in its reference to Nibbāna, seems to emphasize the total absence of lust or attachment in that state of supreme mental repose.

'*Asamkuppam*' too, basically carries with it overtones of stability since the gerundive '*kuppa*' has such meanings as 'movable', 'shakable,' 'excitable' and 'irritable'. Not infrequently the verb '*kuppati*' is used with little or no emotional colouring, mostly with reference to the behaviour of inanimate things and then it is simply 'disturbance' or 'shaking'.⁴ But in the context of mental states, it is often associated with the impulses of irritation or anger, particularly when prefixed with '*sam*'. And

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1. Cf. '*vinaye kho pana thito hoti asamhīro*'
'In regard to discipline, he is firmly established,
is immovable.' *A. IV 141.*
See also *S. I. 193, Thag. V. 1243., Itiv. 77 f.*
 2. Cf. '*vinaye kho pana cheko hoti asamhīro*'
'In regard to Discipline. he is expert and immovable' *Vin. II 96*
 3. Cf. '*asamhīro ti na sakkā gahitagahanam vissajjāpetum*',
'Immovable: i e. one cannot dislodge him from a stand point
he has taken (in regard to a point of Discipline)'
— *A. A. (Comm. on ref. at A. IV 141)*
 4. Cf. *M. I 185 ff., A. III 191., Vin. III 47.*

here too, the same nuances are evident. The stability of Nibbāna as a psychological state is as much due to the absence of repulsion as to that of attraction.

Out of the three roots of evil, greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), the first two indicate the polarization of those psychological forces known as 'formations' (*saṃkhārā*). Formations themselves spring from delusion or ignorance¹ which manifests itself primarily as personality-views. "Herein, monks, the uninstructed ordinary man looks upon form as self. That very 'looking upon' (*samanupassanā*), monks, is a formation (*saṃkhāro*)." S. III 96. In normal perception, it obtains as 'attention' (*manasikāra*) which, as a rule, is impelled by desire or interest (*chanda*). The world of discrete objects over which the range of perception extends, is the result of this beam of attention, switched on, as it were, by interest. "All phenomena, friends, are rooted in desire (or interest); all phenomena are born of attention; all phenomena arise from contact" —A. V. 106. The keener the interest, the keener the attention; and both these factors introduce a certain degree of tension into the perceptual situation, whereby all other relative 'distractions' are forcibly 'ignored.' This tension, force, stress or strain involved in the process, renders all perception more or less artificial and synthetic². Even in the most elementary form of perception,

1. 'Avijjā paccayā saṃkhārā . . .'

'From ignorance as condition, formations (come to be)'

S. II *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (passim.)

2. What is true of perception is true of all 'formations' born of ignorance. When the scientist perceives or conceives matter as 'energy in a form of stress', he is probably bringing out

(Continued Page 34)

ignorance and craving are already implicit. “. But what is the cause, the arising, the origin and the source of that formation? To the uninstructed ordinary man touched by a feeling born of ‘**ignorance-contact**,’ monks, there arises **craving**; born thereof is that formation. Thus, monks, even that formation is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. That feeling too. That contact too. That ignorance too is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen.” S. III 96 f. In the very act of attending, perception becomes blighted with an artificiality which estranges one from reality.

Since it is the formations themselves that are revealed in sense-perception as attitudes of greed and hatred, delusion as the seed-bed of formations, may rightly be regarded as the apex which sustains both types of attitudes. This shows that in order to transcend

some shades of meaning of the elusive term ‘*saṃkhārā*.’ But what is not so easily realized is the fact that it is his own perception and conception—guided as they are by interest and attention—which primarily accounts for this ‘energy’ and ‘stress.’ At whatever level of perception he stops to take his bearings and formulate his theory, it becomes for him the ‘point of contact’ (*phassa*) from which arises the ‘thing’ to be observed, while his interest and attention, design, conglomerate and agglutinate that ‘thing’ under observation. It is only when the beam of attention is switched off, as it were, by the utter withdrawal of ‘interest’ as in the case of the emancipated ones, that the truth of voidness (*suñnatā*) will be realized.

