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# **IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies**

## **IBCJBS**

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## Editor's note

It is a great pleasure to announce the issuing of the first volume of IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies (IBCJBS), the official Journal of International Buddhist College, on the occasion of the commemoration of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The journal aims at the enhancing of research on the wide range of academic disciplines of Buddhist studies such as doctrine, history, culture, ethics, logic, social philosophy and textual and comparative studies pertaining to all Buddhist traditions.

International Buddhist College was established 15 years ago with the intention of promoting Buddhist studies paying equal emphasis on all the Buddhist traditions on a non-sectarian basis for the good of many (*bahūnam vata atthāya*). IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies is an attempt to furthering the services of International Buddhist College through the research studies on various Buddhist academic fields. The first volume of the journal is the starting point in the process of extensive research studies that IBC is looking forward to undertake in many more years to come.

IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies is expected to be published annually in two mediums namely, English and Chinese. Therefore, it would be useful for both English and Chinese readers equally. A very large section of Buddhist studies is represented by Chinese Buddhist studies. Through the inclusion of research articles in our journal, it is intended to encourage Chinese Buddhist scholars to make research in the field of Chinese Buddhist studies.

The teaching of the Buddha is brightened when it is opened and not when it is being kept concealed. Critical investigation into the teaching of the Buddha would lead the path for the good of many. Therefore, research studies are welcome by

Buddhism for its aim is to bring out the fullest benefit of it to mankind. As Buddhist studies represents a vast field of study, there is no doubt that there are many more aspects in Buddhist studies which still need scholarly research by means of which scholars can make their contribution to the academic world. IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies would provide a platform for the Buddhist scholars to come forward and exhibit their research findings.

I would like to mention here, with due respect, the most Venerable Dr Wei Wu, the founder and the council chairman of International Buddhist College for his remarkable effort to bring out this first volume of the journal on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Buddhist College.

I am extremely grateful and thankful to the scholars who contributed invaluable research papers in Buddhist studies within a very short period of time to make this first volume of IBC Journal of Buddhist Studies a success. My sincere thanks also goes to the members of the board of editors and the board of reviewers for their editing and reviewing respectively, the articles to make the journal more academic. My heartfelt thanks are also extended with gratitude to those who help me in different ways throughout the process of editorial activities of this journal.

Prof. Dr Kapila Abhayawansa

Editor in Chief

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# An Examination of the Concepts of Reality and Appearance in Kantian and Buddhist Thoughts

Kapila Abhayawansa

Both Immanuel Kant<sup>1</sup> (1724-1804) and Early Buddhism agree with the view that our sensory experience does not give a real picture of an object. The basis for such a view seems to be almost the same in both philosophies. According to Kant's principles pertaining to experience, **sensibility**<sup>2</sup> is the only mental faculty which has an immediate relation with the object. Any other faculty of mind has no ability to maintain an immediate relation with the object. "Objects are given to us by means of sensibility"<sup>3</sup> says Kant. Impressions which we receive from the object by means of sensibility are known as sensations. Kant's definition of sensation runs as follows: "The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation<sup>4</sup>, so far as we are affected by it, is sensation."<sup>5</sup> The actual presence of an external object independent of mind is presupposed through the existence of these sensations.<sup>6</sup> If there is an object independent of the subject, then there arises a question as to whether this external object becomes an object of our

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, is considered to be the most influential thinker in modern Western Philosophy. The epistemological principles presented in his monumental work, "Critique of Pure Reason" are quite alien to Western philosophy, but surprisingly akin to Buddhist thought.

<sup>2</sup> "The capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects is entitled sensibility." C. P. R. A 19.

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Tr. By Norman Kemp Smith, 1978. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd. A 19.

<sup>4</sup> Another name for the faculty of sensibility.

<sup>5</sup> C. P. R. B 34 – A 20.

<sup>6</sup> "Sensation which presupposes the actual presence of the object." Ibid A 50-B 74.

knowledge as it is. Kant gives the answer to this question in the negative.

The nature of the object is explained by Kant through his interpretation of the way impressions of the object are given to us by means of sensibility. Every sensation consists of content and form. Out of this, only the content is directly related to the object. This content is received by the mind corresponding to the *a priori* forms<sup>7</sup> existing in the sensibility which, are known as space and time. Mind apprehends any object in the empirical world by means of above mentioned two *a priori* modes. It is to be emphasized that these two forms are not objective but, subjective. Kant stresses that the forms are given by the mind on the content of sensations which we receive from the objects. If it is so, then our object of sensibility does not show the nature of the external object as it is. In other words, the object of sensibility is not a real reflection of the external object. If both the *a priori* forms of sensibility are objective, then, the object of sensibility can be considered as something which represents the real picture of the external object. However, the content of sensations is received by the pure intuition of the sensibility under its two *a priori* modes namely, space and time. Accordingly, representations of the object do not contain anything belonging to the real nature of the object.<sup>8</sup> Kant says that there is “merely the appearance of something and the mode in which we are affected by that something” [C. P. R. A 44].

When the mind receives the representation of the object through the *a priori* concepts (space and time) in the sensibility, this manifold of representation becomes itself the object of our experience. In other words, the object of our knowledge is not the

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<sup>7</sup> The forms or modes which exist in the mind independent of experience. They are not derived from experience. For example, when we remove all the material properties relate to the objects, there remains a form of space where material properties should be occupied. This form which is not derived from the experience of the object is known as *a priori*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. A 44

object of the outer world but, the manifold of representation received from it through the senses. That itself becomes the content of our knowledge. The content is determined in accordance with the *a priori* categories of the faculty of understanding. When the content is determined, we call it knowledge or experience proper. If it is true, it entails that our empirical knowledge determines the object as it appears to us and not as it is. If our knowledge grasps only the appearance of an object, we cannot decide that there is only appearance. Kant says that if we do so, we must depend on an absurd conclusion that there is appearance only without that which appears.<sup>9</sup> Hence, Kant presupposes a duality of the object as to what **it is** and as **it appears to us**.

Kant explains what appears to us as appearance. The appearance of an external object becomes a mediate object to our experience which is the completion of our cognitive process and immediate object in the first step of the same process. Therefore, appearances are known as **sensible entities** or **phenomena**. The reality of the object in the empirical world should be distinguished from its appearance or as it appears to us. As the real nature of the object is covered by its appearance, we can know only its appearance. We know anything about the objects by means of sensibility, for the only intuition that is possible for us is the sensible intuition.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the real nature of the object never becomes the immediate object of our sensibility. Therefore, the thing-in-itself which is devoid of the modes of space and time, cannot be a sensible object. If it is a non-sensible object, it compels us to presuppose that there should be a non-sensible intuition.<sup>11</sup> As the thing-in-itself cannot be grasped by the sensible intuition, it should be

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<sup>9</sup> "Otherwise we should be landed in the absurd conclusion that there can be appearance without that appears". C. P. R. B xxvii.

<sup>10</sup> "The only intuition that is possible to us..." C. P. R. B 306

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. B 307

grasped by a non-sensible intuition. Therefore, Kant names these real natures of the objects as **intelligible entities** or **noumena**.<sup>12</sup>

What is the basis of Kant's division of an object into phenomena and noumena? Is there a justifiable basis by which we can accept this duality of the object as true? Kant promises without doubt that the mere appearance of an object is cognized in our knowledge and arises in accordance with the *a priori* principles of the faculties of sensibility and understanding. Therefore, the concept of phenomena is based on Kant's principles relating to the faculties of sensibility and understanding. Every object in the external world extends in space and exists in time. If it is so, can we have empirically, the concepts of space and time in relation to the objects in the external world? What Kant says is that every empirical concept has space and time as *a priori principles*<sup>13</sup>

Though we can think of the space and time without objects, we cannot think of the objects without space and time. This shows us that these concepts are not received from the experience, but they determine the objects existing *a priori* in the mind. Therefore, the concepts of space and time are the *a priori* conditions of the objects. If the object enters the mind under these conditions, it points to the fact that the object of our experience is not the nature of the object but the way it appears to mind under the conditions of space and time. Accordingly, Kant decides that only the mere appearance of the object enters the sensibility. Further this appearance itself becomes the matters (objects) of our experience through the function of understanding. These matters, in other words, the undetermined objects are considered to be the appearance. [The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is entitled appearance. C. P. R. A 20 B 34]. The object is determined when this appearance is modified under the *a priori* categories of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. B 306

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. B 38; 46

the faculty of understanding. But is that the external object that we have determined under those categories? Really, we have determined only the appearance. In other words, it is none other than the undetermined object of an empirical intuition. According to Kant, the existence of an appearance of the external objects is certain for our experience gives only knowledge of appearance. Therefore, Kant has established the concept of appearance or phenomena based on his epistemological principles.

Kant's theory of sensory experience, which analyses the object into appearance and reality, seems to be quite compatible with the early Buddhist notion of sensory knowledge. Early Buddhism constantly emphasizes that our ordinary knowledge does not represent the exact nature of the external world. The Buddhist assumption that what we recognize or experience as a being or person is not true, but the reality is covered by our experience is quite implicit from the following statement in Buddhism:

*“yathā hi aṅgasambhārā hoti saddo ,ratho”iti,  
evam khandhesu santesu hoti ,satto”ti sammuti.”*<sup>14</sup>

[Just as the word „chariot” is used when the parts are assembled, there is the conventional use of the word „being” when the constituents are present.]

It is likely that the later development of the concept of the two truths, conventional truth (Pali *sammuti-sacca* / Skt. *samvṛti-satya*) and absolute truth (Pali *paramattha-sacca* / Skt. *paramārtha-satya*), in Buddhist traditions was initiated from the early Buddhist notion that reality is concealed to ordinary experience. Early Buddhism recognizes a kind of knowledge other than sensory knowledge (*sañjānāti*) by the name of *abhijānāti* which enables a person to know directly the object as it is. These two terms (*sañjānāti* and *abhijānāti*) which appear in the

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<sup>14</sup> S. I. 135.

Mūlapariyāyasutta of Majjhimanikāya is an example which shows how an ordinary man and a person with purified mind knows the object in two different ways<sup>15</sup>. Commenting on the verb *sañjānāti* used in the discourse Bhikkhu Bodhi observes:

“*Paṭhavim paṭhavito sañjānāti*. Although perceiving “earth as earth” seems to suggest seeing the object as it really is, the aim of Buddhist insight meditation, the context makes it clear that the ordinary person’s perception of “earth as earth” already introduces a slight distortion of the object, a distortion that will be blown up into full-fledged misinterpretation when the cognitive process enters the phase of “conceiving.”<sup>16</sup>

In the discourse, sensory knowledge is taken as *sañjānāti* while higher knowledge which sees the thing as they are, as *abhijānāti*. The knowledge known as *sañjānāti* (conceives) seems to be akin to Kant’s sensory knowledge while the knowledge of the object as it is, i.e. *abhijānāti* (comprehends) is unknown to Kant.

This discourse further explains that the normal ordinary person (*assutavā puthujjano*) who does not know the object as it is through his perception attempts/begins making concepts whereas those who have purified mind (*araham khīnāsavo*) avoids such a process due to his comprehension of the object as it is. We can see, therefore, that there are two types of knowledge which arise on the same object, according to the mind of the person experiencing objects, in early Buddhism. The experiencer grasps the object as it appears by means of conception (*sañjānāti*), or as it is by means of comprehension (*abhijānāti*). The person whose mind is structured in the way that it grasps the object as it is (*pariññāta*), sees as it really is; and his experience is called *abhijānāti*; while, the person whose mind is not so structured

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<sup>15</sup> M. I. 1

<sup>16</sup> The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A New Translation of Majjhima Nikāya, Original Translation by Bhikkhu Nānamoli, Edited and Revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1995. p. 1162, n. 5.

(*apariññāta*) recognizes the object as it appears to him; and, he experiences in a way called *sañjānāti*. There is no evidence to show that Kant was aware of the mentality known as *pariññāta* recognized in Buddhism which should be acquired through spiritual purification. Therefore, Kant says that the noumena or thing-in-itself is unknowable.

Though early Buddhism does not make any attempt to explain the way our sensory knowledge represents only the appearance of the object, its epistemological explanation of sensory knowledge seems to be consistent with Kant's theory of sensory knowledge. Buddhism does not mention special mental faculties for the emergence of sensory knowledge. But the mental activities which bring about the cognition of the object can be distinguished from other mental activities with the help of epistemological factors shown in the discourses. In this respect, the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* sheds much light on this. According to this discourse, stages of sensory knowledge can be classified in the following way:

1. Depending on sense and object, there is an emergence of a corresponding sensory consciousness
2. The coming together of the three factors mentioned above is contact
3. Feeling
4. Cognition<sup>17</sup>

In line with the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*, *Atthasālinī*, the commentary to *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* shows the stages of sensory knowledge as follows:

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<sup>17</sup> “*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ tinnam saṅgati phasso phassapaccayā vedanā yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti*” *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*: M. 18.



1. Meeting of the sense and the five-door advertence (*pañcadvārāvajjana*)
2. Relevant consciousness (*viññāṇa*)
3. Receiving/assimilating (*sampaṭicchana*)
4. Examining (*santīraṇa*)
5. Determining or cognition (*voṭṭhapana*)<sup>18</sup>.

Though the above-mentioned Buddhist sources have shown the mental functions beyond the arising of cognition, here the mental stages are given only until the emergence of cognition. According to Kant, the sensation is the effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it.<sup>19</sup> The consciousness arising depending on sense and the object mentioned in the discourse is not different from the concept of sensation in Kant's epistemology. It corresponds to Buddhist explanations of the consciousness arising on the object. The consciousness arising in the case of the eye depends on the contact between the sense and the sense field of colour (the sense field of the visible)<sup>20</sup>, and is only an awareness of the sense field of colour. There is no doubt that a Buddhist critique of the sense field of colour or the visible would be very important in a comparative study between Buddhist and the Kantian theory of sensory knowledge. The canonical Abhidhamma text, Dhammasaṅgaṇī acknowledges the sense field of the visible as both colour (Skt, *varṇa*) and figure (*saṅṭhāna*).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Atthasālinī by Buddhaghosa, PTS, 1897, translated by Pe Maung Tin as "The Expositor", p 72, 140

<sup>19</sup> C. P. R. B. 34, A. 20.

<sup>20</sup> See, Y. Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma, Its Inquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality*, Centre for Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2010. p.157.

<sup>21</sup> Dhammasaṅgaṇī, ed. E. Muller, PTS, 1885, p.139.

Commenting on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī statement, Atthasālinī, the commentary to Dhammasaṅgaṇī, says that figures like long and short are not directly visible hence they cannot be included in the field of the visible<sup>22</sup> It is likely that the Atthasālinī presents this view due to the influence of texts of the Sautrāntika Buddhist tradition. The Sautrāntikas very clearly say that only colour is the sense field of the visible, but the figure is merely a mental construction.<sup>23</sup> What the above description entails is that only the colour of the visible object becomes the object of eye-consciousness and the figure such as high, long and short which is supposed to be the characteristic of the visible object (*rūpa*) is only a mode given by the mind.

The Buddhist critique of the field of the visible is very important in this respect for Kant, too, accepts colour, coherence and hardness etc., as what belongs to the content of sensation and figure such as extension and form what belongs to the mode of appearance. It is the view of Kant that the mode of appearance is not something belonging to the external object, but it exists as *a priori* in the mind. The content of sensation does not exist by itself; it should be in a form or mode. If the content of appearance is in relation to the external objects such as visible form etc., it should be extended in the mode called space. Space is a mode which appeared in the sensibility. Buddhism does not make any statement about space as a form of the external senses.

However, Abhidhamma books show the stage of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*) in the stages of cognition instead of contact which is the second stage of the cognitive process shown in the Madhupinḍikasutta. It is stated that the function of contact is the receiving of the object of the preceding consciousness. Perhaps this receiving / assimilating by the function of *sampaṭicchana* is

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<sup>22</sup> “...*tas mā na nippariyāyena dīghaṃ rūpāyatanaṃ tathādīni.*” Atthasālinī

<sup>23</sup> “*na hi cākṣuṣaṃ etat saṃsthānagrahaṇaṃ. Mānasaṃ tv etat parikalpitaṃ... varṇāyatane saithānagrahaṇābhāvāt.*” Abhidharmakośavyākhyā (Sphuṭārthā), ed. U. Wogihara – Tokyo, 1932-1936. Vol. 1 p. 26

none other than the grasping of the object of consciousness in the mind in some manner. Buddhism does not say whether this is the grasping of the object of consciousness by the mind under the mode of space or not. Though early Buddhism did not present any account of space, Theravāda tradition accepts space as a mere denomination (*paññatti mattam*).<sup>24</sup> Besides, it is accepted that space is something knowable by the mind.<sup>25</sup>

According to Theravādins, both the concepts, space and figure (*saṇṭhāna*) are mental constructions which have no real existence in the external world. On the other hand, it is also accepted that both space and figure are not different from each other and figures such as extension and form are included under the concept of space. In such circumstances, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the function of receiving/assimilating (*sampaṭicchana*) in the Buddhist theory of cognition can be considered as the receiving of the field of the visible (*varṇāyatana*) grasped by the eye consciousness having given form to it by the mind under a *a priori* mode (space) of sensibility, as in Kant's theory of perception. There are some other factors too which can validate the foregoing suggestion. In the Theravāda Abhidhamma, the function of receiving/assimilating (*sampaṭicchana*) is confined only to the objects which are cognizable by the five doors or five senses, Kant has given the name "outer sense" to the objects cognizable by the five external senses. Just like the Abhidhamma accepts that five-door consciousness is received by the function of *sampaṭicchana*, Kant says that outer sense (sense qualities taken by external five senses) is conditioned by an *a priori* condition (space) in the sensibility. The two functions accepted respectively by Buddhists and Kant seem to be one and the same. Moreover, Kant says that the sensations pertaining to the objects of inner sense cannot be conditioned by a *a priori* mode of outer sense namely space. They should be conditioned by the *a priori* mode of inner sense namely,

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<sup>24</sup> Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā, ed. J. Minayeff J. PTS: 1889. p.92

<sup>25</sup> Kathāvatthu, pp. 330-1

time. For Kant, time is the mode of inner sense. Similarly, Theravāda Abhidhamma enumerates that the mind door consciousness does not have a reception under the function of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*). Mental objects (*dhammārammaṇa*) cognizable by the mind door are considered to be unobstructed forms (*appaṭigharūpa*). They cannot extend in space. In other words, mental objects cannot take figures. In this way, it seems that we can come to the following conclusions with regard to theories of cognition of both Kant and Buddhism:

Kant: i. Mental effect of the relation between sense and the object is the sensation. In relation to external objects, sensation includes coherence, hardness and colours.

ii. Figures like extension and modes are given to sensation of the objects coming through five doors by the mind under the *a priori* mode of space. Sensation determined in this way by the mode of space is determined again by the mode of time already appeared in the sensibility. The sensation of the mind-door object is not determined by the mode of space but by the mode of time.

Buddhism: i. Because of the sense and object, there arises eye consciousness. There is only the colour in the object of visual form. The figure is not with the object, but it is a mental form. If it is so, this consciousness is the sense field of colour (*vaṇṇāyatana*).

ii. The function of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*) receives sense, object and consciousness keeping them together. Receiving is applied only to the five-door consciousnesses. There is no receiving function for mental objects. (This is because there are no figures for the mental objects.) This reveals to us that when colour which represents the object becomes the object of consciousness, the figure should be given to the field of the visible by the function of receiving of the mind.

According to Abhidhammic explanation, the object of the consciousness is further examined and determined under the function of investigating (*santīraṇa*) even after the receiving (*sampaṭicchana*). It is expected that the object is not yet fully

comprehended by the examining function. The final stage of the process of perception is considered to be the function of determining (*votthapana*). By means of this function, the object is completely determined. This function of determining is done by the mind door. That Buddhist statement that the final stage of perceiving the object is done by the mind door consciousness is very significant in regard to the Kantian theory of perception. Kant recognizes the last stage of perception as the **synthesis of the apprehension in intuition**. This refers to the apprehension of sense qualities of an object which are extended in space by means of outer sense (space) in the faculty of sensibility and presented in a sequence of time under the inner sense (time).<sup>26</sup> What it means is that the sensations which are determined through the outer sense (space) should again be determined through the inner sense (time). This Kantian explanation of the stage of perception seems to be quite consonant with the foregoing Buddhist clarification of the function of determining (*votthapana*). Kant thinks that sensations of the external objects should be determined not only by the mode of outer sense (space) but also by the mode of inner sense (time), and; the sensations of the inner sense should be determined only by the mode of inner sense, that is time. Even according to Buddhists, object-consciousness (sensation) of the five doors, having been determined by the receiving/assimilating consciousness, finally should be determined by the mind-door consciousness (*votthapana*). In line with Kant, Buddhists also point out that sensations of the mind-door objects are determined only by mind-door consciousness (*votthapana*). Functions of receiving/assimilating (*sampaṭicchana*) and determining (*votthapana*) do not occur there. There is no function of *sampaṭicchana* for the sensation of the mind-door object as it does not need to have a figure (*saṅghāna*), and also there is no function of determining (*votthapana*) as it is already taken through the mind-door consciousness. In this way, it is logically implicit that

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<sup>26</sup> C.P.R. A 99.

the Theravāda Abhidhammika explanations of the functions of *sampañicchana* and *votthapana* are mostly compatible with Kant's interpretations of the functions of space and time.

This comparison between the Kant's theory of sensibility and the Buddhist theory of perception points to the fact that both parties explain the same thing, but in different terminologies. There is no doubt that Kant's assumption that our knowledge of the object does not reflect the real nature of the object, but the appearance, is implied in his theory of Knowledge. Though Buddhists suggest that the ordinary man cannot see the reality of the world does not show implicitly a theoretical basis, it can be said that the Buddhist idea of appearance is hidden in their theory of knowledge, and it can be exposed with the help of Kant's theory of Appearance.

We have already seen that Kant, by pointing out that the world introduced by the knowledge is appearance or phenomena, does not mean that the objects in the world are created completely by the mind. He does not present a kind of idealism that claims that the external world is a projection of the mind. He does not say that there are no external objects at all which are completely independent of the knowing activity of the mind. According to him, we know the world in the way that they are introduced by the mind. Except for that way, there is no any other means for us to know about the objects in the world. Kant understands by the term „phenomena“ the object which entered the mind in relation to the external object. But still there is something in the phenomena which is independent of the mind. Kant sometimes introduces phenomena as the world of sense.<sup>27</sup> Kant says that he does not mean that the objects are mere illusion “for in appearance the objects, even the properties that we ascribed to them, are always regarded as actually given”<sup>28</sup>. Even according to Buddhism, we come to know the world by means of sensory knowledge.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. A 249.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. B 69

Moreover, Buddhism accepts external objects as sensible entities similarly to Kant. The objects such as forms (*rūpa*) and sound (*sadda*) are taken to be knowable by the corresponding senses i.e. forms knowable by eye (*cakkhuviññeyya rūpa*) and sound knowable by ear (*sotaviññeyya sadda*) in Buddhism. Sometimes, Buddhism introduces the world in the same sense that Kant talks about appearance. According to Saṃyuttanikāya, there is the world when there are eye, forms and eye-consciousness<sup>29</sup>. This is quite consonant with Kant's usage when describing the sensible world.