‘*Duddasaṃ anantaṃ nāma—na hi saccaṃ sudassanaṃ
patividdhā taṇhā—jānato passato natthi kiñcanaṃ*

UD 80.

‘Hard to see is the ‘endless’
Not easy’tis to see the truth
Pierced through is craving
And naught for him who knows and sees.’

the above polarization, delusion too must be eliminated together with the formations springing therefrom. The two terms in our epithet apparently do not say anything about this '*tertium-quid*', but it is already implicit in them as we have shown above. As such, the epithet may be said to refer to that paradoxical *samādhi* peculiar to Buddhas and Arahants, which is known as '*Anantarika*'¹ ('Immediacy') or '*Arahattaphala Samādhi*'. Some salient features of this concentration find mention in the following canonical passages.

A. "Monks, in such a manner should a monk examine (with insight) that his consciousness will—while thus examining—**neither be distracted or dissipated out-**

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1. '*Yaṃ buddhaśeṭṭho parivaṇṇayi suciṃ
Samādhimānantarikaññamāhu
Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati.....*'—Sn. v. 226 (*Ratana S.*).

'That pure concentration which the Supremely Awakened One extolled and which they call 'Immediacy'—a concentration comparable to that there does not exist.'

The significance of the term '*Anantarika*' as applied to this unique *Samādhi*, could best be illustrated by the following utterance of Venerable *Ananda*:

"While seeing in whatever manner, friend, there comes to be the immediate destruction of influxes (*anantarā āsavānaṃ khayō hoti*)—that is the highest (way of) seeing. While hearing in whatever manner there comes to be the immediate destruction of influxes—that is the highest hearing. While being happy in whatever way there comes to be the immediate destruction of influxes—that is the highest happiness. While perceiving in whatever manner there comes to be the immediate destruction of influxes—that is the highest perception. Being in whatever state there comes to be the immediate destruction of influxes—that is the highest (form of) existence."

—A. III 202 *Bhaddaji S.*

wardly nor be established inwardly and not grasping, he would not be vexed. When, monks, one's consciousness is neither distracted or dissipated outwardly, nor established inwardly and when he, grasping naught, is not vexed, there will be no arising or origination again of birth, decay, death and suffering."

— M. III 223. *Uddesavibhaṅga S.*

B. "Sister, that particular concentration which is neither 'turned - towards' nor 'turned - outwards,' which is not a form of restraint forcibly held in place by formations — a concentration which is stable owing to the fact of emancipation and is one of contentment owing to its stability and wherein owing to contentment, one is not vexed — that concentration, sister, has been made known by the Lord as that which has knowledge (of arahanthood) as its fruit (*aññāphalo*)."

— A. IV 428.

One can form an idea of the range of meaning covered by the terms '*asamhīram*', '*asamkuppam*', in the context of these two passages. The reference to a non-establishment of consciousness inwardly (*ajjhataṁ asaṇṭhitam* — see **A**) would readily call to mind the definition of '*samhīrati*' in *Bhaddekaratta Satta* in terms of the twenty types of personality-views, while the expression 'neither turned towards' ('*na ca abhirato*' — see **B**.) suggests the absence of an introvert attitude which is not totally unrelated to the nuances of the term in question. Similarly, the phrase '..... his consciousness will neither be distracted or dissipated outwardly' ('*bahiddhā cassa viññānam avikkhittam avisaṭam*' — see **A**) and the expression 'nor turned outwards' ('*na cāpanato*' — see **B**.) have much in common with