We come to know about the objects through the knowledge which arises as the result of mental activity on the sensations received by the mind in relation to the objects in the external world. They are reflected by the mind; they are not creations of the mind. It is true that Buddhism too considers them as something introduced by the mind, but at the same time, accepts their objective characteristics too. Even these characteristics of the object are sometimes explained by Buddhism in terms of subjectivity. In the Pāli discourses, there are occasions where the term *rūpa* (form-matter) is used in the subjective sense. There are also occasions where forms (*rūpa*), sound (*sadda*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*) and tangible (*phoṭṭhabba*) are described as mere sensations.<sup>30</sup> Prof. Kalupahana elucidating the phenomenal characteristics of early Buddhism observes:

“Evidence strongly suggests that early Buddhism as embodied in Pali Nikāyas and Chinese Āgamas, represents a form of phenomenalism. It is true that in speaking of the external world, or more properly of „form“ (*rūpa*), the Buddha makes reference to primary existents (*mahābhūta*) and „secondary form“ (*upādāya rūpa*) [S. 2. 3f.; TD 2. 85a-b 9 Tsa 12. 16]. But this division of matter is not equivalent to the division of matter into primary and secondary qualities found in many of the realist schools. The so-

<sup>29</sup> “yathā atthi ...cakkhum atthi rūpā atthi cakkhuviññāṇaṃ tattha atthi loka”. S. iv. p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> M. ii. p. 98.

called primary existents represented by the earth (*paṭhavi*), etc. are nothing but sense data. Hence, earth, for example, is defined as grossness (*kakkhalatā*) [M. I.185].”<sup>31</sup>

In this regard, Kant’s position seems to be quite similar. He also accepts sensations as the content of the appearance. He says: “That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term it matter.” [C. P. R. B 34- A 20]. The content of sensation has been interpreted by Kant as if he is a person who is well conversant with the Buddhist interpretation of the same. What belongs to sensation is explained in Kantian terms as follows: “... what belongs to sensation, impenetrability, hardness, colour etc...”<sup>32</sup> It is obvious how far this statement is consonant with Buddhist terms such as *kakkhalatā* (hardness or grossness) and *vaṇṇa* (colour).

Though there is no equivalent term for the „phenomena“ in Buddhist literature, modern Buddhist scholars use it to denote conditional Dhammas.<sup>33</sup> They accept this term in the sense that all the dhammas whether mental or physical are conditioned by causes and conditions.<sup>34</sup> Kant also terms sensible entities as phenomena in the sense that they are mentally conditioned.<sup>35</sup> According to him, our knowledge of the phenomena should be presented to the mind in accordance with the *a priori* conditions of sensibility and understanding. In that sense, phenomena in the Kantian sense is conditioned. But there is a distinction between phenomena as used by Kant and by Buddhism. While the concept of phenomena in Kant’s theory of knowledge is confined only to the field of sensory knowledge, the Buddhist concept of phenomena is pervasive throughout the whole field of experience including extrasensory knowledge. According to Kalupahana, “...

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<sup>31</sup> David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1975. p.70.

<sup>32</sup> C. P. R. A 21; B 5.

<sup>33</sup> David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p.161.

<sup>34</sup> K. N. Jayatileke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. p. 448.

<sup>35</sup> C. P. R. B 326.



all we know is phenomena, that is, reality present to consciousness, either directly or reflectively, and that phenomena are all that is to know, there being no „thing-in-itself“ or object out of relation to consciousness”.<sup>36</sup> We can claim such a concept of phenomena in Buddhism, as Buddhism reflects clearly a view that man can have knowledge other than sensory knowledge which can penetrate into the reality of the object. But when our comparison is confined only to the field of sensory knowledge, we cannot forget that Buddhism does not say that our sensory knowledge completely reveals the reality of the object. Buddhism insists on the necessity of a knowledge of knowing and seeing thing-in-itself (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*), for it accepts that there is something in the object other than what we know through sensory knowledge.

The demarcation of the existence of an object into phenomena and noumena by Kant is an inevitable result of the *a priori* principle of knowledge. A philosopher who holds *a priori* synthetic knowledge cannot claim that knowledge reveals the real nature of the object,<sup>37</sup> for if the sensible content which comes to the mind through the *a priori* conditions is prepared as a knowledge in the mind itself, that knowledge cannot be a right apprehension of an object. However, the existence of an object which gives the sensations to the mind after having come to contact with the power of receptivity cannot be denied. Though what appears to us from the object is a mental construction, the object exists in the outside world independently, without any relation to the mind. Kant has made his division into phenomena and noumena basing on the dual nature of the object which is the necessary assumption implied by the principles of *a priori* synthetic knowledge. Kant's assumption that there is the object as it is in opposition to the object as it appears also seems to be comparable with early Buddhist teachings. But there is an important fact to be

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<sup>36</sup> David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>37</sup> S. Korner, *Kant*, p. 92

considered. That is to say, the term/terms thing-in-itself or things-in-themselves used sometimes by Kant for the term „object as it is“ can lead to the wrong ideas. Kant’s view that the thing-in-itself cannot be known also lead his critics to a wrong direction. But Kant does not use the term thing-in-itself with metaphysical implications. If it is said that the thing-in-itself cannot be known in any manner whatsoever, it implies a metaphysical entity. What Kant intends is that it never becomes an object of our sensory knowledge. In this respect, we must not forget Kant’s words “...if we understand by it an object of non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual, ...”<sup>38</sup>

It is important here to inquire into the Buddhist term „*yathābhūtaṃ*“ to know what it means. It is a fundamental assumption of Buddhism that there is nothing other than sense impressions in the objects. Buddhist Abhidhammika interpretations reveal that all the physical objects are made of the different combinations of the four primary elements and those primary elements themselves become sensory data of the objects. In this way, any physical object can be analyzed into its component factors. Y. Karunadasa who has done excellent research on the Buddhist analysis of matter says: “In Buddhism, unlike in many other systems of Indian thought, the *mahābhūtas* are assigned a primary position in the sense that they are recognized as the ultimate irreducible data of matter.”<sup>39</sup> If we come to the conclusion that the aforementioned primary elements are themselves the sensory data for the knowledge that arises for knowing the objects and that they are empirical, it cannot avoid making a judgment that there is nothing other than the object as it is in the experience. But when the experience is limited to sensory experience, is it possible for a person to know the reality of the

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<sup>38</sup> C. P. R. B 307.

<sup>39</sup> Karunadasa, Y. *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*. (1967) Colombo: Published by the Department of Cultural Affairs, p.30.

object through the senses? The person comes to know the object, not as the distinct series of primary elements, but as the object produced by a certain combination of elements. According to Buddhism, the object as it is (*yathābhūtaṃ*) exist under the law of causation (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). There are many references in Buddhist discourses which indicate that the sensory knowledge cannot comprehend the things-in-themselves. For example, in the *sacca-saṃyutta* in the *Samyuttanikāya*, the Buddha advised monks to practice concentration of mind to understand phenomena as they really are.<sup>40</sup> The knowledge of knowing and seeing things „as they are“ arises in the mind of the person who has cultivated concentration. The basis of such knowledge is said to be the mental concentration<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, when there is no mental concentration there is no arising of knowledge of knowing and seeing as it is.<sup>42</sup> Though Buddhism recognizes a concept of thing as it is or things as they are, it is not a concept like God or Soul which is a result of speculative reasoning. Even in Kant’s philosophy, noumena is not a concept of pure reason. Therefore, it is not an object of metaphysics. As Kant was not aware of a kind of super-sensory experience, he just mentioned that the noumena cannot be known through the sensory experience. But he presupposes that it should be the object of contemplation. His thinking about noumena is delineated very clearly, as in the following way: “For a field quite different from that of the senses would here lie open to us, a world which is thought as it were in the spirit (even perhaps intuited), and which would therefore be for the understanding a far nobler, not a less noble, object of contemplation.”<sup>43</sup> However, we should not forget that he suggested that the noumena should have to be known through an intelligible intuition other than the sensory experience which

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<sup>40</sup> *Samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha, samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Sacca-saṃyutta, Samyuttanikāya.*

<sup>41</sup> “*Samādhūpanisaṃ yathābhūtañānadassanaṃ*” – *abhisamaya-saṃyutta*, S. i. 3.3

<sup>42</sup> “*Sammāsamādhim hi asati sammāsamādhi vipannassa hatūpanisaṃ hoti yathābhūtañānadassanaṃ*” A. iv (7-2-2-1)

<sup>43</sup> C. P. R. A 250

arises as the result of the combination of sensibility and understanding. Buddhism accepts that the field of experience can be broader than that of sense experience through a special mental discipline known as meditation. Therefore, in Buddhism thing-in-itself is an object of experience, the experience which goes beyond the capacity of sensory experience. Therefore, the conditionality or causality of the objects (*idappaccayatā, paṭicca-samuppāda*) is an object of experience. However, the realization of this conditionality through experience is said to be very difficult to achieve.<sup>44</sup> The Buddha who realized this reality which is difficult to understand has emphasized in one of his discourses that the normal worldly people cannot understand this reality.<sup>45</sup>

It should be mentioned here that the duality of the object into reality and appearance in early Buddhism represents its premature state. It cannot be seen there in a developed form, rather it is in a latent form. But one of the philosophical schools of Buddhism namely, Madhyamaka, has made a considerable attempt to develop the idea of the duality of the object. It presents the teaching of absolute truth (*paramārtha-satya*) and conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*) in a way that is parallel to Kant's teaching on noumena and phenomena. The concepts of absolute truth and conventional truth in the Madhyamaka have a very close affinity with Kant's concepts of noumena and phenomena. The absolute truth in the Madhyamaka system is taken to be noumena.<sup>46</sup> Kant having taken the same object in two ways namely, as it is and as it appears, introduces them as noumena and phenomena respectively.<sup>47</sup> Even for the Madhyamaka, the same thing according to our way of experience becomes either noumena or phenomena. While noumena exist as the object of real knowledge

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<sup>44</sup> *Adhigato kho myāyaṃ dhammo duddaso durānubodho... yadidaṃ idappaccayatāpaṭicca-samuppādo*. M. 26. Ariyapariyesanasutta.

<sup>45</sup> *Kicchena me adhigataṃ halaṃdāni pakāsituṃ – rāgadosaparetehi nāyaṃ dhammo susambudho*. ibid

<sup>46</sup> *Paramārtho nīpapañcaḥ kartavyo dvividhaḥ*. Mādhyamakārthasaṅgraha, 2

<sup>47</sup> C. P. R. B xxvii

and phenomena as the object of unreal knowledge.<sup>48</sup> According to Kant, the nature of the object shown by the sensory knowledge is phenomena.<sup>49</sup> In the same way, Madhyamakas also accept that the object of the senses is phenomena. The concept of noumena in Kant cannot be judged through the categories of understanding.<sup>50</sup> The categories of understanding are meaningful when they are applied with the sensible intuitions. Therefore, noumena should be known through a non-sensible or super sensible intuition. The concept of *niṣprapañca* (noumena) too is not an object of understanding (*buddhi*) as it belongs to conventional truth (*saṃvṛti*).<sup>51</sup> It should be understood individually, through the non-sensible perception.<sup>52</sup> The absolute truth of Madhyamaka is the inner nature of the objects of senses.<sup>53</sup> It is evident from many statements of Kant that he too considers noumena as the inner nature of the objects. The following are some examples: “This sense can contain in its representation... not the inner properties of the object in itself.”<sup>54</sup> “We have no insight whatsoever into the inner nature of things.”<sup>55</sup>

What we can conclude from the foregoing comparison of teachings is that though the way Kant has approached sensory experience through his epistemological principles is quite different from that of Buddhism, the end results of both the systems of thought seems to be very similar. Kant has inquired into the question of knowledge in order to know the possibility of the *a priori* synthetic knowledge which is certain and universal for the

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<sup>48</sup> *Samyan-mṛśā-darśana-labdhabhāvāḥ – rūpadvayaṃ bibrati sarvabhāvā, samyagdrśaṃ yo viśayaḥ sa tattvaḥ - mṛśādrśānāṃ saṃvṛti-satyamuktam.* Madhyamaka avatāra, vi. 23

<sup>49</sup> C. P. R. A20-B 34

<sup>50</sup> “...that it cannot know these noumena through any of the categories. C. P. R. B 312

<sup>51</sup> *Buddheragocarastattvaṃ – buddhiḥ saṃvṛtirucyate.* Bodhicaryāvatāra. 1. 2

<sup>52</sup> “*Tad etat āryanāṃ eva svasaṃviditā svabhāvatayā pratyātmavedyaṃ*”.

Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā. P. 367

<sup>53</sup> “*Yā sā dharmānāṃ dharmā nāma saiva tat svarūpam. Atha keyaṃ dharmānāṃ dharmatā dharmānāṃ svabhāvaḥ.* Ibid. p. 354

<sup>54</sup> C. P. R. A 30

<sup>55</sup> C. P. R. A 277-B 333

progress of science, whereas Buddhism approaches the same question to find the way a person gets involved in the mental defilements which are the hindrances for spiritual perfection.

### Abbreviations

- A.           Aṅguttaranikāya  
C. P. R.   Critique of Pure Reason  
M.         Majjhimanikāya  
S.         Saṃyuttanikāya

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# Orthographical Sanskritisation in the Udānavarga

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

The text of Udānavarga that is analysed here is a reproduction of the edition of that work prepared by Dr. Franz Bernhard, and published under the auspices of Abhandlungen Der Akademie Der Wissenschaften In Göttingen Philologisch-Historische Klasse, by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (Göttingen, 1965).

The analysis itself was made to accompany my on-line edition of the same work (<http://goo.gl/HCS8>). As the intention was not to re-establish the text but simply to illustrate a feature present in BHS texts, I have used the text as Bernhard presented it, which suits my purposes sufficiently.

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Prof. Franklin Edgerton in the Introduction to his Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary (BHS 1.56) made the significant statement that “*it is ... certain that some Sanskrit-appearing features [in BHS] are orthographic only; the words were pronounced as in Middle Indic.*”<sup>1</sup>

This study attempts to show in detail how a metrical analysis of the verses of Udānavarga can help us to restore the way the verses were pronounced, over and against the way that they have been written in the text as it appears now.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is not something that affects BHS only, as is well-known the Vedic texts have also been Sanskritised according to the rules of the later language, see the extract from Arnold’s book on Vedic Metre, elsewhere on this website.

<sup>2</sup> A disclaimer is necessary at the outset: the metre is only a *help* in the reconstruction of the pronunciation. In regard to certain features of the language of Udānavarga the metre is of no help at all.



This will be done by considering 4 ways that the text has been rewritten to make it appear more Sanskrit than it really was, they can be enumerated as follows:

1: *Expansion of syllables* - this is the case where syllables that have been contracted in Middle Indic have been rewritten in their full Sanskrit form.

2: *Syllables that must be excluded m.c.* - in this case by-forms that appear in Middle Indic, have been regularised to their Sanskrit form.

3: *Syllables that do not make position* - normally in Indian prosody a conjunct consonant will make the preceding vowel heavy in metrical weight, but there are many occasions where they fail to make position in this text.

4: *Svarabhakti vowels* - in Middle Indic the insertion of epenthetic vowels to facilitate pronunciation is a well known phenomena. In the text as we receive it some of these vowels have been excluded from the orthographic representation of the text.

There are a couple of other matters that have to be dealt with in the Introduction before we can move on to a consideration of the metres themselves, they are:

5: *Hiatus and Incomplete Sanskritisation* - there are places where the Sanskritisation of the text has not been completed, which as it stands leaves the metre incorrect.

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Take the Śloka pādayuga: *śīle pratiṣṭhito bhikṣuś cittam prajñām ca bhāvayet* [156ab], a number of questions arise that the metre cannot help us with: were the sibilants distinguished by sound as in Sanskrit or assimilated to *s* as in Pāli? was the pronunciation *bhikṣu* or *bhikkhu*? was the vowel before anusvara in *prajñām* pronounced as long or short? was the word-final consonant in *bhāvayet* pronounced or not?

The metre cannot help us resolve these questions. But there are many other places where it *does* in fact help, and can therefore give us an idea of what the sound was, and this paper is concerned with those matters.

6: *Resolution* - quite frequently one presumed heavy syllable has been resolved into two light ones, this is perfectly acceptable and within the parameters that were allowed in composition.

## 1. Expansion of Syllables

**i: -ava- = o**

In the Udānavarga, we can see that there are many cases where *bhava-* (◡ ◡) has been written, but the metre demands that the syllable be scanned as *bho-* (—). In fact, it seems that the words with this component were favourites in critical positions, where we can be sure of what the weight is in these positions.

In the text, I have scanned these expansions as being equivalent to one heavy syllable, and have identified them by marking them in green and underlining them, thus:

— ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ —  
apramādaratā bhavata suśīlā bhavata bhikṣavaḥ | [119ab]

which, for the metre to be correct we need to read as:

— ◡ ◡ ◡ ◡ — — — ◡ ◡ — — — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — Pathyā Śloka  
apramādaratā bhota suśīlā bhota bhikṣavaḥ.

Here is a list of the words and places where these expansions are found:

*bhavati* 63c, 104e, 105bd, 106bd, 134c, 135c, 144c, 146a, 147c, 207c, 209d, 214e, 217d, 221a, 227c, 235d, 243a, 279a, 281cd, 346d - 351d (6 verses), 352c, 368d, 373d, 421.iid, 464a - 467a (4 verses), 475d, 546c, 548c, 655c, 657f, 674c, 700c, 703a, 765d, 875a, 858b, 881c, 890ad, 966a, 970 cd. *bhavata* 109ab, 369d. This gives a total of 55 occurrences.

I have therefore read *bhavati* as having 2 syllables (*bhoti*) in non-critical positions in the following places: 14c, 564d, 691d.

Note that there are a number of places where *bhavati* must be scanned as having 3 syllables for the metre to be correct. In Pāli the distinction of the written form is usually maintained, where *bhavati* may appear as *hoti*, for instance, but the distinction in this text has been lost because of the Sanskritisation.<sup>3</sup>

We should read *bhavati* (3 syllables) at the following verses: 13c, 147d, 269b, 280iia, 281b, 291.id, 291.iid, 421.iib, 434a, 898d, 905d (a total of 11 occurrences). *-bhava-* also counts as having its full complement of syllables in the following compounds: *yathāvivbhavato* 227b; *bhavatr̥ṣṇāpradālanam* 248d; *prabhavati* 740a; *vikṣīna-bhavatr̥ṣṇasya* 916a, 917a; *ucchinnabhavatr̥ṣṇasya* 918a, 919a.

Occasionally we find that even in the same verse the word is scanned as 2 syllables in one place, and one in another:<sup>4</sup>

u u — — l u — — — l l u — u u l u — u — Pathyā  
asatām na priyo bhavati satām bhavati tu priyaḥ || 147cd

cf. 281bcd, 421iibd.

Another instance of the same type of expansion is *abhijñāvyavasito* 1008b, which must be read as *abhijñāvyosito*.

## ii: -aya- = e

We occasionally find that *-aya-* must also be scanned as an expansion from *-e-*, as in the following: *deśayati* = *deśeti* 190c;

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<sup>3</sup> There is not one occurrence of the form *bhoti* (for *bhavati*) in Udānavarga, which as we can see must have been the actual pronunciation in the majority of cases of this word.

<sup>4</sup> This phenomena also occurs in Pāli, e.g. Jā 487, vs 6 *Kathaṃ bho brāhmaṇo hoti, kathaṃ bhavati kevalī...* In Pāli it even occurs in prose, e.g. *Atittāva, bhikkhave, khattiyaparisā hoti, atha rājā cakkavattā tuṇhī bhavati*; perhaps for emphasis.

*bhāvayati* = *bhāveti* 267d; *bhāvayata* = *bhāveta* 344b.

I therefore read *varjayate* = *vrajete* 463c; *deśayati* = *deśeti* 993e, which makes more sense metrically

## 2. Syllables that Must be Excluded M.C.

There are many other Sanskritisations where a word which has a by-form in Middle Indic, has been regularised to its Sanskrit form in the text, against the metre. Again here we can see that this is merely an orthographic device, and cannot have represented the way the words were pronounced.

There are various cases where this occurs: *api* = *pi*: 30b; 106a; 765c; 855; *iti* = *ti* 290b; 680d - 683d (3 verses); *iva* = *va* 56a; 68f; 112d; 120d; 213b; 214b; 370d; 398c; 438b; 602b; 702b; 721a.<sup>5</sup>

## 3. Syllables that Do Not Make Position

We also see orthographical Sanskritization in words where there are syllables that do not make position.<sup>6</sup> In Indian verse composition rhythmical patterns are built up through the alternation of light and heavy syllables. To define the weight of the syllables it is necessary to take into consideration 2 factors: the natural length of the vowel, and what follows it.

If the vowel is long (*ā, ī, ū, ē, ai, o, & au*) normally the syllable will count as heavy. If the vowel is short (*a, i, u, r, & l*), then metrical weight depends on what follows it. If it is followed by another vowel, or by a simple consonant, it will be light in weight; if it is followed by a conjunct normally it will be heavy.

However, certain conjunct consonants do not make the preceding syllable heavy as expected, they are then said to be not making position. In the Udānavarga, the most frequent cases of this are

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<sup>5</sup> There are sometimes alternative ways of understanding these forms - see section 6 below and the commentary to the text.

<sup>6</sup> For details about conjuncts not making position in Pāli, see An Outline of the Metres in the Pāli Canon 1.5 elsewhere on this website.

found when a consonant is in conjunction with the semi-vowel sound *-r-* .

In this section, I have examined all the conjuncts with *-r-* that may be liable to fail in this regard, and have made a list of the result.<sup>7</sup> In the commentary to the text, however, to prevent a profusion of notes I only normally identify the conjuncts that have *failed* to make position, unless there is a need to explain why I have identified one variation over another.

### **i: br**

As in Pāli *br-* regularly does not make position as we can see when it appears in metrically critical positions, where the weight of the syllable is assured. In the text that follows, we can see that *br-* in *brāhmaṇ-* and *brahma-* regularly fails to make position.<sup>8</sup>

I count *br-* as failing to make position in the following words: e.g. *brāhmaṇa* 1022ib; *brāhmaṇam* 1017d; *brāhmaṇaḥ* 362b, 724d, 964b, 965b, 1024d, 1026b, 1038d; *śramaṇabrāhmaṇāḥ* 957b, 958b, 959b, 1038d;

I have also therefore, when entering the metrical markings in non-critical positions, counted it as not making position in the following words: *coṣitabrahmacaryaḥ* 968c; *brahmacaryavān* 244b, 891b; *brahmaṇaḥ* 956d, 969d, 978d; *brāhmaṇam* 970af, 971d - 977d (7 verses), 979d - 992d (14 verses), 993f, 994d - 1001d, 1002f, 1003d - 1012d, 1013a-d; 1014a-d; 1015a-d; 1016d, 1017id, 1017iid, 1020d, 1021id; *brāhmaṇasya* 1026a; *brāhmaṇasyedṛśam* 1039a; *brāhmaṇā* 1018d, 1019if, 1019iif.