Asamkuppam', though they stress, in particular, the absence of an extreme extrovert attitude. The negation of the afore-mentioned '*tertium-quid*,' finds expression in these two passages in the words: 'not grasping, he would not be vexed (*'anupādāya na paritasseyya'*—see **A**) and perhaps more clearly, in the rather unwieldy compound which we sought to render by:'. . .' (that particular concentration) which is not a form of restraint forcibly held in place by formations' (*'na sasaṅkhāraniggayhavāritavato*—see **B**). This latter expression seems to suggest, by contrast, that any makeshift compromise between the two extremes of 'attraction' and 'repulsion', of 'sympathy' and 'anti-pathy', of 'settling' and 'distraction' (*rāga—dosa; anunaya-paṭigha; saṁkhitta-vikkhitta*) — such as obtain in any worldly type of concentration—is necessarily accompanied by mental synergies or formations (*saṁkhārā*). These formations exercise such a rigorous control over the concentration so much so that it might be called a state of pent up tension or stress—however subtle it may appear. Hence, like all other phenomena which partake of a concocted and compound character, worldly concentration, even at its best, can yield only a 'peace-dependent-on-irritability' (*'kuppapaṭiccasanti Sn. V 784*). That extraordinary concentration of the arahant, however, has eliminated even this *tertium-quid* by the utter appeasement of all formations (*'sabbasaṁkhārasamatha'*) and is therefore known as the 'Unexcitable (or Unshakable) Deliverance of the mind' (*'ākuppañcetovimutti'*). The appeasement of mental formations is accompanied by the relinquishment of all 'assets' or 'substrata' (*sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo*) which arrest and sustain attention. Yet this paradoxical concentration does not lapse into a dull lethargy since it has as its quasi-object of attention the very Nibbānic

peace of the cessation of formations.¹ For instance at *A. V* 321 one finds the Buddha giving the following explanation in response to Venerable Ananda's query concerning the possibility and nature of such a concentration:

“Herein, *Ānanda*, a monk attends thus: ‘This is peace, this is excellent, that is to say, the appeasement of all formations, the relinquishment of all assets (or substrata), the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna’. Thus is it, *Ānanda*, that there could be such an attainment of concentration for a monk, in which he would not attend to the eye, nor to a form, nor to the ear, nor to a sound, nor to the nose, nor to a smell, nor to the tongue, nor to a flavour, nor to the body, nor to a tangible, nor to earth, nor to water, nor to fire, nor to air, nor to the sphere of infinity of space, nor to the sphere of infinity

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1. ‘Nibbāna becomes the highest state of peace (*paramā santi*) for the arahant, due to his appeasement of all formations.

‘*Rahadova nivātova — anejo vūpasammati*’

Itiv. 92

‘Like the lake — when there's no breeze,
Urge-less, he is fully appeased.’

Cf. Schopenhauer: “The world can appear in its true colour and form, in its complete and correct significance, only when the intellect, freed from willing, moves freely over objects, and yet is energetically active without being spurred on by the will. This is certainly contrary to the nature and destiny of the intellect; thus it is to a certain extent unnatural and for this reason, exceedingly rare. But it is precisely in this that the true nature of GENIUS lies; and in this alone does that stage occur in a high degree and for some time, whereas in the rest it appears only approximately and exceptionally ...

— The World as Will and Representation: II 381–2.

(As quoted in ‘Schopenhauer and Buddhism

Wh. 144–146 p. 66 — Bhikkhu *Ñāṇajīvako*)

of consciousness, nor to the sphere of infinity of 'nothingness', nor to the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, nor to this world, nor to a world beyond. And whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after and traversed by the mind, even to that he does not attend. But nevertheless, he **does** attend."

Transcending all polarities characteristic of the phenomenal consciousness, the emancipated-one thus attains to the highest possible state of mental equilibrium which is 'immovable and non-irritable' and in which he meditates — as it were — 'thought-less'.

*‘Passaddhakāyo suvimuttacitto
asaṅkharāno sātimaṃ anoko
aññāya dhammaṃ avitakkajhāyī
na kuppati na saraṭī na thīno
evamvihārī bahulo’dha bhikkhu
Pañcoghaṭṭho atarīdha chaṭṭhaṃ
evam jhāyīm bahulaṃ kāmasaññā
paribāhirā honti aladdhāyo tanti*

— S. I. 126.

In body relaxed—in mind well freed,
Concocting not,¹ mindful. abode-less.²

1. • ‘*Asaṅkharāno*’: The appeasement of formations is meant.

2. ‘*Anoko*’: Cf. S. III 9 f. “The form element, householder, is an abode for consciousness..... the feeling-element the perception-element..... the formations-element, householder, is an abode for consciousness...”

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