### **ii: śr**

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<sup>7</sup> In the lists which follow the words are given in Indian alphabetical order.

<sup>8</sup> There is no other conjunct with *br* in the text which is in critical position, so that the status of the conjunct cannot be generalized from this text alone.

*śr* makes position in: *anamuśrutam* 261a; *alpaśruto* 465a, 466a; *bahuśrutam* 468a; *bahuśrutam* 562b, 974b; *bahuśrutasya* 795b, 796b; *bahuśrutāḥ* 780b; *bahuśrutaiḥ* 539b; *bahuśruto* 464a, 467a; *miśro* 653b.

It seems therefore that words from √ *śru* normally make position,<sup>9</sup> therefore I also count it making position in the following non-critical positions: *aśrutvā* 461c; *bahuśrutyena* 903b; *śrutam* 458a; *śrutamātratā* 582b; *śrutvā* 104c; *śrūyate* 474.iaa.

*śr* fails to make position in the following words: *gautamaśrāvākāḥ* 313b - 330b (18 verses); *śrāvākāḥ* 692d; *śrutvā* 541c; *śreyāḥ* 537d; *śreṣṭham* 218a; *śraiṣṭhyam* 542c; *śrotriyau* 724b, 1024b, 1025b; *samyaksambuddhaśrāvākāḥ* 379d. It seems from this that words with *śrāvak-* (written *sāvak-* in Pāli) do not make position normally, even though they are derived from √ *śru*.

As it appears that *śr* is likely to fail to make position in most words, I also count it as not making position in the following verses, where it occurs in non-critical positions: *aśraddhaś* 723a; *aśrāddhebhīḥ* 538a; *miśrā* 743b; *viññānaśrutam* 475c; *viśreṇayitvā* 244c, 891c; *śuśruṣur* 219c; *śraddhā* 222a; *śraddhāsyanti* 453a; *śrotreṇa* 474.ia; *śramaṇaḥ* 956d, 969d; *śramaṇo* 964a, 965a; *śreṣṭham* 290b; *saddharmaśravane* 225b.

### iii: *pr*

The places where *pr* in this text makes, or fails to make, position is not so easy to define, and it seems that it may have been counted or not counted as making position according to convenience.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, compare the verses found at 684 & 685, where *pr* fails

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<sup>9</sup> But see the exception just below.

<sup>10</sup> According to the analysis made here Edgerton's rather categorical statement (BHS Reader, pg vi) that "An initial consonant cluster never makes position (in BHS)" is incorrect - it is true that *usually* they do not make position, but there are many exceptions where they must in fact be making position for the metre to be correct. See e.g. 53c; 67c; 104c; 147d; 211c; 367d; 368d; 538c; 684c; 685c; 751c; 863d etc. etc.

to make position in line a; but does make position in line c! A similar situation occurs at 262cd.

Roughly, however, we can see from the analysis that follows that *pr* normally makes position when it is in the middle of a word (including compounds), which is what we would expect, as these words produce gemination even in Pāli when in medial position.

There are a significant number of occasions, however, where it unexpectedly makes position at the beginning of a word also, where simplification of the cluster, and consequent loss of metrical weight, would be the rule in Pāli. We may regard these forms as being completely Sanskritised during the redaction of the verses.<sup>11</sup>

a: *pr* makes position in the following places:

Medials: *aprakampayaḥ* 366b; *apramattaḥ* 307b; *apramatto* 841a; *apriyam* 198b; *kāyapradoṣaṃ* 169a; *cirapavāsinaṃ* 141a; *niḥsaraṇaprajñō* 473c; *notkuṭukaprahāṇaṃ* 955c; *buddhapratibhāsite* 692c; *viprasannaḥ* 306b; *viprahāya* 344a, 790a, 994a; *vairaprasaṅgo* 297c; *samyojanavipramuktaḥ* 1046d, 1047d; *satpuruṣaprasāstāḥ* 216b; *saprajñāḥ* 158c, 539c, 551a, 553a, 555a; *saprajñō* 153a; *sugatapradeśitaḥ* 262d; *hetuprabhavam* 354a; I therefore take *-pr-* as making position in *sarvaprāṇeṣu* 853c also.

Initials: *praceṣyate* 368d; *prativaśāś* 271c; *pratītaḥ* 211c; *prapañcitaṃ* 751a; *pramodate* 685c; *prasocati* 684c; *prasahate* 711e - 716 (7 verses); *prājñāḥ* 538c; *priyaḥ* 147d; *prītisukhaṃ* 863d.

b: From what follows we can see that the places where *pr* does *not* make position are predominantly at the beginning of a word, but sometimes it fails unexpectedly in middle position also:

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<sup>11</sup> In what follows I have separated medials from initials.

Medials: *apramattasya* 89d; *asthiprākāraṃ* 353a; *nirvāṇaprāptaye* 195b, 219b; *punṇyaprekṣī* 537b.

Initials: *pramattacāriṇas* 21a *prajāḥ* 604b; *prajñā* 250a; *pratirūpaṃ* 878a; *pratyūhaśatāni* 767a; *pravrajitaḥ* 564c; *prāptaye* 262d, 267d, 856d; *prāṇinām* 82d; *pretya* 684a, 685a.

I also take *prathamam* 482a, 483a; *pravrajyā* 234c; *praharen* 1026a; & *prāptavyam* 606a; as not making position to satisfy the metre.

#### iv: other conjuncts

Because of the well-known weakness of the semi-vowels *y*, *l*, & *v*, I made a cursory inspection of the conjuncts with these consonants in critical position,<sup>12</sup> but was only able to find 4 places where it seems *certain* that they fail to make position, they are found at: *tv* in 132c, giving *jagaṇa* in an Old Gīti verse; *kl-* in *kliṣṭam* at 684d in a Vaitālīya opening; *dv-* in *dvesam* 935a, in a Aupacchandāsaka cadence; *sn-* in *sneham* 371a, in a Vaitālīya opening.

All of the other conjuncts seem to make position. Below is a list of their occurrence divided according to the conjunct:

*tr:* *atra* 184c; *ubhayatra* 684b, 685b; *tatra* 354b, 370c; *duratikramāḥ* 799d. *paratra* 118d, 181d, 217d, 286d, 762d, 765d; *yatra* 53b; *śatrubhūtam* 767b; *sarvatra* 757c; *sahasrāṇi* 185a; *sukhatrayam* 149b; *sucitrā* 30a.

*dr:* *bhadrikā* 539d; *samudramadhye* 200a.

*dhr:* *adhruvam* 587b.

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<sup>12</sup>In this examination I have counted the cadence of Śloka; and the opening and cadence of Triṣṭubh, and Mātracchandās lines; and the gaṇas in Gaṇacchandās metres as critical.



*kr:* *atikramet* 740f; *atikrameta* 417b; *anantavikramam* 755c; *kriyate* 652b; *duratikramam* 1020ia, 1020iia; *duratikramāḥ* 72f; *dharmacakram* 263a; *samatikramaḥ* 776b; *samatikramam* 643b; *so 'tikramej* 306d.

*vr:* *parivrajat* 83d, 283d, 878f, 882f, 994b; *pravrajitaḥ* 564c.

*sr:* *parisravāṇi* 298c.

Although it appears that most of the other conjuncts do in fact make position, in a limited number of places, for reasons explained in the commentary it seems better to take them as not making position in the following words (these differ from the 4 instances listed above as the scanning of the syllables is uncertain):

*tr-* in *traividyō* 208.ia, giving the pathyā cadence; *-dv-* in *vigatadveṣebhyo* in 347b, giving the pathyā cadence; *dv-* in *dveṣaś* 355c, giving the pathyā cadence; *sv-* in *svake* 563a, in a Triṣṭubh break, to avoid the heavy 6th syllable.

#### **v: cch**

A further case where we have orthographical Sanskritization is in the writing of *cch*, which makes the previous syllable heavy, where *ch* is required for the metre to be correct, as in: *cchandam* 52d & *hiraṇyacchannaḥ* 702b; *cch* is also occasionally written unnecessarily at the beginning of a pāda, as in: *cchinnākṣaḥ* 100c & *cchāyā* 834f; it is also written after anuśvara: *cchrāmaṇyārthasya* 105d.

I therefore take it as not making position in *cchitvā* 51c; *cchannam* 162c; *cchandram* 671c, 672c; *vastucchinnasya* 912b - 919b (8 verses); & *ucchinnabhavatrṣṇasya* 918a, 919a.

#### **4. Svarabhakti Vowels**

Sometimes svarabhakti (epenthetic) vowels that have been excluded from the orthographic representation of the text also

need to be reinstated, and then given their full value.<sup>13</sup> I have identified svarabhakti vowels at the following places: *utpāda<sup>v</sup>yadharmināḥ* 3b; *ar<sup>a</sup>hatām* 187a, 219a; *div<sup>y</sup>am* 216c; *brahmacar<sup>y</sup>am* 235d; *s<sup>y</sup>ān* 305c.

## 5. Hiatus and Incomplete Sanskritisation

In the Middle Indic dialects, hiatus between words is perfectly acceptable, and quite often found, as a glance at nearly any Pāli text will show. In Classical Sanskrit, however, hiatus is normally avoided. In this section, I have examined all the cases of external vowel sandhi to find out how this relates to the pronunciation of the text.

Hiatus occurs in the following places: *ka ānanda* 4a; *garbha eke* 9a; *rathakāra iva* 56a; *kṣīrapaka iva* 68f; *ya etām* 74a; *chinnākṣa iva* 101d; *drṣṭadhārmika eko* 109a; *tīvra utpadyate* 127c; *ya ihākṣeṇa* 184b; *bhasmācchanna ivānalaḥ* 213d; *śreṣṭha uktaḥ* 218d; *nānurakta iti* 231a; *sa ucyate* 243d; *sthavira ucyate* 244d; *ya āryam* 267c; *jñātvālpajñāta iti* 280.iic; *careta eṣaṇām* 284d; *sa imam* 302e, 335d, 337d, 339d; *sa imām* 336d, 338d, 340d; *saṣṭha adhipatī* 352a; *’lpamatsya iva* 357d; *hrada iva* 366c; *ka imām* 367a; *kṣīrapaka iva* 370d; *ya udācchinatty* 394a, 933a, 945a, 946a; *abalāśva iva* 398c; *ca asaṣyamānam* 417c; *bāla eva* 559d; *bhavyarūpa iva* 602b; *sa eko* 607d; *ya evam* 608c; *vipāka iti* 680d, 681d, 682d, 683d; *madhya ivodakasya* 689d; *lohārdhamāṣa iva* 702b; *śrāddha ārabdhavīryavān* 711.iid; *nāga iva* 721a; *ya icchet* 759d; *iṣukāra iva* 817d; *yaśa iha* 840c; *ya imām* 1001a; *śuddha ity* 1025d.

Most of these examples are within the normal limits of the metre, but there are a number of forms included in the list where the metre is incorrect as it stands, and could be corrected by the simple expedient of completing the Sanskritisation of the text. Examples of this are:

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<sup>13</sup> For more on svarabhakti see An Outline of the Metres in the Pāli Canon 1.6.

*sa imām* 336c, 338c, 340c = *semām*  
*vipāka iti* 680 - 3d = *vipāketi*  
*lohārdhamāṣa iva* 702b = *lohārdhamāṣeva*  
*nāga iva* 721a = *nāgeva*  
*iṣukāra iva* 817d = *iṣukāreva*

There are a few more examples where the metre could be corrected by completing the Sanskritisation, but it would also be possible to correct the metre by dropping the Sanskritisation:

*rathakāra iva* 56a = *rathakāreva* or *rathakāra* 'va  
*nānurakta iti* 231a = *nānurakteti* or *nānurakta* 'ti  
*kṣīrapaka iva* 370d = *kṣīrapakeva* or *kṣīrapaka* 'va  
*abalāśva iva* 398c = *abalāśveva* or *abalāśva* 'va  
*bhavyarūpa iva* 602b = *bhavyarūpeva* or *bhavyarūpa* 'va

## 6. Resolution

As in the Pāli texts, a common feature of the verses of the Udānavarga is the resolution of one (presumed) heavy syllable into 2 light syllables.

Resolution cannot occur in 2nd or 8th position in a Śloka, but apart from that it can occur anywhere else, the most common position being the opening syllables of the line.

Below is a table listing the occurrences of resolution found in this text according to the position and metre:

### Śloka

1 <sup>st</sup>	74d; 131a; 147a; 168c; 235c; 243a; 258c; 277c; 337a; 466c; 467c; 538b; 545a; 711.ia; 711.iiia; 712a; 713a; 714a; 715a; 716a; 746a; 801c; 816b; 878a.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	793c.
4 <sup>th</sup>	1008d.
5 <sup>th</sup>	240a.
6 <sup>th</sup>	203e; 256c; 257a; 480c; 575c; 623a; 632a; 633a.

7<sup>th</sup> 160c; 401.iiia; 402a, 405a; 407a, 409a; 411a; 413a.

### Triṣṭubh & Jagatī

1<sup>st</sup> 51d; 65c; 298c; 563d; 596.iabcd; 696b; 702a; 845b;  
846b; 847b; 848b; 876d; 1045c; 1046c.  
5<sup>th</sup> 139ab.  
6<sup>th</sup> 105a.

It can be seen from this that in this text, resolution at the 1st is quite common in both of the main metres; and at the 6th it is common in the Śloka. Anywhere else resolution can only be counted as incidental.<sup>14</sup>

## 7. Examples

It may be useful to show how all of this affects the text, and we can best do that by giving some examples with the written and pronounced form side by side.<sup>15</sup> I include the metrical markings so that we can see how the metre can help guide us in this reconstruction of the pronunciation of the text:

written:	pronounced:
— — — — — etad api cchitvā tu parivrajanti [51c]	— — — — — Triṣṭubh etam pi chitvā tu parivrajanti [51c]
— — — — — alpam api cet sahitaṁ bhāṣamāṇo	— — — — — Triṣṭubh alpam pi cet sahitaṁ bhāṣamāṇo
— — — — — dharmasya bhavati hy anudharmacārī	— — — — — dharmasya bhoti hy anudharmacārī
— — — — — rāgaṁ ca doṣaṁ ca tathaiva moham	— — — — — rāgaṁ ca doṣaṁ ca tathaiva moham
— — — — — prahāya bhāgī śrāmaṇyārthasya bhavati 106]	— — — — — prahāya bhāgī śrāmaṇyārthasya bhoti [106]

<sup>14</sup> The number of verses given as having resolution at the 7th, apart from the first one, are probably all to be corrected - see the notes to 401.iiia (which covers the repetitions which follow).

<sup>15</sup> That is, as far as we can reconstruct it, see note 1 above.

— u — u — u — u —  
apramādaratā bhavata  
u — u — u — u —  
suśīlā bhavata bhikṣavaḥ [119ab]

u — u — u — u —  
asatām na priyo bhavati  
u — u — u — u —  
satām bhavati tu priyaḥ [147cd]

— — — — u — u —  
artham dharmaṁ ca deśayati [190c]

— u — u — u —  
śraddhādhano hy arhatām  
— — — — u —  
dharmaṁ nirvāṇapāptaye [219ab]

— u — u — u — u — u —  
bhāvayati mārgam hy amṛtasya prāptaye  
[267]

— u — u — u — u —  
pāpadharmāpi ced bhavati  
u — u — u — u —  
sa teṣām bhavati pūjitaḥ [281cd]

— u — u — u — u —  
śrutvā hy anarthaṁ varjayate [463]

— u — u — u — u — u —  
hy adhyavasitā yatra prajāḥ prasaktāḥ [604]

— u — u — u — u —  
bhikṣur na tāvatā bhavati  
u — u — u — u —  
yāvatā bhikṣate parān  
— — — — u —  
veśmān dharmān samādāya  
u — u — u — u —  
bhikṣur bhavati na tāvatā [890]

— — — — u — u —  
bhovādī nāma sa bhavati  
u — u — u — u —  
sa ced bhavati sakiñcanaḥ [970]

— u — u — u — — Pathyā Śloka  
apramādaratā bhota  
u — u — u — u —  
suśīlā bhota bhikṣavaḥ [119ab]

u — u — u — u — Pathyā Śloka  
asatām na priyo bhoti  
u — u — u — u —  
satām bhavati tu priyaḥ [147cd]

— — — — u — —  
artham dharmaṁ ca deśeti [190c]

— u — u — u — u — navipulā  
śraddhādhano hy arahatām  
— — — — u —  
dharmaṁ nirvāṇapāptaye [219ab]

— u — u — u — u — u — Jagatī  
bhāveti mārgam hy amṛtasya pāptaye [267]

— u — u — u — — Pathyā Śloka  
pāpadharmāpi ced bhoti  
u — u — u — u —  
sa teṣām bhoti pūjitaḥ [281cd]

— u — u — u — — Pathyā Śloka  
śrutvā hy anarthaṁ varjete [463]

— u — u — u — u — u — Triṣṭubh  
hy adhyositā yatrā prajāḥ prasaktāḥ [604]

— u — u — u — — Pathyā Śloka  
bhikṣur na tāvatā bhoti  
u — u — u — u —  
yāvatā bhikṣate parān  
— — — — u —  
veśmān dharmān samādāya  
u — u — u — u —  
bhikṣur bhoti na tāvatā [890]

— — — — u — u — savipulā  
bhovādī nāma sa bhoti  
u — u — u — u —  
sa ced bhoti sakiñcanaḥ [970]

# **A Brief Note on the Restoration of the Forest- Monk Tradition in 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Thailand**

**Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand**

## **Abstract**

This paper aims at exploring how the tradition of the forest monks (*araññavāsī* or *vanavāsī*) in Thailand which almost disappeared around the end of the Ayutthaya period due to many successive wars was restored by King Rama IV (King Mongkut) of Thailand.

## **Introduction**

The tradition of Theravadin monks is divided into two main groups: *gāmaवासī* (those living in village or city monasteries) and *vanavāsī* or *araññavāsī* (those living in forest monasteries). The *gāmaवासī* monks focus more on the study of Buddha's teaching, or currently learn Pali Buddhist texts while the *vanavāsī* or *araññavāsī* monks live in a forest monastery, learn basic Buddha's teaching (*dhamma*) and monastic disciplines (*vinaya*) and prefer meditation as their priority to study. The inclination to be focused more on either learning Buddhist theories or practicing meditation goes back to the time of the Buddha himself.

In fact, the Buddha was among the *Śramaṇas* who renounced the world in search of truth. He achieved supreme enlightenment in a forest. During the earliest period of Buddhist monasticism, he, together with his monk disciples, wandered about to various places without a fixed location. The monasteries were built later. When Buddhist monks were needed to stay for three months during the *vassa* (Buddhist Lent), a fixed place for monks was

considered and soon became a tradition. So, a fixed monastery came into existence.

The first Buddhist monastery was built in a bamboo grove, called Veḷuvanārāma, at Rājagaha. The forest monastery is actually an ideal place for Buddhist monks who want to put an end to suffering completely in view of the fact that they have to practise meditation daily and they do need a quiet place to do.

With the passage of time, however, people started to settle down near the monasteries, they then turn to become city monasteries. Often too, people start to build monasteries near to their villages because they want Buddhist monks to help them perform rites and rituals to serve their village communities. So, Buddhist monks who dwell in city or village monasteries find it hard to practise meditation because there are usually, many social activities to be engaged.

Anyway, the reason for renouncing the world is to put an end to suffering because simply learning Buddhist theories cannot lead one to the emancipation of all sufferings. Therefore, even if a monk learns a lot of Buddha's teaching and observes 227 monastic rules very well but fails to further develop concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) to put an end to suffering, their life is still considered by the Buddha 'empty'.

There is a story in the Dhammapada's commentary<sup>1</sup> that a monk called Poṭhila<sup>2</sup> who remembered the Buddha's teaching in the whole Pali Canon (*tepiṭakadhara*) but hardly practised meditation was rebuked by the Buddha as *tucchapoṭhila* ('empty Piṭhila'), meaning that he possessed nothing. The monk thought:<sup>3</sup> 'I myself

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<sup>1</sup> DhA iii.417-421.

<sup>2</sup> The story of this monk is described in a *dhamma* talk by Ven Ajahn Chah (1978) entitled 'Tuccho Poṭhila-Venerable Empty Scripture' available at [http://www.ajahnchah.org/book/Tuccho\\_Pothila\\_Venerable.php](http://www.ajahnchah.org/book/Tuccho_Pothila_Venerable.php).

<sup>3</sup> The Pali texts run: *ahaṃ sātthakathāni tīni piṭakani dhāremi, pañcañṇam bhikkhusatānaṃ attharasa mahāguṇa dhammaṃ vācemi, atha ca pana maṃ sattha abhikkhaṇaṃ 'tucchapoṭhilaṃ vademi, addhā maṃ sattha jhānaḍḍhaṃ abhāvena evaṃ vadetīti*.

can remember the Pali Canon along with its commentaries, teach the *dhamma* to eighteen groups of five hundred monks, but am, nonetheless, rebuked by the Buddha as ‘empty monk’; This may be because I don’t have any higher virtues like *jhāna*. So he made a decision to go to a forest and started practising meditation seriously.

The tradition of having two types of monks, *gāmavasī* and *araññavāsī* is more strengthened later when the corpus of Buddha’s teaching was collected and cited in the first three councils organized in India so the task of learning scriptures(*ganthadhura*) was assigned seriously among various groups of monks and took up so much of monks’ time to the extent that the monks who wanted to master the whole Buddha’s teaching need to abandon all other works including meditation. And wherever Buddhism takes roots now, there are two types of monks.

In this paper, I shall briefly explain how the tradition of forest monks in Thailand hardly survived by the end of the Ayutthaya period up until the early Ratanakosindra period and was successfully restored again by King Rama IV or King Mongkut of Thailand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **1. Sukhothai Period (1238-1438)**

The forest-monk tradition in Thailand goes back to the Sukhothai period. There were both groups of monks in Thailand being active during this period because both groups were supported by Sukhothai kings. The monks who were well-versed in the Three *piṭakas* were recorded in an inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai too. For example, the King invited ‘พระมหาสมณวิมลราชปราชญ์เรขนาบปิฎกไตร’ (Most Ven Phra Mahāsvāmi who was well-versed in the *tipiṭaka*) from Nakhorn Sri Thammarat to



Sukhothai.<sup>4</sup> The *Jinakālamāli*<sup>5</sup> text explains that King Dhammarājā (King Lerthai) of Sukhothai also built a monastery called Wat Pa Ma Muang or Wat Ambavanārāma (Mango Forest Monastery) and then invited Ven Sumana to stay. Ven Sumana, a native of Sukhothai, had learnt Buddhism from Most Ven Udumbaramahāsāmi, a Sinhalese meditation master who dwelled in Myanmar. In addition, the North Chronicles (คัมภีร์พงศาวดารเหนือ)<sup>6</sup> further explained that the monastic administration during the Sukhothai period was divided into two fractions: The Right Group (คณะฝ่ายขวา) and the Left Group (คณะฝ่ายซ้าย). Prince Dhamrong Rajanubhab explained that the *gāmaṇvāsī* monks already existed in Thailand during the Sukhothai period but the *vanavāsī* or *araññavāsī* monks were brought in from Sri Lanka.<sup>7</sup> Suffice it to say that the two traditions: *gāmaṇvāsī* and *vanavāsī* or *araññavāsī* monks existed during the Sukhothai period of Thailand.

## 2. Ayutthaya (1350-1767) and Thunburi (1767-1782) Periods

The monastic administrative system of Ayutthaya resembled that of Sukhothai. There were two high ranking monks called *saṅgharājā* (the ruler of the Buddhist Order): one belongs to the *gāmaṇvāsī* group and another one the *vanavāsī* or *araññavāsī* group. Of these two, whoever is senior in term of *vassa* (the three-

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in ปฐมพงษ์ โพธิ์ประสิทธิ์นันท์. (๒๕๔๘). ประวัติศาสตร์พระพุทธศาสนาในประเทศไทย: ตั้งแต่สมัยสุโขทัยถึงสมัยรัชกาลที่ ๕. เอกสารงานวิจัยที่ได้รับทุนวิจัยจากวิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล.

นครปฐม: วิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล (Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand, 2006, *History of Buddhism in Thailand: From the Sukhothai Period until the time of King Rama V: A Research Project funded by College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University*), p.46. See especially my footnote no.144.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in ปฐมพงษ์ โพธิ์ประสิทธิ์นันท์. (๒๕๔๘). ประวัติศาสตร์พระพุทธศาสนาในประเทศไทย: ตั้งแต่สมัยสุโขทัยถึงสมัยรัชกาลที่ ๕. เอกสารงานวิจัยที่ได้รับทุนวิจัยจากวิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล.

นครปฐม: วิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล (Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand, 2006, *History of Buddhism in Thailand: From the Sukhothai Period until the time of King Rama V: A Research Project funded by College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University*), p.54. See especially my footnote no.163.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp.55-56.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.56, especially my footnote no.168.

month retreat during the rainy season), will be promoted to the rank of His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Somdet Phra Sangharat).<sup>8</sup>

As I explained in my research work<sup>9</sup>, the problem with this period is that Buddhism was very much influenced by Brahmanism-Hinduism because the first king of Ayutthaya, King U-thong (1314-1369), was inspired by the concept of the God-King (*devarājā*) in Brahmanism-Hinduism which was a dominant religion in South-East Asia along with Buddhism to the extent that he invited eight brahmins from Varanasi, India to come to his kingdom and taught Hindu rites and rituals for his royal court. Since then Brahmanism-Hinduism played a key role in the state. Several monks were engaged in the practice of superstitious beliefs and this practice was seriously supported by many kings. King Narai (1656-1688), for example, was reputed for having learnt magic spells from Brahmanism-Hinduism and especially respected monks who were well-versed in them.

The forest tradition did exist during these two periods even though the story of forest monks was hardly recorded. Not many forest monks famous for meditation practice were mentioned. The most detailed book on meditation during this time is apparently the one titled the *Samathapipassanakammaṭṭhāna: Maggapālīmut and Vithī Ārāṭṭhanāphrakammaṭṭhān (The Practice of Samatha and Vipassanā: A Text which describes the Path not directly taken from Pali Sources together with a Method to Start the Kammaṭṭhāna)*.<sup>10</sup> It explains how one of the most famous meditation masters during the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods practised meditation and taught his disciples. The book is said to have been collected from the teaching of His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch (Sukh Kaithuen), one of the most well-known

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 71-72.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 4, pp.62-86.

<sup>10</sup> I understand that the word *maggapālīmut* here is derived from *maggapalimuttaka* which implies that the book was not a translation from any specific Pali text but rather an explanation taken from various sources combined together.

meditation masters who lived during the Ayutthaya, Thonburi and early Ratanakosindra periods.

His Holiness was born in 1733 during the time of King Borommakos of Ayutthaya (1733-1758). When Ayutthaya was burnt to the ground by the Burmese troops in 1767 and King Taksin made Thonburi his capital, His Holiness was promoted to the rank of *Phra Athikarn* (an administrative monk) and stayed at Wat Tha Hoy.

When King Rama I (King Buddhayodfar Chulalok) ascended to the throne in 1782 and founded the Ratanakosindra Kingdom, making Bangkok the new capital, the situation in the country was not perfectly peaceful. There were nine wars with Burma to be settled during his time. The tradition of forest monks in Siam during this time was hardly mentioned. Even though there might be monks doing meditation and living in the forest, they did so out of their personal interest and I personally don't think that the number was high since there was no systematic schooling responsible for producing forest monks during this period.

Even worse, a large number of monks across the country did not adhere to the *vinaya* (monastic rules) strictly, fell away from good conduct and behaved badly to the extent that the King had to enact a specific law, called *Kot Phra Song* (the law for Buddhist Monks), to control and punish them.<sup>11</sup> The successive wars had created a huge impact on the sangha which needed to be hugely reformed. When King Rama II and III ascended to the throne, the situation was almost similar because there were no dramatic changes.

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<sup>11</sup> ปฐมพงษ์ โพธิ์ประสิทธิ์นันท์. (๒๕๔๘). ประวัติศาสตร์พระพุทธศาสนาในประเทศไทย: ตั้งแต่สมัยสุโขทัยถึงสมัยรัชกาลที่ ๕. เอกสารงานวิจัยโดยได้รับทุนวิจัยจากวิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล.

นครปฐม: วิทยาลัยศาสนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล (Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand, 2006, *History of Buddhism in Thailand: From the Sukhothai Period until the time of King Rama V: A Research Project funded by College of Religious Studies, Mahidol University*), p.97 ff.

### 3. The Restoration of the Forest Monk Tradition by King Mongkut

King Mongkut was ordained twice, once as a novice at the age of 14 and, for the second time, as a monk at the age of 20 at the Emerald Buddha Temple. His given Buddhist name was Vajirañāṇo. He was in the monkhood for 27 years before being invited by his ministers to ascend to the throne during 1851-1868. He made it clear why he was ordained as a monk. He said that his elder brother, Prince Jetsadabodin or later King Rama III, expected the throne and, for the sake of his own safety, he should ordain as a monk.<sup>12</sup>

According to his own Pali writing, he had to be in the monkhood for the sake of his own safety because if he remained a layman, he might be harmed by his royal brother who wanted the throne.<sup>13</sup> After being ordained as a monk and staying at Wat Mahathat for three days, he moved to Wat Samorai, currently Wat Rachathiwaswiharn. His Buddhist name was Vajirañāṇo Bhikkhu. He studied Buddhism and Pali seriously and soon afterwards mastered this classical language. He composed many Pali verses which have been used nowadays including the morning and

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<sup>12</sup> มหาเถรสมาคม, บรรณาธิการ (๒๕๔๓), *ประชุมพระราชนิพนธ์ภาษามาลีในพระบาทสมเด็จพระ*

*จอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว*, กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์สำนักงานพระพุทธศาสนาแห่งชาติ (The Sangha Supreme Council, eds, 2004, *A Collection of Pali Writings of King Rama IV or King Mongkut*, Bangkok: the National Bureau for Buddhism Printing House), p. 198.

In his own writing, he said:

‘tato pure kiñci kālaṃ	deviyā jeṭṭhaputtako
sammasanto’va disvāna	sabbajeṭṭhakabhātaram
vemātikam abhibhuyya	karontaṃ palasā api
pitu rajjampi patthentaṃ	mahājanena mānitaṃ
sallakkhetvā anokāsaṃ	daharass’eva attano
jātiyā vīsativasso	huvā mokkhaṃ apekkhiya
āpucchitvā va pitaraṃ	pabbajjūpagato ahu
bhikkhunāmena vajira-	ñāṇo ayyo’ti pākaṭo
tasmiñ ca bhikkhubhūte va	rājā āsi divaṃgato.’

<sup>13</sup> มหาเถรสมาคม, บรรณาธิการ (๒๕๔๓), *ประชุมพระราชนิพนธ์ภาษามาลีในพระบาทสมเด็จพระ*

*จอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว*, กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์สำนักงานพระพุทธศาสนาแห่งชาติ (The Sangha Supreme Council, eds, 2004, *A Collection of Pali Writings of King Rama IV or King Mongkut*, Bangkok: the National Bureau for Buddhism Printing House).

evening chantings<sup>14</sup>. Usually, he got access to the teaching of the Buddha by reading original palmleaf manuscripts recorded in various alphabets in Thailand.

Later, he was invited to stay at Wat Bowornniwetwiharn in 1836. Vajirañāṇo Bhikkhu emphasized both *ganthadhura* (the task of studying scriptures) and *vipassanadhura* (the task of developing insight). While being a monk, not only King Mongkut taught Pali to his monk disciples and collected a large number of Buddhist palmleaf manuscripts at Wat Bowornniwetwiharn, he also trained his monk disciples to practise meditation, as explained in the Pali texts, their commentaries, special texts such as the *Visuddhimagga*. In teaching meditation, first and foremost, Vajirañāṇo emphasised the strict observation of the 227 monastic rules as the foundation of both right meditation and wisdom.<sup>15</sup> He also integrated some *dhūṭanga* practices as part of meditation practice for his monk disciples. In addition, he also built some monasteries for his monk disciples to specifically practise meditation such as Wat Boromniwat. It is recorded that soon after he moved from Wat Rachathiwat to Wat Bowornniwet, there were some of his monks disciples well-known for their meditation practices already such as Phra Buddhasiri or Somdet Phra Wanarat (Thub) of Wat Sommanat Wiharn, and Phra Amarābhiraṅkhit (Kerd Amaro) of Wat Boromniwat.

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<sup>14</sup> What he composed were compiled and published together in มหาธรรมสมัคม, บรรณาธิการ (๒๕๔๑), ประชุมพระราชนิพนธ์กษัตริย์ในพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์สำนักงานพระพุทธศาสนาแห่งชาติ (The Sangha Supreme Council, eds, 2004, *A Collection of Pali Writings of King Rama IV or King Mongkut*, Bangkok: the National Bureau for Buddhism Printing House).

<sup>15</sup> He explains often in his writing that there are two kinds of *vinaya* practices. The first one is the practice in accordance with one's previous teachers (*vaṃsaparamparāpaṭipatti*) who may be wrong and another one is the practice in accordance with the monastic rules as explained in the Pali Canon and its commentaries. The Thammayut monks were encouraged to follow the second one. He said: '*api ca saṅkhepena āyasmanto jānantu vinayaapaṭipatti nāmesā duvidhā honti vaṃsaparamparāya paṭipajjhitaḥ ca Pāliatthakathādayo oloketvā paripūreṭaṃ sakkuṇeyyā ca*' มหาธรรมสมัคม, บรรณาธิการ (๒๕๔๑), ประชุมพระราชนิพนธ์กษัตริย์กษัตริย์ในพระบาทสมเด็จพระจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, กรุงเทพฯ: โรงพิมพ์สำนักงานพระพุทธศาสนาแห่งชาติ (The Sangha Supreme Council, eds, 2004, *A Collection of Pali Writings of King Rama IV or King Mongkut*, Bangkok: the National Bureau for Buddhism Printing House), p.504.

While he was staying at Wat Bowornniwet,<sup>16</sup> he accepted two other monk disciples from Ubon Ratchathani Province: Ven. Bandhulo (Dee) and Ven. Devadhammī (Mao). These two disciples were related. Ven Devadhammī was a nephew of Ven Bandhulo. Both used to stay and practised meditation at Wat Mahathat, Bangkok. But later, they were impressed by Mongkut's practice at Wat Bowornniwet; so both of them moved to become his disciples.

Having ascended to the throne, King Mongkut granted permission to the then governor of Ubon Rajchathani province, Phra Promratchawong (Kuthong), to invite both of them to go back to Ubon Ratchathani in order to spread Buddhism in the Northeastern part of the country and then, under the royal support, he built a monastery, Wat Supattanaram, near Moon River for them. Ven Bandhulo became the first abbot of the monastery while Ven Devadhammī became the vice-abbot. Both of them taught both *ganthadura* and *vipassanādhura* to local people. Later, another monastery was also built, Wat Sri Thong (Wat Sri Ubonratanaram) and Ven Devadhammī was invited to become its abbot.

While Bandhulo became the leader of the Thammayut monks at Ubon Ratchathani, there were six Thammayut monasteries which were built, namely, Wat Supattanaram, Wat Sri Thong (currently Sri Ubonratanaram), Wat Suthat, Wat Chaimongkol, Wat Sra Kaew, Wat Ho Kong. All these monasteries were called *Araññikāvāsa* (forest monasteries) because they were located in

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<sup>16</sup> See คณะกรรมการบริหารคณะธรรมยุต (๒๕๔๗). ประวัติคณะธรรมยุต. กรุงเทพฯ: มหามกุฏราชวิทยาลัย (The Thammayut Executives, 2004, *A History of the Thammayut Order*, Bangkok, Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Foundation), pp.195 ff.

forests which is convenient for meditation practice.<sup>17</sup>

Having stayed at Ubon Ratchathani for quite some time, both became well-known in terms of their strict observation of the monastic rules and meditation, and many monks went to practice under their guidance. Among the earliest disciples of these two monks were Phra Ubaligunupamacharn (Chand Sirichando), Phrakhrū Tha Jotipālo (later he was the preceptor of Phrakhrū Wiwekphuttakit (Luang Pu Sao Kantasīlo), Phra Ariyakawee (later he became the preceptor of Phrakru Winaithorn Mun Bhūridatto (Luang Pu Mun Bhuridatto) and Ven Somdet Phramahaweera Wong (Uan Tisso). The most famous meditation masters of this lineage were, however, Phrakruwiwekputthakit (Sao Kantasīlo) and his student Phrakru Winaithorn Mun Bhūridatto.

In particular, Phrakru Winaithorn Mun Bhūridatto, or simply called Luang Pu Mun Bhūridatto, became the master of several meditation masters who were all well known in Thailand nowadays such as Phra Acharn Sing Khantyāgamo, Phra Thammacedi (Jum Bandhulo), Luang Pu Thet Desaraṃsī, Luang Pu Khao Anālayo, Luang Pu Whaen Sucinno, Luang Por Char Subhaddo, Luang Ta Bua Nāṇasampanno, Luang Por Lee Dhammadharo, Luang Por Puth Tḥāniyo, Luang Pu Dul Atulo, Luang Pu Whaen Suciṇṇo, to mention but a few. All these monks were affiliated to the Thammayut Order set by King Mongkut himself. Of all meditation masters who were disciples of Phrakru Winaithorn Mun Bhūridatto, the most senior one and who is still alive, is Phra Thammongkonyarn (Wiriyang Sirindharo) of Wat Thammongkol (Pali= Dhammamaṅgala), Bangkok, under whose

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<sup>17</sup> See คณะกรรมการบริหารคณะธรรมยุต (๒๕๔๗). ประวัติคณะธรรมยุต. กรุงเทพฯ: มหามกุฏราชวิทยาลัย (The Thammayut Executives, 2004, *A History of the Thammayut Order*, Bangkok, Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya Foundation), p.197.

guidance I have learnt much more of meditation in the modern Buddhist forest tradition in Thailand. He was born in 1920 and will turn 100 years old on 7 Januaray 2019. He used to be the close attendant of Phrakru Winaithorn Mun Bhūridatto for four years.







King Rama IV (King Mongkut)



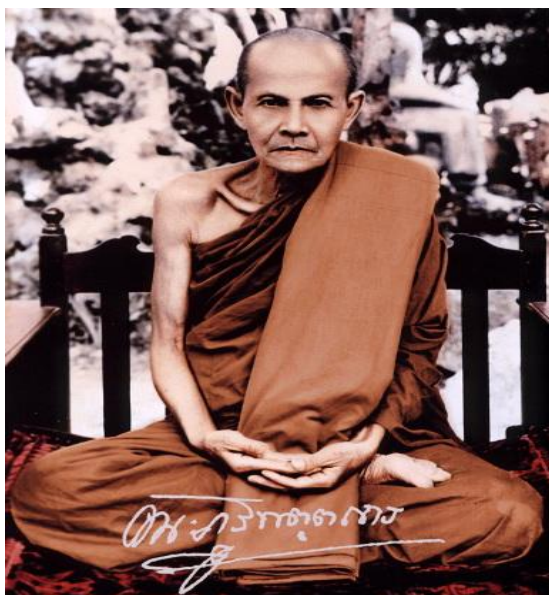
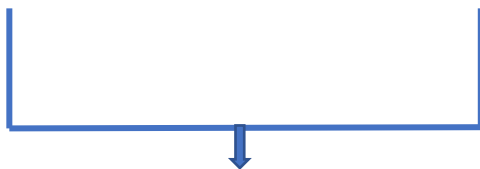
Ven Yā Devadhammī (Mao)  
Abbot of Wat Sri Thong (Wat Sri  
Ubonratanārām)



Phraku Wiwekputthakit  
(Sao Kantasīlo)



Phra Ariyakawee  
(Oon Dhammarakkhito)



Phrakruwinaithorn Mun Bhūridatto



Phra Thammongkolyān  
(Wiriyang Sirindharo)

#### 4. Conclusion

As we can see from the above discussion, the tradition of having two types of monks *gāmaṃvāsī* and *vanavāsī* or *araññāvāsī* has existed in Thailand from the Sukhothai period onwards. At the top level of monastic administration, there is also a position for forest monks. It means that both *gāmaṃvāsī* and *vanavāsī* monks have been an integral part of the monastic order in Thailand already.

However, by the end of the Ayutthaya period until early Ratanakosindra period, the number of forest monks decreased dramatically due to repeated wars. They were hardly mentioned in any historical book or chronicle. Even though there might be some meditation masters who lived in forests, they did so out of their own personal interest as there was no monastery responsible for producing them in large numbers. We can fairly say that throughout a long history of Thailand, the forest-dwelling monks were less than city-dwelling ones by far. It was not until King Rama IV or King Mongkut became a monk and started to reform the monastic order that the tradition of forest monks in Thailand became lively again.

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# **Does Buddhism really promote gender equality?**

**Petrina Coventry**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are now widely accepted critical factors for economic, social, and democratic progress of society, yet the status of women is widely varied worldwide, and there is evidence to suggest (Klingarova, 2015) that for the purposes of social geographic investigation, religion may now be a more important variable than race or ethnicity when trying to understand root causes of gender inequality.

Religion is deeply rooted in peoples' experiences and influences the socioeconomic and political direction of societies (Stump, 2008).

Societal development can be strongly influenced by institutional norms, as well as culture and tradition, which are often largely determined by religion. As the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal, religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influence with social norms and patterns of social organisation (Sinclair, 1986).

In the histories of religions, the voice of women is rarely heard, women as researchers and subjects of research were in the minority up until the last couple of decades (King, 1995), some claim this is due to patriarchal dispositions of societies in which these religions emerged, and which eventually stifled changes in the status of women.

The world religions all agree on the respect for women and their crucial role in family life, especially with emphasis on women as



mothers and wives, however it appears that not all advocate emancipation or empowerment in the sense of total equality with men, therefore we can say confidently that within many religions we find gender inequality which has been affected by interpretations and embedded practices.

When we look specifically at Buddhist doctrine, the question of whether it has achieved gender equality has been challenged over its history and some would say that the expression, practice, and institutionalisation of the doctrines are highly variable according to time and place with regards to how women are perceived and treated.

In the following paper, the evidence and arguments for, and against, gender equality in Buddhism are explored through an examination of core Buddhist doctrines, the representations of women in Buddhist literature, the status of women within Buddhist institutions, and quantitative research as evidence of growing participation and empowerment of women within Buddhist practice as well as its strong societal influence.

### **Doctrinal Evidence**

Buddhism has as its teaching core that is free of gender bias and this has remained consistent over its 2,500-year history (Sponberg, 1992; Wawrytko, 2009). One of the central Buddhist teachings is that of *anattā* that there is no permanent abiding self behind the flux of experience. It follows, then, if the self does not in reality exist, neither does gender. However Gross (2008, 2010) has taken issue with the way in which this argument has been used to obscure the historical injustices against women in Buddhism and to paralyse effective action for change within Buddhist institutions. Further, Gross (2010) has argued that while all forms of Buddhism adhere to the teaching of *anattā*, this adherence appears to have not resulted in a stance of questioning conventional, everyday gender norms and stereotypes.

Secondly, in Buddhist teachings, men and women both have the potential to attain *nībbana*, the highest goal of Buddhism. For example, in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha states: —whether a woman or a man”, one can reach nirvana (Watson, 2003). In addition, the Buddhist literature records a number of women who, having followed the Buddha’s teaching, obtained this goal. An example of this are the women recognized as *arhatis* in the *Verses of the Elder Nuns* (Powers, 2011). The assertion by Buddha of the equality of men and women with regards to their potential for attaining enlightenment has been described by Dharmasiri (1997) as a genuinely revolutionary moment given the “patriarchally entrenched” Hindu culture of the time.

Some of the early texts, however, list “if/ impossibilities for women”, which have been interpreted as implying that women may not go to the extremes of enlightenment as do men (Harvey, 2003). In addition, several Indian Buddhist texts have asserted that when a person attains a high level of realisation, future births will be in male bodies, thus destroying the potential for femaleness (Powers, 2011). Even the later Mahāyāna teachings, generally regarded as being more positive in the view of women, perpetuate this line of thinking. For example, both the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* clearly state that a woman must be reborn as a man before reaching Buddhahood (Watson, 2003).

A third line of evidence in support of female equality in Buddhist doctrine pertains to the concept of *kamma* – that of good actions leading to happy rebirths, while bad actions leading to unhappy rebirths. In Buddhist theory, to the extent that it is current actions and not gender that determine the quality of future lives, men and women can be seen to be equal with respect to the law of *kamma*. Despite this, however, some texts have expounded the view that it is more fortuitous to be reborn as a male than as a female, and in many parts of the Buddhist world, eventual rebirth as a male was historically presented as “the only viable solution to the misfortunes of female rebirth” (Gross, 2010, p. 18).

## Representation of Women in Buddhist Literature

Most scholars agree that the attitudes to women and portrayals in Buddhist texts are generally favourable (e.g., Gross, 2008; Wills, 1985) or in relation to early texts at least favourable in comparison to surrounding historical and cultural milieu (Dharmasiri, 1997). For example, Gross (2008) writes that Buddhism is free of the images and symbols of male superiority. Positive portrayals of women in early Buddhist literature include: women *arhatis* in the *Verses of the Elder Nuns* who are described as having attained outstanding wisdom and meditative accomplishments; the Buddha's mother, Maya, who is described as an exemplar of virtue and; the Buddha's stepmother, Prajapati, who is described as devout and spiritually accomplished (Powers, 2011).

On the other hand, there is also evidence of negative images in the early Buddhist texts. Powers (2011) draws attention to several examples of misogynist passages in Indian Buddhist Texts. He describes, for example, comments made by Buddhaghosa asserting the moral superiority of males to females, and the manner in which gender is viewed as a reward or punishment; specifically, that a punishment for a man who committed extremely serious actions might be a spontaneous transformation into a woman, whereas women who exhibited outstanding acts of virtue might be rewarded by a spontaneous transformation into a man.

The Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna literatures are uniformly seen as less problematic (Watson, 2003). There are several positive female and feminine images in the Mahāyāna literature, including *Prajñāpāramitā*, the personification of the perfect wisdom of emptiness (Watson, 2003, p. 30) while in the Vajrayāna “the very language embodies the feminine perspective.” Watson (2003) also draws attention to the large number of female protectors and deities within this literature as well as the centrality of *dākinīs* to the Vajrayāna mythology and *sādhana*.

In summary, the portrayal of women in Buddhist texts is varied, and scholars have identified examples of both positive and

negative depictions. According to Powers (2011), while there are many examples of positive portrayals of women, generally Buddhist tradition seems to have accepted the prevailing attitudes about women of their society and historical period.

### **Buddhist Institutional Practices**

Perhaps the strongest evidence for disparity between the genders emerges from an examination of Buddhist institutional life, including the issue of the ordination of nuns. Buddhism is credited with being one of the first religions to have an organised body of women followers, the *bhikkhunī*. In early textual accounts, Buddha's own step-mother could join, following some reluctance on Buddha's part and Ananda's intervention. Horner (1930/1975) has drawn attention to the significance of this occurrence in the status of women within religious participation. However, the significance of this occurrence is somewhat tempered by the restrictions placed on women as part of their admittance into the community. These restrictions took the form of additional rules for females and are generally interpreted as making the *bhikkhuni* order subordinate to men (Harvey, 2003). Current opinion, however, is divided with regards to whether these restrictions were placed on women by the Buddha or were added to the texts at a later time (Tan, 2010).

In either regard, these restrictions have had a profound influence on the status of women within Buddhist institutions across Buddhism's 2,500-year history (Goodwin, 2012). Scholars have listed a large number of inequalities that both reflect and contribute to unconscious gender bias and an unquestioning stance to associated social norms and mores (e.g., Goodwin, 2012; Gross, 2010). There is considerable evidence of discriminatory rules within Buddhist institutions around the world that limit women's authority, rights, activities, and status within these institutions (Goodwin, 2012). The majority of Buddhist orders throughout Asia, even the more liberal sects in Korea and Taiwan, teach that woman have more weaknesses and karmic obstructions than do men (Goodwin, 2012). Many exhibit discrimination in their rules,

rituals and policies. For example, in some orders strict monastic rules apply for women including the requirement for nuns to bow down to monks' feet, and for even the senior nuns to acquiesce to monks who have just been initiated (Goodwin, 2012). Often, there is resistance and even hostility to attempted reforms such as lineage chants that include female ancestors, and the use of gender-inclusive and gender-neutral liturgies (Gross, 2010). Overall, nuns and laywomen receive less financial and institutional support than monks and generally have a lower status and fewer opportunities for education and promotion (Goodwin, 2012). Such inequalities are not limited to the historical past or to Asian countries but are equally observable in the West. For example, a recent study of a Theravāda Buddhist organisation in North America showed that even though members agree that women and men are equally able to gain access to and practice the tradition, women and men have distinct gender roles and responsibilities within the organisation that are inconsistent with what the leaders and attendees understand to be the teachings of the tradition (Cadge, 2004).

The ordination of women has also continued to be a major issue to modern times (Goodwin, 2012; Heirman, 2011; King, 1999). Whilst recently, in some parts of the Buddhist world, nuns appear to have made progress in improving their status, in other parts monks and other stakeholders appear to be resisting the full ordination of women (Gross, 2010). Of extant ordination traditions- only the *Dharmaguptaka* accepts both men and women without dispute as fully ordained members of the monastic community (Heirman, 2011). In addition, in many monastic orders that accept both men and women, nuns generally cannot hold the highest-ranking positions of authority (Goodwin, 2012).

## **Quantitative Research**

Interpreting the texts, and protocols is important however there has been recent research conducted (Kamila KLINGOROVÁ, 2015) that shows by using statistical analysis we can determine how extensively women in certain states within religions are

represented socio economically, and the influence of selected world religions on the indicators of gender inequality and the social status of women.

These findings are important to determine where religions fall in terms of their influence and progress in terms of gender equality.

In the research, 50 geographical ‘states’ were chosen for analysis. The selection criterion was based on religiosity.

States with the highest share of religious (self-identified) people in the world were selected, as well as states with the highest share of people “without religious affiliation” (Zuckerman, 2007). This included 30 states in which one of three of the most common religions Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam were dominant, of note, differences between Christian denominations were not given attention.

Variables were tested to reflect the state of gender inequality in society. These variables included: sex ratio; literacy, tertiary education attainment; political representation: share of women in parliament and economic representation: women in the labour force as well as a complementary variable expressing the share of inhabitants adhering to the specified religion and the Gender Inequality Index (GII variable).

The method chosen for this analysis was correlation (Pearson’s  $r$ ) examining whether religiosity affected the status of women in society and gender inequality, as reflected in the relations between the chosen variables.

For the Pearson’s correlation coefficient, values were tested at a significance level of  $p < 0.01$ . All calculations were carried out using SPSS.

		Correlations					
		Sex ratio	Literacy	University	Parliament	Labour force	GII
Religiosity	Pearson Correlation	.251**	.465**	-.315**	-.634**	-.678**	.794**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	759,706	759,706	721,206	718,532	721,206	702,806
Sex ratio	Pearson Correlation		.380**	-.330**	-.295**	-.638**	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N		759,706	721,206	718,532	721,206	702,806
Literacy	Pearson Correlation			-.415**	-.250**	-.585**	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N			721,206	718,532	721,206	702,806
University	Pearson Correlation				.444**	.301**	-.337**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000	0.000	0.000
	N				718,532	721,206	702,806
Parliament	Pearson Correlation					.527**	-.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0.000	0.000
	N					718,532	700,132
Labour force	Pearson Correlation						-.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						0.000
	N						702,806

Tab. 2: Correlation analysis weighted by GDP per capita.

Sources: Adherents, 2013; Zuckerman, 2007; Census of India, 2011, 2001, 1991; World Factbook, 2013; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2012; International Labour Office, 2011; United Nations Development Programme, 2013; United Nations Statistics Division, 2011; Women in Indian Parliaments, 2013. Processed by the SPSS software.

Note: N represents the amount of values. A correlation coefficient (r) of 0–0.3 is considered weak correlation, a value of 0.3–0.6 represents an average correlation and strong correlation is attributed to the values of 0.6–1. The analysis is weighted by the GDP per capita; \*\* Correlation is significant at the level  $P < 0.01$ .

Findings stated that the highest level of gender equality based on GII and other selected variables were in states without a dominant religious affiliation, followed by Buddhist and Christian, and finally Muslim and Hindu states.

Therefore, the world's Buddhist states occupied the second position with the largest share of economically active women (50% in Cambodia and Laos), and the second lowest discrepancy between male and female literacy (2.39%) and reached second position in the GII variable (0.366), which is considered as most significant for the study of gender inequality in society.

However, it was shown that Buddhist states have only the fourth highest share of women in parliament (0.175) and it appears that political participation of women is not significant in these Buddhist states (lowest in Sri Lanka at 0.061 and Burma at 0.064).

Economic participation and membership in parliament are two important components comprising the GII (United Nations Development Program, 2013). In this case, one of these indicators improves the GII score of the Buddhist states, while the other does the opposite. The GII of the Buddhist states therefore probably supersedes the result of the Christian states because of significantly higher female labour participation.

We can see then from this research that Buddhist states rank more highly on gender equality across certain variables tested than do other religions.

## Summary & Conclusion

When Buddhists believe in *upekkhā*, equanimity or that everyone should be treated equally because we all have 'Buddha Nature' and the ability to become enlightened regardless of culture, race or background, what we are saying is that this equanimity extends to gender as well.

Buddhist society seems to be more equal in terms of gender than the Christian, Muslim, and Hindu societies (Cabezón, 1992; Gross, 1994), and it is fair to say that most scholarly opinion holds that Buddhist doctrine, at its core, is intrinsically free of gender bias. The disparity between Buddhist theory and practice is reflected in scholarly opinion regarding Buddhism's "scorecard" on issues relevant to gender equality.

Gross (2010) states that Buddhism's record on the practicalities of gender is "quite depressing". Sponberg (1992, p. 8) has described Buddhism in terms of "soteriological inclusiveness, institutional androcentrism, ascetic misogyny and soteriological androgyny". Nossiter (2008, p. 166) has referred to "a long-standing tradition of entrenched sexism evident within Buddhism of all kinds, which stretches back almost 2500 years to the time the living Buddha created the Sangha". Watson (2003) writes that while doctrinally Buddhism is concerned with liberation for all beings, in practice there is evidence of misogynistic strands. Finally, Sponberg (1992)



writes that while women are generally free to pursue a monastic career it is only within accepted social standards of male authority and female subordination.

Whilst Buddhism may not be sexist, its actual practice has been shaped by institutions or practices that are sexist (Nossiter, 2008). The manner in which the teachings have been implemented across both cultural and historical context, are highly variable in the way women are viewed, valued, and treated. The dissemination of Buddhist teachings has been susceptible and largely reflective of prevailing historically-situated socio-cultural mores, norms and attitudes. Therein lies the challenge of determining which influences the other more, society on religion, or religion on society.

But there should be hope. Even those who clearly recognise difficulties in Buddhism can see the potential and the means for their resolution (e.g., Gross, 2010; Watson, 2003). For example, according to Gross (2008, p. 293) —“in its philosophical views and its meditation practices, Buddhism has tremendous potential for deconstructing gender”. Similarly, Watson (2003, p.30) writes that throughout the history of Buddhism —“we find ... resources for an androgynous approach to Buddhism that respects the co-humanity of man and woman, male and female”. Thus, while the practice of Buddhism, as distinct from its theory, cannot unequivocally be said to promote gender equality, Buddhism contains within itself the very means for promoting gender equality in a profound and complete manner.

And there is evidence of progress with respect to issues of gender equality. It has been noted that the progression from Early Buddhism through the Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna shows evidence of greater openness to women and the feminine more generally (Watson, 2003). Progress can also be seen in the growing impetus for the full ordination of women, greater participation of women in important monastic roles in Buddhist orders, such as teaching, and

the reforms around monastic rules for women, to which the Dalai Lama has also lent his authority (Goodwin, 2012).

The female voice has been conspicuous by its under representation in the Buddhist world. However there is a gradual redress of gender balance which is adding to the reach and diversity of the Dharma in modern times and as we can see from the quantitative research with Buddhist states selected for analysis, they exhibit a higher involvement of women in economic life, with small differences between men and women in literacy and education.

If societal development is indeed strongly influenced by religion, and the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal (Sinclair, 1986), then the responsibility and onus on leaders within Buddhism to continue be role models, evolve the practice and set the right example with regard to gender equality is stronger than previously thought. The foundations are certainly in place within the doctrines and literature.

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# Critical Buddhist Studies: The Ancient Ābhīdharmika Standpoint

KL Dhammajoti

It is well-known that in the *Kesaputtiya-sutta* (more popularly known as the *Kālama-sutta*) of the Pāli Canon,<sup>1</sup> the Buddha advises against being blindly and irrationally overwhelmed, among other things, by the authority of tradition, lineage, scriptures, etc. The ultimate acceptable authority is one's own experience. This distinctively represents the Buddha's own emphasis on the necessary critical attitude on the part of his followers in understanding his teachings (or those of any teacher). It may be paraphrased as a methodology of "critical Buddhist Studies" advocated by the Buddha himself and the ancient Buddhists. In the following pages, I would like to highlight the ancient Ābhīdharmikas of the Sarvāstivāda as an exemplification of this emphasis harking back to the Buddha's own emphasis.

## The Nature and Aim of Abhidharma

Properly speaking, Abhidharma is soteriology; neither "scholasticism" nor "philosophy". Its ultimate aim is stated to be the transcendence of the saṃsāric predicament, and its mission is to provide an efficient means for this purpose—not for scholarly studies *per se*. This Ābhīdharmika claim is represented by Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* as follows:

Since, other than the discernment of *dharma*s there is no  
Excellent means for the appeasement of defilements,

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<sup>1</sup> Aṅguttara-nikāya, I 188 ff.

And it is on account of defilements that the world wanders in this existence-ocean  
— Thus, for this reason, it has been taught, they say (i.e., the Vaibhāṣikas), by the Teacher.<sup>2</sup>

Abhidharma in the absolute (true) sense is declared to be the outflow-free *prajñā*. And *prajñā* is defined as the “discernment of *dharma*s” (*dharma-pravicaya*), which is absolutely indispensable for transcending *saṃsāra*.

In the conventional sense, however, “Abhidharma” includes all forms of understanding capable of conducing to this pure *prajñā*: all the with-outflow understandings that are derived from listening (*śruta-mayī*), from reflection (*cintā-mayī*) and from cultivation (*bhāvanā-mayī*); understanding that is innate (*upapatti-pratilambhika*), as well as the Abhidharma treatises which provide intellectual learning.<sup>3</sup>

In brief: Abhidharma in the true sense is “discernment of *dharma*s”. Each “*dharma*” is a uniquely characterized ultimate ontological real<sup>4</sup>—an existent force which, in corroboration with other existent forces—contributes to the complex sentient experiences. The mission of Abhidharma is to properly discern the ultimate reals, or Reality, through intellectual investigation as well as spiritual praxis and realization. Accordingly, intellectual study, including “scholarly studies”, is emphatically given its due place in the whole journey of spiritual striving—just as in the Sūtra, *prajñā* is given its due emphasis in the scheme of the “fivefold faculties” (*pañcendriya*). In Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, the *dharma*, *prajñā*, is the faculty of understanding, operating in various modes at various stages of a sentient experience: it can be pure, impure, proper, improper, etc. Ultimately, however, it is the outflow-free

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<sup>2</sup> AKB, 2: *dharmāṇāṃ pravicayam antereṇa nāsti | kleśāṇāṃ yata upaśāntaye 'bhyupāyaḥ | kleśaiś ca bhramati bhavāṇāve 'tra lokas taddhetor ata uditāḥ kilaiṣa śāstrā ||*

<sup>3</sup> AKB, 2 f.

<sup>4</sup> AKB, 2: *svalakṣaṇa-dhāraṇād dharmāḥ |* “A *dharma* is that which sustains its own (unique) characteristic”.

(pure) *prajñā* qua spiritual insight (or direct realization, *abhisamaya*) that liberates one from defilements; hence leads to liberation.

### **The Ascertainment of the Contents of the *Sūtras***

An essential aspect of the “discernment of *dharma*s” is the discernment or ascertainment of the meanings of the *sūtras*. The distinctive Ābhidhārmika standpoint is that one must truly discern the meanings of the *sūtras*, rather than blindly clinging to their literal expressions. In fact, the Ābhidhārmikas claim that Abhidharma is not only properly *buddha-vacana*, but indeed the true authority (*pramāṇa*) or criterion for ascertaining whether a *sūtra* is “explicit in meaning” (*nītārtha*) or “implicit in meaning” (*neyārtha*). Or rather, it is claimed that Abhidharma is the explicit and definitive (*lākṣaṇika*) teachings of the Buddha.

JPŚ puts the fundamental stress of the Ābhidhārmikas on the need to discern the *sūtras* as follows:

... one should therefore discern the meanings of the *sūtras*. As the Bhagavat has said: Animals have their final abode in the forest; birds have their final abode in the sky; the *āryas* have their final abode in *Nirvāṇa*; *dharma*s find their final abode in discernment.<sup>5</sup>

On this, MVŚ explains:

The wise ones should therefore skilfully discern the meanings of the *sūtras*, and should not understand them [merely] at face value. If one does so, one will not only make the Noble Teachings appear contradictory, but also generate topsy turvy views in one’s own mind.<sup>6</sup>

This Ābhidhārmika standpoint of the need to critically ascertain the *sūtras* is also shared by other Sarvāstivāda masters, including some Dārṣṭāntikas. In this connection, we may note an interesting discussion in MVŚ on the wording of the

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<sup>5</sup> JPŚ, 922c.

<sup>6</sup> MVŚ, 145c.



*Dharmacakrapravartana-sūtra*. In this *sūtra*, the Buddha says: (I) first he gained the pure spiritual insight that: “this is the Truth of Unsatisfactoriness (*dukkhasatya*)”; (II) next, that this Truth was to be fully known (*parijñeya*); (III) next, that it has been fully known (*parijñāta*).<sup>7</sup> The Venerable Dharmatrāta remarks that he is horrified by these *sūtra* wordings which contradict a Noble One’s sequence of spiritual realization—the initial insight that the Truth will be known (i.e., (II)) cannot arise subsequent to his having fully gained the pure insight (i.e., (I)).

Here Dharmatrāta is alluding to the established Abhidharma doctrine of the sequence of the three outflow-free faculties (*anāsravāṇi indriyāṇi*): (1) the “I-shall-know-what-has-not-been-known faculty” (*anājñātam-ajñāsyāmīndriya*), (2) the “having-fully-known faculty” (*ājñendriya*), (3) “the faculty of one possessing full knowledge” (*ājñātāvīndriya*). These three faculties are *sine qua non* for the critical stages of spiritual attainment: The first necessarily contributes as the controlling faculty to the entry into the Path of Vision (*darśana-mārga*), transforming the practitioner from an ordinary worldling (*prthagjana*) into an *ārya*.; the second, to his entry into the Path of Cultivation (*bhāvanā-mārga*); the third, to his attainment of the non-trainee (*aśaikṣa*) stage.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note here that, Dharmatrāta, a leading Dārṣāntika and *sutra-dhara*—and thus generally taking the *Sūtra* as the authority—is here displaying an objective and critical attitude towards the content of the *sūtra* as passed down by

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<sup>7</sup> Cf Samyutta-nikāya, *Dharmacakkapavattana-sutta*: “*idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ*”*ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi* | “*taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññeyyaṃ*”*ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe...pe... udapādi* | “*taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ pariññātaṃ*”*ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi* |

<sup>8</sup> Dharmatrāta states here in terms of the specifically Abhidharmic terminology: the *anājñātam-ajñāsyāmi-indriya* must first arise; then the *ājñātendriya*; and finally, the *ājñātāvīndriya*. For the nature and functions of these three outflow-free *indriyas*, see AKB, 40, 49.

tradition. Nevertheless, considering that this first preaching had led to the spiritual realization of the five *bhikṣus* together with a host of divine beings, he simply asserts the need to adjust the sequence of the wording, without actually rejecting the *sūtra*. He asserts:

This *sūtra* should have said as follows:

“This is the Noble Truth of Unsatisfactoriness”. With regard to [these *dharma*s] unheard before by me, ... Likewise for the Truths of Origination, Cessation and the Path.

“This Noble Truth of Unsatisfactoriness is to be fully known by understanding. This Noble Truth of Origination is to be fully abandoned by understanding. This Noble Truth of Cessation is to be directly realized by understanding. This Noble Truth of the Path is to be cultivated by understanding. With regard to ... unheard of before ...”

The Ābhidhārmikas here do not deny Dharmatrāta’s criticism. But they assert that instead of adjusting the wording, one should search for the *sūtra*’s intention (\**abhiprāya*): A preacher of the *Dharma* may either follow a sequence that accords with that of the preaching—as in the case of this *sutra*; or a sequence that accords with that of spiritual realization (*abhisamaya*)—as pointed out by Dharmatrāta.<sup>9</sup>

This discussion reflects the attitude of ancient—at least by the time of MVŚ, the gigantic Abhidharma commentary believed to have been gradually compiled through at least half a century and completed around 150 CE —critical scholarship, essentially matching modern Buddhist critical scholarship! Elsewhere, the MVŚ compilers differentiate the *Sūtra* and *Vinaya* from the Abhidharma thus:

In the Abhidharma, one should seek the true nature and characteristics of *dharma*s, not sequential order [of exposition—as one should in the *Sūtra*], or introductory account (*nidāna*)[—as one

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<sup>9</sup> MVŚ, 410c10-411a10.

should in the Vinaya]: there is nothing wrong that [an exposition] is given earlier or later, or without an introductory account.”<sup>10</sup>

The following articulate remarks by the later Ābhīdhārmika, Saṃghabhadra (c. early 5<sup>th</sup> century CE), illustrates further their critical approach to the study of the *sūtras*:

Simply because one comes across a *sūtra* incomplete in meanings, one must not [rush to] generate obstinate denial of other noble teachings. This is because, the noble teachings comprise a large variety; there is no single *sūtra* wherein all meanings are to be found. The noble teachings are twofold: Some are explicit in meaning (*nūtārtha*), others implicit (*neyārtha*); some are context-dependent, others are not; some expound the conventional, others the absolute truth (*paramārtha-satya*); some expound generically, others specifically; some expound from their own viewpoint, others from others’ viewpoint; some pertain to the characteristics of *dharma*s (*dharma-lakṣaṇa*), others to religious instructions (*\*śāsana*)—there are such innumerable perspectives. Sometimes, even though the exposition of a certain doctrinal point is found in a *sūtra*, its signification (*artha*) cannot be clarified (made manifest) unless it is considered together with other [related] expositions. Take for instance, the statement in a *sūtra* that one must apply the mind (*manas-√kr*) to the *saṃskāras*. To begin with, it is first to be clarified what “*saṃskāras*” [here] refer to. There are many types of “*saṃskāra*” referred in the *sūtras*: The “*saṃskāras*” in the *sūtra* reference “*avidyā pratyayāḥ saṃskārāḥ*”; the *kāya-saṃskārah* in other *sūtras*, referring to the in-breathing and out-breathing, *vitarka*, *vicāra*, *saṃjñā*, *cetanā*; .... [the “*saṃskāra*”] in the *sūtra* statement “all *saṃskāras* are impermanent.” ... One must investigate into all such [related notions and contexts].

Thus, there should be places in the noble teachings that fully elucidate the intrinsic natures, names, etc., of *dharma*s. This is because the Bhagavat, in order to benefit sentient beings to be guided (*vineya*), takes into consideration the particular contexts, occasions, and personality types, etc.—and then he expounds to them accordingly particular doctrinal perspectives (*dharma-paryāya*). Since there is no single *sūtra* in which complete exposition [of a given doctrine] can be found, it is difficult to

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<sup>10</sup> MVŚ, 1c18–25.

discern its [proper] signification in isolation from other expositions elsewhere ...<sup>11</sup>

In Skandhila's \**Abhidharmāvatāra*, a succinct Vaibhāṣika work somewhat post-dating AKB, the scope of the Ābhidhārmika "discernment of *dharma*s" is given in its definition of *prajñā*—which, as we have seen above, is none other than the true nature Abhidharma itself:

[*Prajñā* is] the examination (*upalakṣaṇa*), as the case may be, of the following eight kinds of *dharma*: subsumption, conjunction, endowment, cause, condition, fruit, intrinsic characteristic, common characteristic.<sup>12</sup>

This scope of the "discernment of *dharma*s" has in fact already been similarly spelt out in the much earlier MVŚ as the fundamental concerns of Ābhidhārmika investigation:

The meanings of the *abhidharma-piṭaka* should be understood by means of fourteen things: (1-6) the six causes (*hetu*), (7-10) the four conditions (*pratyaya*), (11) subsumption/inclusion (*saṃgraha*), (12) conjunction (*saṃprayoga*), (13) endowment (*samanvāgama*), (14) non-endowment (*asamanvāgama*). Those who, by means of these fourteen things, understand the *abhidharma* unerringly, are called Ābhidhārmikas, not [those who] merely recite and memorize the words.

Other masters say that the meanings of the *abhidharma-piṭaka* should be understood by means of seven things: (1) skillfulness with regard to causes (*hetu-kaūśalya*), (2) skillfulness with regard to conditions (*pratyaya-kaūśalya*), (3) skillfulness with regard to intrinsic characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa-kaūśalya*), (4) skillfulness with regard to common characteristic (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa-kaūśalya*), (5) skillfulness with regard to subsumption and non-subsumption (*saṃgraha-asamgraha-kaūśalya*), (6) skillfulness with regard to conjunction and disjunction (*saṃprayoga-viprayoga-kaūśalya*), (7) skillfulness with regard to endowment and non-endowment (*samanvāgama-asamanvāgama-kaūśalya*). Those who, by means of

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<sup>11</sup> 708b26-c19. Saṃghabhadra's remarks here are made in the context of arguing for the Sarvāstivāda position that defilements can also be abandoned through the mundane paths (*laukika-mārga*).

<sup>12</sup> Cf *Entrance*, § 4.5.8

these seven things understand the *abhidharma* unerringly, are called  
Ābhidhārmikas, ....<sup>13</sup>

In the above-cited scope of Ābhidhārmika studies, subsumption stands out as a most important taxonomical device for *dharma-pravicaya*. To discern the reals (the *dharma*s), one must determine their intrinsic natures. And a rigorous methodology for this is subsumption. For instance, the *sūtras* speak at different places of “understanding”, “knowledge”, “insight”, “views” (proper and improper ones), “vision”, defiled and non-defiled “nescience” (*akliṣṭa-ajñāna*<sup>14</sup>), “wisdom”, etc. Through the methodological device of subsumption, all these are ascertained as having the same intrinsic nature of *prajñā*: there are different modes of being of *prajñā*. As a matter of fact, it is this methodology that outstandingly contributed to determination of the Abhidharmic list of *dharma*s.

But the subsumption does not merely serve as methodology of intellectual study. It has also an important soteriological function. MVŚ explains that, necessarily starting with the examination of the subsumption of *dharma*s in respect of intrinsic nature, one comes to eradicate the clinging to the ideation of the Self (*ātman*) and a unity as an ontological existent. With this, progressively, one finally acquires the pure *prajñā* into Reality, coming to be liberated:

Subsumption in respect of intrinsic nature applies without being independent of occasion and causes. Independence of time—at no time/(on no occasion) is there no *saṃgraha* of a *dharma* in respect of its intrinsic nature. Independence of causes—without any cause, a *dharma* is subsumed [by itself] in respect of its intrinsic nature, since without dependent on causes and conditions it exists in itself („it has its intrinsic nature“).

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<sup>13</sup> MVŚ, 116b.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Dhammajoti, KL, “The Defects in the *Arhat*’s Enlightenment: His *Akliṣṭajñāna* and *Vāsanā*”. In: *Bukkyō Kenkū*, vol. XXVII, 65–98. Hamamatsu.

One wishing to examine all *dharma*s should first examine their subsumption in respect of their intrinsic natures (examine how they are subsumed in terms of their intrinsic nature).

Question: what advantage is there, what merit, in examining the subsumption of *dharma*s in respect of intrinsic nature?

Answer: It removes the ideation of the Self and the ideation of a unity [as a true entity in itself], and one then readily perfects the cultivation of the ideation of *dharma*s and distinctness. [In this way one progressively realizes the impermanence of all material and non-material *dharma*s.]

In this way, one will come to acquire the seeds similar to the gateway of liberation of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Examining that conditioned *dharma*s are empty and not-Self, one will come to be deeply averse to *saṃsāra*, thus further acquiring the seeds similar to the gateway of liberation of the signless (*animitta*). Not delighting in *saṃsāra*, one then comes to take deep delight in *nirvāṇa*, thus further acquiring the seeds similar to the gateway of liberation of non-aspiring (*apraṇihita*).

With regard to these three *samādhis* [of liberation], one generates the medium with the support of the lower, and the higher with the support of the medium, bringing forth *prajñā*, becoming detached from the triple spheres, attaining perfect enlightenment and realizing absolute quiescence. Indeed, when one examines the subsumption of *dharma*s in respect of intrinsic nature, one comes to gain these advantages and merits.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

The foregoing discussion should suffice to demonstrate that, inspired by the Buddha's own emphasis, the ancient Ābhidharmikas have consistently and concretely upheld the approach of what deserves to be called "critical Buddhist studies". Very probably, the ancient Buddhist masters were the first (or at least among the first) ancient masters to have initiated a tradition of critical religious studies. Modern critical Buddhist scholarship no doubt can learn much from it as a solid foundation to develop further thereon.

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<sup>15</sup> 307a9–307a28. Cf also Ny, 342c8–19.

## Abbreviations

AKB	Pradhan, P. (1975) ed, <i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu</i> . Patna.
Entrance	Dhammajoti, KL (2008), <i>Entrance into the Supreme Doctrine</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> revised edition. Hong Kong.
JPS	<i>Jñānaprasthāna-śāstra</i> 阿毗達磨發智論 (T no. 1544).
MVŚ	<i>Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā-śāstra</i> 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, (T no. 1545).
Ny	* <i>Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra</i> 阿毘達磨順正理論, (T no. 1562).
T	Takakusu, J (1924–1932), ed, <i>Taishō Shinshu Daizokyo</i> 大正大藏經.

# The Wandering of the Buddhas – a Commentarial Exposition<sup>1</sup>

Gyanabodhi (Sajal Barua)

“O monks, there is one individual who is born for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the happiness, benefit and welfare of the men and gods. Who is this one individual? He is the thus gone one, the worthy one, the perfectly enlightened one”.<sup>2</sup>

The narratives scattered throughout the Pāli canon depict that the Gotama Buddha, after his awakening, spent all his life wandering from place to place in order to teach the *dhamma* for the benefit and happiness of the people.<sup>3</sup> Since his first discourse, the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (S PTS V 420-424, CST4 5.1081), delivered to his five fellow ascetics at the Deer Park in Bārāṇasi until his great demise (*mahāparinibbāna*) at the root of Sal tree in Kusinārā, he was fully devoted to the propagation of the *dhamma*. He instructed his disciples too, from the very beginning of his career, to go from place to place and carry out the same duty. The Vinaya-piṭaka, for example, recounts an episode of the Buddha asking his newly converted disciples to go in different directions to preach the *dhamma*.<sup>4</sup> What is significant in his instruction is that the Buddha specifically stressed as to „no two individuals

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is developed from a discussion on a similar topic in my dissertation which was submitted lately for my PhD degree to the faculty of graduate studies, Mahidol University

<sup>2</sup> PTS I 22, CST4 1.170.

<sup>3</sup> The Sutta-piṭaka records in the settings of each *sutta* the places where the Buddha delivered each particular discourse; Jinacārita, a twelfth century Pāli poetry of Medhamkara Thera, presents in it the places where the Buddha had spent his forty five rain-retreats (cf. Rouse 1905: 28-30, 62-64).

<sup>4</sup> Vin PTS I 20, CST4 3.32.



should go in the same direction" (*mā ekena dve agamittha*). This command, from the Buddha to his disciples, points to the fact that he wanted the maximum number of beings to benefit from his teachings.

Not just the Pāli canon but the commentarial literature too discusses the matter of the Buddhas' wandering from place to place. The discussion in commentarial literature reveals on the one hand the boundless kindness and compassion of a Buddha who would travel thousands of *yojana* paths to assist beings to be established in the *dhamma*, on the other hand, it shows his limitations as a human being. In this essay, I provide 1) a discussion of the Buddhas' wandering between the places and 2) a translation of the particular sections on the wandering of the Buddhas from the commentary on the Rathavinītasutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (Ps PTS II 148-152, CST4 1.254).

The commentarial account provides an explanation of the nature of the Buddhas' journey to different places. We come to know from this exposition in the commentary how exactly the Buddhas travelled between the places. In our inquiry into the matter we may put forth the following questions: Did the Buddhas travel alone or in a group? Did they travel only for the purpose of preaching the *dhamma* to the expected audience? How much time did they take and how much area did they cover in each distinct journey? And why did they choose to stay in or leave a certain place? An exploration into these questions would certainly assist to broaden our understanding of a Buddha in the Pāli commentarial tradition.

On the question of how and/or why a Buddha chooses to stay in or leave a certain place, the commentator provides an interesting exposition. According to the commentator, a Buddha does not stay in a place considering the comfortable external conditions of the place, but for the enthusiasm of the people in understanding and practicing the *dhamma*. Otherwise the Buddha leaves the place and moves to an area where there are people desirous of having an

experience of the *dhamma*.<sup>5</sup> The commentator, in fact, provides an incident where he discusses that once the Gotama Buddha was leaving Jeta's forest prior to a rain-retreat. Many including the king of Kosala and Anāthapiṇḍika requested him to stay back, but he refused their request. He stayed back only in response to the request of one of Anāthapiṇḍika's slave girls (*dāsī*) called Puṇṇā, because she wanted to take refuge in the triple gem and be established in the five precepts. After taking refuge and being established in the precepts, Puṇṇā went forth and subsequently with the practice of insight (*vipassanā*) attained *arahant*-ship.<sup>6</sup> So, as the Pāli commentarial literature illustrates, in his travels, the major focus of the Buddha was to establish people in the *dhamma*. Once the duty was accomplished, he moved to another place.

In the commentary on the Rathavinītasutta, the discussion of the Buddhas' wandering appears in a clarification of the expression "*yathābhirantam*". It says that a Buddha, after staying in a place as long as he finds delight, moves to a different place. In the narratives of the Rathavinītasutta, the Gotama Buddha moved from Rājagaha to Sāvathī, because his duty was accomplished in Rājagaha.

The commentator classifies the journey of a Buddha to be twofold: 1) a quick journey (*turitacārikā*) and 2) a slow journey (*aturitacārikā*). Buddhas are said to take a quick journey to assist beings that are ready to attain stages of awakening needing only a little spiritual help. A Buddha, out of compassion towards these individuals, travels different lengths of paths to assist them. The commentary on the Rathavinītasutta presents incidents of the Gotama Buddha's quick journey covering as short as a three *gavuta* path and as long as more than two thousand *yojana* path.<sup>7</sup> Cone (2010: 47) in her dictionary defines a *gavuta* to be „one-quarter of a *yojana*“; the PED states it to be „a little less than two

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<sup>5</sup> Ps PTS II 148, CST4 1.254.

<sup>6</sup> Ps PTS II 136-137, CST4 1.252.

<sup>7</sup> Ps PTS II 148, CST4 1.254.

miles” or „a league”. And a *yojana* is said to refer to seven miles.<sup>8</sup> If a *gavuta* is taken to be one and a half mile, the shorter distance covered by the Gotama Buddha in his quick journey would consist of four and a half miles, and the longer distance would consist of more than fourteen thousand miles. So, regardless of geographical distances, a Buddha would take his quick journey based just on the need of beings that were waiting to be awakened requiring only a little spiritual assistance from the Buddha.

A Buddha, in his quick journey, would sometimes be accompanied by a group of monks as in the case of Vanavāsītissa Samanera presented in the commentary on the Rathavinītasutta. The commentator describes that the Gotama Buddha went to visit Vanavāsītissa Samanera surrounded by twenty thousand monks who possessed the six higher knowledges (*chaḷabhiññā*).<sup>9</sup>

Elsewhere in the Pāli literature, it is said that one of the daily practices of the Buddha was to survey the world at dawn with his attainment of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā samāpatti*) and see if there was any being that needed spiritual help.<sup>10</sup> As pointed out by Endo (1997: 97): “He had a habit of looking at the world at dawn having arisen from the stage of great compassion (*paccūsa-*

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. DOP and PED, s.v. *gavuta*, *yojana*.

<sup>9</sup> Ps PTS II 149, CST4 1.254. The *Ṭikā* to the Pāpācasūdanī states that the reason for the Buddha to have asked only those monks who possessed the six higher knowledges is that he decided to travel through the sky (Ps-pt CST4 1.254: *Ākāsagāmīhi saddhiṃ gantukāmo “chaḷabhiññānaṃ ārocehi”ti āha*).

<sup>10</sup> The commentary to the Suttanipāta (SnA PTS I 134, CST4 75) states that it was one of the four activities carried out by the Buddha in the third phase of a night: *Tato pacchimayāmaṃ cattāro bhāge katvā ekaṃ bhāgaṃ caṅkamaṃ adhiṭṭhāti, dutiyabhāgaṃ Gandhakuṭiṃ pavisitvā dakkhinena passena sato sampajāno sīhaseyyaṃ kappei, tatiyabhāgaṃ phalasamāpattiyaṃ vītināmeti, catutthabhāgaṃ mahākaruṇāsamāpattiṃ pavisitvā buddhacakkhunā lokaṃ voloketi apparajakkhamahārajakkhādisattadassanattham* (Thereafter, dividing the last phase [of a night] into four segments, he practices walking up and down in one segment; in the second segment, having entered into the perfumed chamber, he lies down on his right side in a lion’s posture being mindful and attentive; in the third segment, he spends time with the attainment of fruition; and in the fourth segment, having entered into the attainment of great compassion, he surveys the world with his Buddha-eye, for the purpose of seeing beings who have little defilements and who have great defilements.)

*samaye eva mahākaruṇā-samāpattito uṭṭhāya lokam volokento...*).” Narada Mahathera (1988/2010: 123) remarks that the Buddha usually goes out to help those that are vicious and impure, not the virtuous ones. This is because the virtuous ones themselves come to the Buddha for his instructions. As for the vicious people, Mahathera provides examples of the mass murderer Aṅgulimāla and the wicked Ālavaka. On the other hand, Mahathera shows that virtuous people like Visākhā, Anāthapiṇḍika, Sāriputta and Moggallāna themselves came to the Buddha for instructions. However, the Pāli commentators provide examples that are contrary to this assertion. As the commentary on the Rathavinītasutta states, the Gotama Buddha in his quick journey went to favour not only vicious and impure individuals like Aṅgulimāla and Ālavaka but also virtuous people like Mahākassapa, Pukkhusāti, Mahākappina, Khadiravaniya and Vanavasi Tissasamanera.<sup>11</sup>

A slow journey (*aturitacārikā*) is a journey that a Buddha takes, often accompanied by a group of monks, after completing a three months rain-retreat in a place until his next rain-retreat. In a slow journey, a Buddha travels daily following a one and a half *yojana* path through different villages and cities successively collecting alms and preaching the *dhamma* for the benefit of the world. Based on the time periods he spends and the distance he covers in the slow journey, it is classified as threefold.<sup>12</sup> They are:

- 1) the great circle (*mahāmaṇḍala*),
- 2) the medium circle (*majjhimaṇḍala*), and
- 3) the inner circle (*antomaṇḍala*)

The great circle is said to consist of an area of nine hundred *yojanas* that a Buddha covers in a nine-month journey. He starts

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<sup>11</sup> Ps PTS II 148, CST4 1.254.

<sup>12</sup> Ps PTS II 150, CST4 1.254.

the journey immediately after completing the great invitation at the end of a rain-retreat.

The medium circle consists of an area of six hundred *yojanas* and a Buddha covers it with an eight-month journey. In this case, he does not begin his journey immediately after the three months rain-retreat. This is because, as described by the commentator, he spends one more month after the usual rain-retreat to guide monks whose practice of calm and insight is still tender and requires further instructions.

The inner circle consists of an area of three hundred *yojanas* and a Buddha spends varied time periods to cover his journey to this area. As it is described in the commentary, a Buddha stays back to guide monks whose faculties are immature (*aparipakkindriya*) and are not able to achieve their spiritual goals within the four months' time. So, according to their need, the Buddha spends five, six, seven or eight months in the same place for their benefit. Accordingly, this journey may take seven, six, five or four months' time to complete.

In his journey, be it a quick one or a slow one, a Buddha preaches to the beings for their establishment into the triple gem, the five precepts, the eight *jhānas*, and the noble paths and fruitions and so on. But more generally, he is said to go on a journey thinking that the common people, especially those less fortunate ones would get to see him and listen to his teachings. These people will have opportunities to offer garlands of flowers, alms and so on; some even would consider renouncing home-life and join the order.<sup>13</sup>

A Buddha however does not go on a journey only for preaching. As remarked by the commentator he also goes on a journey „for the sake of bodily comforts by means of a walk“ (*jaṅghāvihāravasena sarīraphāsukatthāya*) and „for the sake of

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<sup>13</sup> Ps PTS II 151, CST4 1.254.

declaring a code of training to the monks” (*bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ paññāpanatthāya*).<sup>14</sup>

Pondering on the reasons for Buddhas’ travels, the Pāli commentators illustrate that a Buddha’s decision to stay in or leave a certain place was a conscious resolution involving various factors, such as people’s eagerness in learning the *dhamma*, readiness of beings to be established in the stages of awakening, favouring the less fortunate ones to be able to at least perceive the Buddha and listen to his teachings and so on.

In summary, it can be said with regard to the Buddhas’ wandering that in a slow journey, a Buddha covers a particular area in a specific time period; and the journey generally continues between the rain-retreats; but a quick journey is taken up by him depending on the readiness of the beings requiring spiritual assistance. There is no specific time period for taking up the quick journey. It seems he takes up this journey when he is in rain-retreat or even when he is on a slow journey.

### **A Translation of the Sections on the Buddhas’ Journey from the Commentary on the Rathavinītasutta (Ps PTS II 148-152, CST4 1.254):**

[The numbering on the left in each paragraph and the page numbers in square brackets are from PTS edition of the text. The words or phrases in bold are statements from the *sutta* upon which comments were given]

45. [148] “**As long as he finds delight**” means having dwelt for as long as he intends to. Indeed, for the Buddhas, who are dwelling in one place, there is no displeasure owing to misfortunes [caused by] shadow and water and so on or inconvenient dwelling place or people’s faithless-condition and so on; he (=a Buddha) does not

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

dwell for long having been pleased with those fortunes and thinking “we would dwell comfortably here”.<sup>15</sup> But wherein due to the Tathāgata’s stay, beings are established in refuges or undertaken precepts or gone forth, and thereupon he becomes their support for the [attainment of] the path to stream-entry and so on; therein, the Buddhas stay with the intention of establishing the beings in those fortunes; in the absence of those [fortunes] they leave. Due to that it is said: „having dwelt as long as he intends to”.

46. “**Going for a journey**” means going on a long distance journey.<sup>16</sup> And this journey of the Blessed One is twofold by name: a quick journey (*turitacārika*) and a slow journey (*aturitacārika*). Therein, having seen an individual to be awakened at a distance, going quickly for the purpose of his awakening is called a quick journey. It should be understood [in reference to the Buddha’s] going out to meet the Mahākassapa and so on. Indeed, the Blessed One, while going out to meet the Mahākassapa, went up to a three *gavuta* path in a moment; [he went up to] thirty *yojana* path for the benefit of the Ālavaka, and likewise for the Aṅgulimāla; [149] and he went up to forty-five *yojana* path for the Pukkhusāti; two

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<sup>15</sup> It probably means that even if the condition of living is good with the fortune of shadow, water and so on in a particular place, the Buddhas do not live there for long only due to that.

<sup>16</sup> The term *addhāna* is a neuter noun. Cone (2001: 83) provides following translations of the term: path, road, journey, time. *Addhānamagga* is thus translated as „a road for journeying, or a high road”; to this the PED (s.v. *addhāna*) also agrees, but it also translates the phrase as „a long road between two towns”. Arunuddha (2004: 57) in his DPI translates phrases like *addhānagamanaśamaye* as „at the time of a long distance journey”, and *addhānamaggapaṭipanno hoti* as „(He) has entered into a long road”. Based on the explanations given here, I translated „*addhānagamanaṃ gacchanto*” as „going on a long distance journey”.

thousand *yojana* path for the Mahākappina; seven hundred *yojana* path for the benefit of the Khadiravaniya; and two thousand *yojanas* and three *gavuta* plus path for the novice Tissa, the forest dweller, who was a co-resident of the general of doctrine (*dhammasenāpati*).<sup>17</sup>

47. It is reported that one day, an elder said [to the Buddha]: “Venerable sir, I am going to visit the novice Tissa”. The Blessed One saying “I will also go” called the Venerable Ānanda [and said]: “Ānanda, inform twenty thousand [monks] who possess the six higher knowledges<sup>18</sup> [saying that] „the Blessed One will go to visit the novice Tissa, the forest dweller.”” Thereafter, on the second day, having ascended in the sky being surrounded by twenty thousand destroyers of cankers (=arahants)<sup>19</sup> and having descended at the

<sup>17</sup> It is an attribute used to refer to the venerable Sāriputtathera. See for example, Thag PTS 96, CST4 1086: *Dhammasenāpatiṃ vīraṃ, mahājhāyīm samāhitam; Sāriputtaṃ namassantā, tiṭṭhanti pañjalikatā* ([a great multitude of gods etc.] stand with folded hands, worshipping Sāriputta who is a general of doctrine, hero, great contemplative, composed.).

<sup>18</sup> The *chaḷabhiñña*-monks constitute a particular type among the liberated beings described in the Pāli literature. As for example, the following passage in the Saṃyutta Nikāya (PTS I 191, CST4 1.215) mentions of four types of monks who are all described to be pure in bodily and verbal conducts, and hence the Buddha finds no faults whatsoever in them. The passage reads: *Imesaṃ pi khvāhaṃ sāriputta pañcannaṃ bhikkhusatānaṃ na kiñci garahāmi kāyikaṃ vā vācasikaṃ vā. Imesaṃ pi sāriputta pañcannaṃ bhikkhusatānaṃ saṭṭhi bhikkhū tevijjā saṭṭhi bhikkhū chaḷabhiñña saṭṭhi bhikkhū ubhato bhāgavimuttā atha itare paññāvimuttā ti* (Sāriputta, I do not censure of any bodily or verbal act of these five hundred monks. Sāriputta, among these five hundred monks, sixty are possessors of three knowledge, sixty are possessors of six higher knowledge, sixty are liberated in both ways, and the rest are liberated by wisdom.). The six higher knowledge that a *chaḷabhiñña*-monk possesses are: 1) psychic powers (*iddhividha*), 2) divine ear (*dibbasota*), 3) knowing the minds of others (*cetopariyañāna*), 4) recollection of past lives (*pubbenivāsānussati*), 5) divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), and 6) destruction of cankers (*āsavakkhayañāna*). Cf. D PTS I 77-84, CST4 1.238-250; M PTS I 34-36, CST4 1.68-69; A PTS V 199-200, CST4 10.97.

<sup>19</sup> The Ps (PTS I 42, CST4 1.8) provides following definition of a destroyer of cankers (*khināsava*): *Khināsavo ti, cattāro āsavā: kāmāsavo...pe... avijjāsavo. Ime cattāro āsavā arahato khīṇā, pahīṇā, samucchinnā, paṭippassaddhā, abhabbuppattikā, nānagginā daḍḍhā; tena vuccati khināsavo ti* („A Destroyer of cankers” means: there are four cankers, viz. the canker of sensuality, existence, wrong view, and ignorance. When, for an *arahant*, these



entrance to a village of his domain at a distance of two thousand *yojanas*, he wore the robe. People, who were going to work, having seen the teacher had come, said [to each other] “Let us not go to work”. And after preparing seats and offering rice gruel, while washing [their] feet asked the young monks: “Venerable, where is the Blessed One going?” [The monks replied:] O lay devotees, the Blessed One is not going elsewhere, he has come here to visit the novice Tissa. They became joyful thinking “Indeed, our elder is not someone unimportant, as it is reported, the teacher [himself] has come in order to visit the novice who frequents our family.

48. Then after the Buddha had finished the meal, the novice, while wandering for alms in the village, asked [the lay devotees]: “Lay devotees, is there a large community of monks?” And to that, they replied: “Venerable, the teacher has come”. He (=the novice Tissa), having approached the Blessed One, inquired about His alms. The teacher, having taken his bowl by hand, said: “Yes, Tissa, my meal was completed”. Thereafter, having inquired the preceptor, he sat on a seat prepared for himself and took the meal. Then, when he has completed the meal, the teacher, having said what is auspicious, left the place; and having stood at the village-door and said: “Tissa, which of the two is the way to go to the dwelling place?” [Tissa replied:] “This is the way, Blessed One”. [Buddha said:] “Tissa, you go first and show [me] the way”.

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four cankers are destroyed, abandoned, extirpated, quieted, and unlikely to arise again, as they were burnt with the fire of knowledge, on account of that, one is called a destroyer of cankers.).

49. As is reported, the Blessed One, being one who points out the way (*maggadesaka*)<sup>20</sup> to the world with gods, thinking: “I will get to observe the novice in all the three *gavuta* paths” made him the one who points out the way. And having gone to his own dwelling place, he (=Tissa) performed his duty to the Blessed One. Then, the Blessed One, [150] having asked: “Which of the two is your cloister, Tissa?” (The Blessed One) went there and sat on the rock which was a seat of the novice, and asked him: “Tissa, do you live comfortably in this place?” He replied: “Yes, Venerable sir, while living in this place, hearing the sound of lions, tigers, elephants, deer, and peacocks and so on, the perception of a forest arises, and on account of that I live comfortably”. Then, the Blessed One, having said: “Tissa, gather the community of monks, I will give them the inheritance of a Buddha”, and having fully ordained<sup>21</sup> the monks who gathered there,

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<sup>20</sup> In Sv-nt (CST4 5.254), a *maggadesaka* (one who points out the way) is said to be one who points out the way to *nibbāna* or to a happy state of existence (*Maggadesako ti nibbānamaggassa, sugatimaggassa vā desako*). This statement is, in fact, in line with the verse in the Dhammapada:

*Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro tathāgataṃ,  
Paṭipannā pamokkhanti jhāyino mārābandhanaṃ.*

(Effort must be made by you, the thus gone ones just show the way; those who are contemplatives and tread the path are released from the bondage of the evil ones.).

<sup>21</sup> The *Ṭīkā* provides two opinions regarding „the inheritance of a Buddha” (Ps-pt CST4 1.254): *Saṅghakammena sijjhamānāpi upasampadā satthu ānāvaseneva sijjhanato “buddhadāyayaṃ te dassāmi”ti vuttanti vadanti. Apara “aparipuṇṇavāsivassasseva tassa upasampadaṃ anujānanto satthā ,buddhadāyayaṃ te dassāmi”ti avocā”ti vadanti. Upasampādetvāti dhammasenāpatinā upajjhāyena upasampādetvā* (They say, “I will give them the inheritance of a Buddha” is said because the higher ordination which is being accomplished with a ceremony performed by a community of monks is accomplished with only the command of the teacher. Others say, „the teacher said, “I will give them the inheritance of a Buddha” giving permission for the higher ordination to only those who have completed twenty years of age.”). Further it says that the higher ordination was actually conducted by the elder Sāriputta, the general of the *dhamma* – (*Upasampādetvāti dhammasenāpatinā upajjhāyena upasampādetvā*).

returned to his own dwelling place. This is called a quick journey.

50. This is a journey [that involves] travelling daily a *yojana* or a half *yojana* path for alms round etc. to a village and a city successively for the benefit of the world. This is called the slow journey. And the Blessed One, who takes this journey, travels in any of these three circles: the large circle, the medium circle and the inner circle. Therein, the great circle covers nine hundred *yojanas*,<sup>22</sup> the medium circle covers six hundred *yojanas* and the inner circle covers three hundred *yojanas* [area]. When he wishes to go to a journey in the great circle, he goes out with a retinue of a large community of monks, after celebrating the great invitation ceremony on the first day of lunar fortnight (*pāṭipadadivase*). All around a hundred *yojana*,<sup>23</sup> there is only one uproar. Those, who come early, get to invite [the Buddha]. [Comparing to] the other two circles, hospitality flows more into the great circle. Therein, the Blessed One, dwelling for a day or two in those villages and towns, favouring the crowd by accepting foods, and increasing their skillfulness connected with rolling back [from *saṃsāra*]<sup>24</sup> by giving instruction, concludes his nine-month journey.

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<sup>22</sup> According to the *Ṭīkā* this great circle actually refers to the middle country (*majjhimadesa*).

<sup>23</sup> The *Ṭīkā* states that „all around“ should be understood as covering all four sides of the place one has travelled (*Samantāti gatagataṭṭhānassa catūsu passesu*).

<sup>24</sup> The phrase is ...*vivaṭṭūpanissitaṃ kusalaṃ vaḍḍento*...; the meaning given in PED (s.v. *vivaṭṭa*) for *vivaṭṭa* is „rolling back“; it further states that „Dogmatically *vivaṭṭa* is used as “absence of *vaṭṭa*,” i. e. *nibbāna* or salvation from *saṃsāra*.

51. If within the rainy retreat the practice of calm and insight of the monks is still tender, without celebrating the great invitation, having given an abridged invitation and celebrated the invitation in the month of Kattika,<sup>25</sup> [the Buddha] leaving on the first day of Maggasira<sup>26</sup> surrounded by a great community of monks, goes down to the medium circle. Also, due to other reasons,<sup>27</sup> he goes out dwelling just four months as he wishes to travel on a journey to the medium circle. As said above, [comparing to] the other two circles, hospitality flows more into the medium circle. The Blessed One, as before, benefiting the world concludes [his] journey in eight months.

52. Even after dwelling four months, if the beings to be instructed (*veneyyasatta*)<sup>28</sup> by the Buddha are still with immature faculty, the Buddha, while waiting for the development of their faculties, [151] lives there for another one, two, three or four months, and [at the end of that he] goes out surrounded by a great community of monks. As said above, [comparing to] the other two circles, hospitality flows more into the inner circle. The Blessed One, as said before, benefiting the world, concludes [his] journey in seven months or six months, or five months or four months.

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<sup>25</sup> The last month of rainy season; according to English calendar it starts in the mid-October and ends in the mid-November. Cf. PED, s.v. *Kattikā*, *Māsa*.

<sup>26</sup> PTS reads: *maggasira*; CST4 reads: *migasira*; PED writes: *māgasira* (see PED, s.v. *Māsa*); it is a name of a month that comes after Kattikā and before Phussa. According to English calendar the month starts in the mid-November and ends in the mid-December.

<sup>27</sup> The *Ṭikā* states that other reasons should be understood as considering the maturity of knowledge of those to be instructed in the medium circle (...*aññenapi majjhimamaṇḍale veneyyānaṃ ñāṇaparipākādikāraṇena nikkhamati*).

<sup>28</sup> According to Sv-nt (CST4 5.254), „beings to be instructed” are beings who should be instructed conforming to their characters (*Veneyyasattā ti ca caritānurūpaṃ vinetabbasattā*).

53. Thus, while going on a journey anywhere among these three circles, he does not travel for the sake of robes etcetera,<sup>29</sup> Rather [he travels thinking], „when those who are poor, foolish, old, and afflicted by illness, will come and see the Thus-gone one?“ “Indeed, while I go on a journey, the public will get to see the Thus-gone one; therein, minds of some will be gladdened, some will honour with garlands and so on, some will offer food with a spoon, abandoning the wrong view some will become possessors of right view, it will become [the cause for] their happiness and benefit for a long time,” thinking thus he goes on a journey for the benefit of the world.

54. Further, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, go on a journey due to four reasons: for the sake of bodily comfort by means of a walk,<sup>30</sup> with the purpose of finding an occasion for preaching,<sup>31</sup> for the sake of declaring the code of training to the monks,<sup>32</sup> and for the sake of awakening the beings

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<sup>29</sup> It means the four requisites: food, robes, lodging, and medicine.

<sup>30</sup> The Tīkā states, it means for the sake of being comfortable by purging excessive elements in the body [gathered] due to being bound just in one place (*Sarīraphāsukatthāyāti ekasmiṃyeva thāne nibaddhavāsenā ussannadhātukassa sarīrassa virecanena phāsubhāvattāyā*).

<sup>31</sup> PTS reads: *aṭṭhuppattikālaṃ*; CST4 reads: *atthuppattikālaṃ*. Literally it means „the time for giving rise to meaning or arousing meaning“; Cone (2001: 50) renders the meaning to be „an occurrence giving rise to the preaching of the *dhmma*“ and *aṭṭhuppattika* as „arising from an occurrence“. According to the explanation in the Tīkā to the commentary on the Rathavināsa-sutta, it actually refers to preaching of a discourse or a Jātaka and so on. The Tīkā states: *aṭṭhuppattikālābhikaṅkhanatthāyā ti aggikkhandhūpamasutta maghadevajātakādīdesanānaṃ viya dhammadesanāyā aṭṭhuppattikālassa ākaṅkhanena* (“for the sake of desiring a time for arousing meaning” denotes that with the desire of arousing meaning of the preaching of the teaching (*dhmma*) just as the preaching of the Aggikkhandhūpamasutta and the Maghadevajātaka and so on).

<sup>32</sup> The Tīkā while commenting on the „code of training“ refers to a disciplinary rule in the Vinaya-piṭaka (PTS III 108-110, CST4 2.326-329) titled as *Surāpānasikkhāpadaṃ* (Training rule with concerning liquor and drinks).

whose faculties are going to be matured and who are ready to be awakened here and there.

Also, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, go on a journey due to four other reasons: they (=the people) will go to the Buddha who is a refuge or they will go to the doctrine which is a refuge or they will go to the community that is a refuge or I will satisfy the fourfold assembly with a great shower of the teaching.<sup>33</sup>

Also, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, go on a journey due to five other reasons: they (=the people) will refrain from killing living beings or from taking what is not given or from wrong conduct in sexuality or from lying or they will refrain from causes of heedlessness such as liquor, spirits and alcohol.

Also, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, go on a journey due to eight other reasons: they (=the people) will obtain the first absorption or the second absorption or the third absorption or the fourth absorption or the attainment of the sphere of infinite space or the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness or the attainment of the sphere of nothingness or they will obtain the attainment of the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.

Also, the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, go on a journey due to eight other reasons: they (=the people) will come in possession of the path of

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<sup>33</sup> As stated in Mp (IV 166, CST4 4.8), the Fourfold assembly (*catasso parisā*) refers to the community of monks, of nuns, of male lay devotees, and of female lay devotees (*Ettāvatā, bhante uttara, manusseṣu catasso parisā: bhikkhū, bhikkhuniyo, upāsakā, upāsikāyo*).

stream-entry or the fruition of stream-entry or the path of once-return or the fruition of once-return or the path of non-return or the fruition of non-return or the path of *arahant*-ship or the fruition of *arahant*-ship. This is a slow journey, and this is intended here.

55. And this journey is again twofold: the regular journey (*nibandhacārikā*) and the irregular journey (*anibandhacārikā*). [152] Therein, one goes on a journey for the purpose of only a certain being to be awakened;<sup>34</sup> this is called a regular journey. And [when] one travels to a village, a market and a city in succession; this is called an irregular journey. This is what is intended here.

### Abbreviations

A	Āṅguttara Nikāya
CST4	Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyāna Tipiṭaka, Version 4.
D	Dīgha Nikāya
DIP	Dictionary of Pāli Idioms by K. Anuruddha
DOP	A Dictionary of Pāli of M. Cone
M	Majjhima Nikāya
Mp	Manorathapūraṇī
PED	Pāli-English Dictionary of the Pali Text Society
Ps	Papañcasūdanī
Ps-pt	Papañcasūdanī-purāṇaṭīkā
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya
SnA	Suttanipāta aṭṭhakathā
Sv-nt	Sumaṅgalavilāsinī Abhinavaṭīkā
Thag	Theragāthā
Vin	Vinaya Piṭaka

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<sup>34</sup> The Ṭīkā (Ps-pt CST4 1.254) to the Rathavinītasutta mentions the name of Āṅgulimāla who falls in this category of beings. It says: *Bodhaneyyasatte āṅgulimālādiṭṭhe bodhanatthāya* (For the purpose of awakening refers to beings to be awakened such as Āṅgulimāla and so on.).

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# An Exposition of the Cognitive process of Theravāda Abhidhamma

Wimal Hewamanage

## Abstract:

The authenticity of Theravāda Abhidhamma, the last basket of the Pali Canon, is a disputable topic; nevertheless, it is appreciated by modern scholars as one of the great fields to scrutinize Buddhist psychology. Discussions on the mind and its cognitive process are foremost points in psychological studies. This research centers on the psychological analysis of the occurrence of consciousness in the cognitive process (*cittavīthi*) in Theravada Abhidhamma. It has been expressed with six sixes namely; six bases, six doors, six objects, six types of consciousness, six processes and six fold presentation of objects. Compared with early Buddhist discourses, this paper will reveal how and why Abhidhammic clarifications occasionally differ from the Canon and the psychological analysis of these clarifications. The duration of one material phenomenon (*rūpa*) consists of 17 mind-moments and one mind-moment consists of the three sub-moments; arising (*uppāda*), presence (*ṭiti*) and dissolution (*bhaṅga*). A complete eye-door cognitive process goes on as past *bhavaṅga*, vibrational *bhavaṅga*, arrest *bhavaṅga*, five-door adverting, eye-consciousness, receiving, investigating, determining, seven *javanas*, and two registrations. Before the first moment and after the last moment of the cognitive process, the mind is within a stream of *bhavaṅga*. The six fold presentation of objects divides into two main groups called five sense doors with four subdivisions and one mind door with two subdivisions. While very great, great, slight and very slight are the former subdivisions and clear and obscure are represented in the latter. Since in this context, the terms like great and slight are not utilized because of the size of objects but because of the impact on the consciousness,

they reveal the psychological significance of the cognitive process of Theravada Abhidhamma. Though the early Buddhist discourses express the cognitive process it seems that the Abhidhammic analysis is more technical, descriptive and psychological.

*Keywords:* Buddhist psychology, *cittavīthi*, cognitive process, Theravada Abhidhamma

## **Introduction**

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the rest of the Abhidhamma literature written in Pali is one of the key kinds of literature to identify the notion of what Theravada is. Concerning the sense of the word of the Buddha, which was uttered by the Buddha himself, there are disputable points among traditional Buddhists and modern scholars on Abhidhamma. The account found in the introduction of Atthasālinī, the Commentary to the Dhammasaṅgaṇi-pākaraṇa, shows that this controversy about the authenticity of the Abhidhamma piṭaka goes back at least to the fifth century AD. The general understanding is that the Abhidhamma piṭaka is the new literature which was written centering on the Dhamma and Vinaya due to further explanations of the Buddhist teachings. This attempt was taken by Sarvāstivāda and some of the other Buddhist schools as well. However, this research paper is centered on one of the well-known tiny handbook named the Manual of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha) which consists of nine small chapters and is utilized throughout the Theravada Buddhist world. It represents the handbooks (Saṅgaha) under the Pakaraṇa stream and was composed by Ācariya Anuruddha who lived in medieval Sri Lanka. There are nine short manuals or compendiums of Abhidhamma.

Regarding this, there are a few outstanding works, which were utilized in this research paper which should respectfully be mentioned here. The Theravada Abhidhamma Its Inquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality was written by Professor Y. Karunadasa and A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma was written by Bhikkhu Bodhi and Manual of Abhidhamma written by

Ven. Narada. Bhikkhu Bodhi's work also titled as the Philosophy of Psychology of Buddhism. Karunadasa's work makes a remarkable contribution to Theravada Abhidhamma which he occasionally compares with some of the other Buddhist schools like Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika.

### **Early Buddhist Standpoint**

At the very beginning of the fourth chapter, the Compendium of Cognitive Process (Vīṭhisāṅgahavibhāga) in the Manual of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammathhasaṅgaha) pays attention to 36 points regarding the cognitive process and it shows how it is more descriptive than early Buddhist discourses. The early Buddhist discourses revealed that the cognitive process, depending on eye and forms, gives rise to eye-consciousness. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one perceives. What one perceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one objectifies. Based on what a person objectifies, the perceptions and categories of objectification assail him/her with regard to past, present, and future forms cognizable via the eye. In the same manner dependent on ear and sounds, ear-consciousness arises..., dependent on nose and aromas, nose-consciousness arises..., dependent on tongue and flavors, tongue-consciousness arises..., dependent on body and tactile sensations, body-consciousness arises..., and dependent on intellect and ideas, intellect-consciousness arises. In this explanation, *papañca* (spreading out, expansion, diffusion, and manifoldness) indicates the final stage in the cognitive process. The tendency towards proliferation in the realm of concepts may be described in any one of those terms (Nanamoli and Bodhi 2009 p.204; Nanananda 2012 p.4).

The process of cognition in the Mahāhatthipadopama sutta, the Great Discourses on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint, expresses in three steps the eye and the other faculties, with their respective objects and their corresponding class of consciousness. At the same time lack of one, the factors prevent the continuation of the cognitive process. If internally the eye is intact but no

external forms come into its range, and there is no corresponding engagement (*tajjasamannāhāra*), then there is no manifestation of the corresponding class of consciousness. But when internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range and there is the corresponding conscious engagement, then there is the manifestation of the corresponding class of consciousness (Nanamoli and Bodhi 2009: p.284).

## **Six Sixes**

Abhidhammic psychological analysis of the cognitive process is discussed with reference to the concept of *cittavīthi* meaning cognitive process, a pathway or a process. *Vīthi* is derived from vi + i, to go. Regarding this cognitive process, it has paid attention to six sixes namely; six bases, six doors, six objects, six types of consciousness, six processes and six fold presentation of objects. At the outset, we have to know them with names at least and I will provide a basic account of the topic. The six bases are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and heart, and then eye-door, ear-door, nose-door, tongue-door body-door and mind-door are the six doors. Visible objects, audible object, odorous object, sapid object, tangible objects, and cognoscible object are called six objects. The six fold consciousness is named as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness. The six fold cognitive process (*chavīthiyo*) is divided into two: the five-door process and one mind-door process.

## **The Five-Door and Mind-Door Cognitive Process**

According to the Abhidhammic explanations, six fold cognitive processes are bifurcated into two foremost groups; the five-door process (*pañcadvāra-vīthi*) and the mind door process (*manodvāra-vīthi*). The mixed-door process is synonymous for the five-door process because they combine with both a physical sense order and mind-door. Since mind-door occurs completely at mind, it is also called bare mind-door process (*suddha-manodvāra-vīthi*). The eye-door process, ear-door process, nose-door process,

tongue-door process, body-door process are called the five-door process, and for a mind-door process, it is identified as *monodvarāva-vīthi*. Though the five-door processes are the same process regarding cognitive process, they should complete their own essential conditions to occur cognitive process. For an eye-door process, eye-sensitivity (*cakkhuppasāda*), visible objects (*rūpārammaṇa*), light (*aloka*) and attention (*manasikāra*) are essential conditions. For an ear-door process, ear-sensitivity (*śotappasāda*), sound (*saddārammaṇa*), space (*ākāśa*) and attention; for a nose-door process, nose-sensitivity (*ghāṇappasāda*), smell (*gandhārammaṇa*), air element (*vāyodhātu*) and attention; for a tongue-door process, tongue sensitivity (*jivhappasāda*), taste (*rasārammaṇa*), water element (*āpodhātu*) and attention; for a body-door process, body-sensitivity (*kāyappasāda*), tangible object (*phoṭṭabbārammaṇa*), earth element (*paṭhavīdhātu*) and attention; and for a mind-door process, the heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), mental object (*dhammārammaṇa*), the *bhavaṅga* and attention are essential conditions for cognitive process (Bodhi 1999 p. 150-152).

In this explanation, the six doors always bond with relevant objects and the attention is common for all in early Buddhist explanations. They follow a uniform pattern despite the difference in the sense of faculty. At the same time, the commentary has highlighted supportive factors namely light, space, air element, water element, earth element, and the *bhavaṅga* to complete the cognitive process from the eye-door process to the mind-door process respectively. Even though there are the other three factors, without these factors, the cognitive process cannot function. Further, the above mentioned two discourses in the Pali cannon have not paid attention to these factors like light, space etc.

The five-door processes are again divided into seventy fivefold according to the six fold presentation of objects (*ārammaṇa*). Regarding the eye-door process, there is one very great cognitive process, two great cognitive processes, six slight cognitive processes, six very slight and altogether there are 15 eye-door cognitive processes. In the same way, the rest of the four doors

also consist of 15 per each door cognitive process. In this context terms; very great (*atimahanta*), great (*mahanta*), slight (*pariita*), very slight (*atiparitta*) centering on five-door process and clear (*vibhūta*) and obscure (*avibhūta*) centering on mind-door process do not refer to the size or grossness of objects but highlights the impact on consciousness and also the above mentioned six factors are in ascending order.

Duration of material phenomena consists of 17 mind-moments and one mind-moment consists of the three sub-moments; arising (*uppāda*), presence (*ṭīti*) and dissolution (*bhaṅga*). In the early stage of Buddhism, there were only two moments named arising (*uppāda*), and dissolution (*vaya*) and later moment of presence (*ṭīti*) was popularized through Abhidhamma. Nevertheless, even within the Abhidhamma teachings, Acariya Ananda refutes the existence of presence mind-moment in his Mula Tikā to the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

The well-known verse which is utilized at every obsequies occasion of devotees in Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism depicted in the Mahāparinibbana sutta of the Dīghanikāya states only two; arising and dissolution attributing to Sakka, the god of the king. “Impermanent are compounded things, prone to rise and fall; having risen they're destroyed, their passing truest bliss” (Walshe 1995: p.157). But the Aṅguttaranikāya states “There are these three conditioned characteristics that define the conditioned: an arising is seen (*uppāda*), a vanishing is seen (*vaya*), and the alteration while it persists is seen (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*)” (Bodhi 2012 p.246). This last point, the alteration of that which stands is identified with presence moment (Bodhi 1999 p.156).

However, regarding the most powerful five-door process named very great (*atimahanta*) should be followed in all the 17 steps with 10 deviations. Seven javanas and two registrations repeatedly arise and the rest of the six cognitive stages arise only once with the very great (*atimahanta*) eye-door process. They are respectively past life-continuum (*atīta bhavaṅga*), vibrational life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-calana*), arrest life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-calana*),

five-door adverting (*pañcadvārāvajjana*), eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*), perceiving (*sampaṭicchana*), investigating (*santīraṇa*), determining (*votthapana*), javana and registration (*tadārammaṇa*). Among these 17 moments, there are only 14 acts of process consciousness because the very first step is past *bhavaṅga* and the next two, vibrational *bhavaṅga* and arrest *bhavaṅga* are initial stages and there is no consciousness in a proper way.

To understand the Abhidhammic explanations on cognitive process, attention should be paid on *bhavaṅga* as well. When the mind is not dealing with sense-door processes, it is in a dormant state (*bhavaṅga*). The *bhavaṅga* is the process-free consciousness out of three and it plays the role of uninterrupted continuity of individual life through the duration of any single existence.

*Bhavaṅga* (*bhava-aṅga*), which, in the canonical works, is mentioned twice or thrice in the Paṭṭhāna, is explained in the Abhidhamma commentaries as the foundation or condition (*kāraṇa*) of existence (*bhava*), as the sine qua non of life, having the nature of a process, lit. a flux or stream (*sota*). Herein, since time immemorial, all impressions and experiences are, as it were, stored up, or better said, are functioning, but concealed as such to full consciousness, from where however they occasionally emerge as subconscious phenomena and approach the threshold of full consciousness, or crossing it become fully conscious. This so-called „subconscious life-stream' or undercurrent of life is that by which might be explained the faculty of memory, paranormal psychic phenomena, mental and physical growth, karma and rebirth. etc. An alternative rendering is „life-continuum“ (Nyanatiloka 1988 p.69, 70).

The first stage in this cognitive process is called past life-continuum, *atīta bhavaṅga* and it is a threshold of full consciousness. This *bhavaṅga* vibrates with when the impact of the sense-objects entering a sense-door and it is the second stage



called vibration of *bhavaṅga*, *bhavaṅga calana* in Pali, arise. After that, the stage of *bhavaṅga* arrest occurs and it is called *bhavaṅga upacceda*; the term *upacceda* is derived from *upa+chida* with the meaning of breaking or cutting off, destruction, stoppage, interruption. It highlights how it interrupts the *bhavaṅga*, dormant state.

After arrest *bhavaṅga*, one of the most appropriate sense-door occurs from all the five-door faculties. Five-door advertent consciousness launches into the cognitive process (*vīthipatha*) and this is the real starting point of the cognitive process. Then, according to the objects, relevant appropriate sense-consciousness occurs like eye consciousness after the function of seeing, ear consciousness after the function of hearing (*savaṇa-kicca*) and so forth. If the process stops here, eye-consciousness or rest of the sense-consciousness; it is a mere of the act of seeing (*dassana-matta*), the act of hearing (*savaṇa-matta*), etc (Karunadasa 2015 p.148).

For the continuation of the cognitive process on objects, there occurs three types of consciousness performing the function of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*), investigating (*santīraṇa*) and determining (*vothapana*). *Sampaṭicchana* is derived from *sampaṭicchati* (*sam+pati+isu+ya* to receive, accept) with the meaning of acceptance, agreement, investigation, decision making and *santīraṇa* derived from *tīreti* (*tīra+ne* to measure, judge, recognize) with the prefix *sam*. *Voṭṭhapana* is a noun derived from *voṭṭhāpeti* or *vavattṭhāpeti* (to establish, put up, arrange) with meanings establishing, synthesizing, determination (David and Stede 1994: p. 651, 676, 690).

After determining the object, the most significant cognitive process occurs, named *javana*, literary meaning „running swiftly“. At this stage, *javana* should be completely comprehended the object and to be run seven swift running steps over the object. *Javana* has three main aspects; cognitive which is defined as „experiencing of object“ (*anubhavana*), affective with the affective

dimension depending on the attractive or repulsive nature of the object, volitional which is the only stage in the cognitive process and it is associated with volition (Karunadasa 2015: p. 149). Since within the cognitive process only the *javana* impinge with volition, *javana* has the ability to make wholesome and unwholesome deeds. *Tadārammaṇa*, registration is the last stage which can only occur with the very great five-door process and clear mind-door process because of the great impact of consciousness through objects.

A number of cognitive processes are only discussed in detail for better understanding. For example, very great eye-door cognitive processes begin with one moment of past life-continuum and then the rest of the 16 stages respectively occur (See - Table 1.1). In the same way, other very great cognitive processes with the rest of the four doors occur. There are ten great five-door cognitive processes and the first eye-door process begins just after two past life-continuum but there is no registration and end with *bhavaṅga*. The second process begins after three past life-continuum and end with seven *javanas*. Regarding slight (*paritta*) cognitive five-door process, there are 30 *cittavīthis* and the cognitive process begins after four to nine past life-continuum. Since, here, the presentation of objects does not make appreciable influence to the consciousness, there are no occurring *javanas*. The last cognitive process consists of nine past life-continuums and then vibration life-continuum occurs. After that, the rest of the cognitive moments occur and end with the arising of two moments determining. The last five-door cognitive process related to the very slight presentation of objects which are also 30 in number, begin after 10 to 15 past life-continuum and within these process, only vibrational life-continuum occurs (See - Table 1.2). It seems that the cognitive process can be divided into three sections namely pre-cognitive, cognitive and post-cognitive. From the first or second to five can be taken as pre-cognitive, six to 15 as cognitive and 16 and 17 as post-cognitive in the very great five-door cognitive process. The pre-cognitive process seems that they can again be divided as the beginning of the pre-cognitive (1-3) and end of the pre-cognition (4, 5). The cognitive process also

seems six to eight beginners" level and 9 - 15 advance level of the cognitive process.

To express this cognitive process, ancient teachers used a simile of a man who enjoyed a mango. Once a certain man slept under a mango tree and then a ripe mango fell from the tree. Awakened by this sound, the man opened his eyes and looked at the mango. Having stretched out his hand, he took the fruit, squeezed it and smelt it. Then he ate the mango and swallowed, appreciating its taste and went back to sleep. When the man was sleeping under the tree, it is similar to *bhavaṅga* and the sudden falling down of a ripe mango from its stalk is similar to vibrational *bhavaṅga*, and the grazing of his ear is similar to arrest *bhavaṅga*. When his eye makes contact with the mango, eye consciousness occurs. The collecting of the mango is similar to receiving, squeezing is similar to investigating and smelling to determining. Eating the mango is likened to *javanas* while the swallowing of the fruit and appreciating its taste is likened to registration and going back to sleep is similar to *bhavaṅga* (Bodhi 1999 p.158).

The mind-door process is a cognitive process that occurs exclusively through the mind-door without any admixture of the sense doors. Thus, bare mind-door process (*suddhamanodvāravīthi*) is synonymous to this. Though mind-door process bifurcates as sense sphere process and sublime process; attention will only be paid here on the former which derives nine sub-divisions as five clear, two obscure mind-door processes, one clear and one obscure mind-door processes occur with necessary objects.

The bare mind-door process cannot occur without three types of consciousness performing namely the function of receiving (*sampaticchana*), investigating (*santīraṇa*) and determining (*vothapana*). The first clear mind-door process occurs as one past life-continuum, vibrational life-continuum, arrest life-continuum, mind-door consciousness, seven *javanas*, two registrations, and four *bhavaṅgas* (See - Table 2.1). The rest of the four mind-door

processes begin after two to five past life-continuums. Two obscure mind-door processes start after six and seven past life-continuum and former ends with *bhavaṅga* and latter with *javanas* (See - Table 2.2).

## Conclusion

The discussion shows that the cognitive process of Theravada Abhidhamma completely stands on a psychological base. Bifurcating as five-door and mind-door Abhidhamma has highlighted their special characteristics. Cognitive process with reference to five-door is not the same in all the occasions. They are divided into four sections as very great (*atimahanta*), great (*mahanta*), slight (*paritta*) and very slight (*atiparitta*), and mind-door process divides into two as clear (*vibhūta*) and obscure (*avibhūta*). Since in this context, the terms like great and slight are not utilized because of the size of objects but the impact on the consciousness reveals the psychological significance of the cognitive process. At the same time, this explanation does not refute the early Buddhist notion of no-self but it expresses further utilizing the analytical method. Therefore, Abhidhammic analysis of cognitive process seems to be a more technical, descriptive and psychological approach than expressions depicted in early Buddhist discourses.

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Table 1.1: Complete Very Great Eye-Door Process

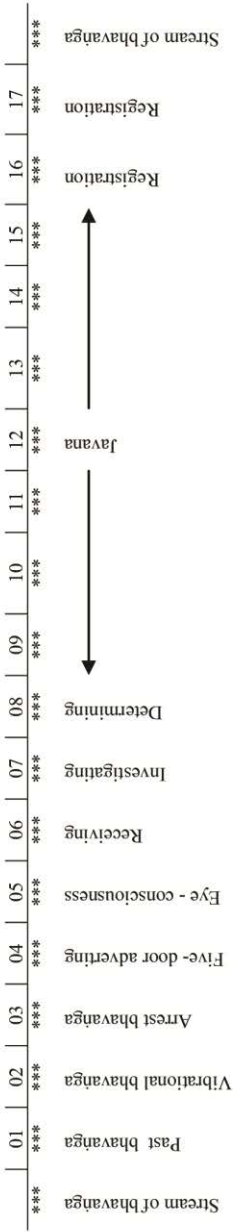


Table 1.2: 1<sup>st</sup> Very Slight Eye-Door Process

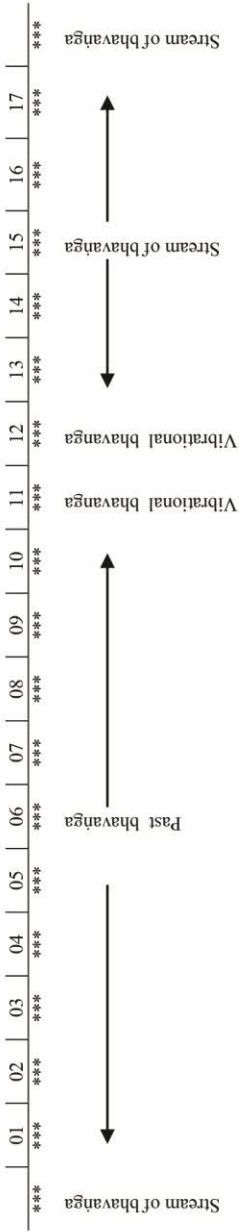


Table 2.1: 1<sup>st</sup> Clear Mind-Door Process

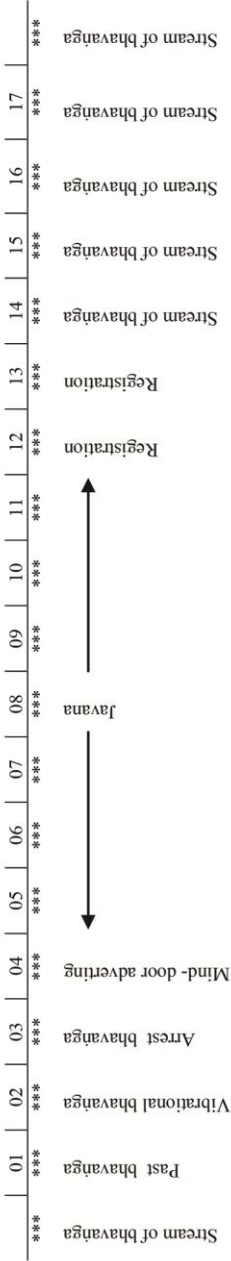
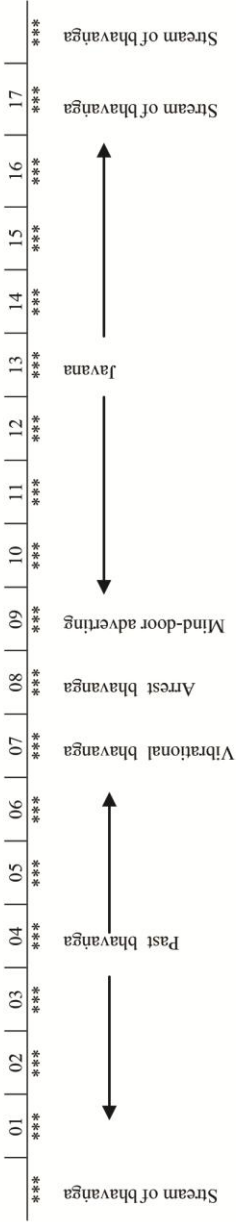


Table 2.2: 1<sup>st</sup> Obscure Mind-Door Process



# **The Life Story of Khache Nono, Known as Lama Tshulkhrim Nyima, of Ladakh**

**Lozang Jamspal**

## **Introduction**

Born in 1796, Khache Nono (“esteemed son of the Khache family”), later to become known as Lama Tshulkhrim Nyima, was a pioneering religious figure in Ladakh and Western Tibet. After first working as a trader for his maternal cousin, he became a monk at age 33.

The life story of this great person, written in Tibetan by his disciple Venerable Tshulkhrim rDorje, resides at Ri rDzong monastery in the form of wood block prints. A modern book version based on this source has been published in two volumes by the Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages of Ladakh. The narrative recounted in this paper paraphrases Venerable Tshulkhrim rDorje’s work in prose portions.

The Western Tibetan region of mNga’ris has three parts. One of these, formerly known as Mar yul, present day Ladakh, is surrounded by enormous mountains, down the middle of which flows the Indus river. Here, little Khache Nono was born in the village called Saspola, where during a growing season of just four months a year, farmers produce apples, apricots, barley, wheat, and beans.



## Family History

Khache Nono's parents were honest persons.<sup>1</sup> His father's name was bLobzang bKrashis, his mother's name was 'Dzomskyid. When Lama Geshe Midla, who always concealed his spiritual attainments, was invited to Saspola, young mother 'Dzomskyid confided to him her innermost feelings. "I regret that although I have four daughters, I have no son," she said, and wept. "O young one, there's no need for tears. I shall supplicate the Three Jewels,<sup>2</sup> and you will examine your dreams." That night she dreamt that she was bearing a flower as she descended through the sky to a mountain, where she took an arrow from the altar of a certain deity. She tied the arrow to her waist, and returned home. She recounted this amazing dream to her Lama, and he said, "Young woman, this may be an auspicious sign that you will bear a son."

## Early Childhood

She did conceive a son before long. With the appearance of auspicious signs and symbols, the expectant parents made extra efforts to carry out virtuous and pure deeds. During the traditional festival marking one month from the baby's birth, the entire village was offered a celebratory feast of food and drink, and there were dancing and singing throughout the day.

Even at a tender age, Kache Nono's understanding was lucid and his efforts diligent, and because of these superior qualities, he was loved by all. A certain high lama named him bStan'dzin Tshedbang. His sharp intellect enabled him to learn reading and writing easily in early childhood. He also became skilled in all the arts of singing, dancing, and playing the instruments including the flute.

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<sup>1</sup> Nawang Tsering Shakspo, ed. *The Biography of Lama Tsultrim Nyima*. Leh: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages. 2009, p. 9

<sup>2</sup> 2 Ibid. p.10

One day, when he was six years old, as he walked carrying a toy bow in his hand, he saw two sparrows fighting in a tree branch.<sup>3</sup> Without intending to harm them, he fired playfully small pebbles with his bow. He struck both sparrows, and they died. A bystander remarked upon the boy's skill, but the regret arose in the noble child's mind. He took himself to the family shrine room, and confessed to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, promising that henceforth he would never harm any living being.<sup>4</sup>

### **Spiritual Mentorship**

When he reached the age of seven, he went to see two lamas, Midla bLobzang bKrashis and bLobzang Tshulkhriims, whose residence was up the hill from his house, and he offered himself into their service. At the sight of a child so holy and full of merit, the two Lamas lovingly accepted him, and taught him Dharma.

When Khache Nono was twelve years old, he went to Ruthog to be the assisting manager for Tshering dNgosgrub, the son of his maternal uncle, from the Skyidrwapa family. The traditional practice of „The Sevenfold Cause and Effect Instruction for Developing Bodhicitta“ begins with the need to recognize every living being as one's mother in previous lifetimes. In Khache Nono's mind, everyone appeared as his own mother. Thus, Khache Nono practiced the good deeds of a Bodhisattva. In winter, he fed the poor, hungry sparrows by giving them grain and seed. From the great waves of such good deeds, his lamas, his parents, other relatives, and the gentle folks of his region all began referring him as, “Noble One of Kha che pa.”

### **Marriage, Plague, and Passing**

When Khache Nono came of age, his parents chose a bride for him. But, because the union was not a happy one, he broke off the relationship after two years. After that he made the acquaintance

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.12

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.13

of a fortunate, good natured woman named gYang'dzoms, from the gTogoche family of his home village. He cherished her and took her as his new wife.

Sometime later, an outbreak of fever struck his village, and Khache Nono's compassionate mother, 'Dzomskyid, lovingly looked after her son with care. Despite his illness, she did not hesitate to perform a traditional Tibetan urinalysis, which involved putting his warm urine onto her tongue, to determine whether and how the fever could be cured. He always remembered his mother's loving kindness.

Later on, when his mother died of the fever herself, he invited his two root lamas, as well as some other Sangha members to perform the death rituals. Then, he bore his mother's corpse on his own back to the charnel ground.

One summer while he was gone to Ruthog for business, news came to him that his lama had gone to the Pure Land. Khache Nono returned to Saspola to fulfill his lama's wish as the death ritual by anointing his lama's remains with fragrance. He offered red silk vestments to all those who performed the death ritual, served a collation to everyone, and provided all that was needful for the cremation.

### **The Honorable Trader**

After that, his good cousin, the merchant, returned to Ruthog with another associate. Khache Nono stayed behind, taking over his elder cousin's business, and assuming the responsibility for all his trade relations. Even in business, Khache Nono offered success and profit to others, and took decline and loss upon himself, always practicing bodhisattva activities in accordance with the scriptures.

When weighing a bushel of grain, he gave more to others and took less for himself. Through the meditative practice of Giving-and-

Taking (*gtong len*), all people became faithful and trusting to him. They exclaimed that Khache Nono was the finest of all tradesmen, showering him with praises. Similarly, the nomadic people of the Upper North trusted him completely. Everyone loved him as they would love a father or a mother, an elder or a younger sibling, and they piled up heaps of merchandise for Khache Nono to sell on their behalf.

Prior to his intervention, there was an annual custom of forcing sixty yaks and two hundred sheep to bear very heavy loads before they were sold to butchers in Ladakh's capital of Leh. During his time as a merchant, Khache Nono made sure that this unwholesome custom was abolished. Never exploiting yaks or sheep, he only used horses or mules while transporting goods.

Khache Nono was wary of negativity, and was mindful to avoid any misdeed. As a result, the local Kashmiri merchants, known in Leh for being very hard-headed traders, found it unnecessary to oversee Khache Nono when he weighed out even costly pashmina. These Kashmiri merchants placed their total trust in Khache Nono, came to rely upon him, and increased his renown by going so far as to proclaim his goodness with tears in their eyes.

On his travels, Khache Nono taught all the merchants how to conduct business. Whatever he did was excellent in intention, and his activities were universally praised. He received the full set of *upāsaka* vows for laypersons from the abbot of Cosklung monastery in Ruthog.<sup>5</sup>

Even in young adulthood, Khache Nono was uninterested in frivolity. But, when spurred on by his peers or local custom, he could excel at any activity. There is the story of his playing polo on the field with five others, where he is described as racing his horse like a bird and exhibiting unmatched skill in driving the ball.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.55

One member of a rival team in frustration whipped Khache Nono's horse on the thigh. When the horse reared up and bolted in fright, the unflappable Khache Nono, brought the horse back under control.<sup>6</sup>

### **Family Life and Renunciation**

Khache Nono's parents had performed many ceremonies and deity supplications to ensure that he had all those things that were considered vital to a good life—wealth, plenty to eat, and a male heir. And in 1824, when Khache Nono was 29 years old, his wife gave birth to their son.

Despite having these excellent enjoyments, being a great bodhisattva, he thought, "All composite things are impermanent; all worldly things lead to suffering."

He had in his possession thirteen bars of pure silver. Being completely without attachment to this money, he made offerings to the Three Jewels and gave the rest to the poor, until it was all gone. As his sisters were discussing with the rest of the family how the newborn child should be reared with regard to such concerns as wealth and grain, he said, "That's what you are planning to do? I have another plan," and he performed service to the spiritual community of kLukhyil Monastery, offering much wealth to them, and providing alms for every beggar. After that the great Khache Nono said to his wife gYang'dzoms: "We need to bestow everlasting happiness upon our son."

Not understanding yet his full intention, but agreeing with the spirit of his statement, gYang'dzoms replied, "O lord, that would be very good."

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.61

“Everlasting happiness is renunciation,” said Khache Nono,<sup>7</sup> “for even at the peak of cyclic existence, no happiness is to be found. Any good that resides in wealth and fine houses in time becomes a cause of suffering and lacks any essence.”

His wife agreed, and so they began preparing to offer their child in service of the Dharma. They arranged for him the requisite saffron-colored vestments, a golden hat, and so on. “For our son’s excellent Hair-Tuft Offering, as his parents, we should be elegantly dressed. On such a special occasion, we should be adorned as others are at weddings.”

Having long since given up the eight worldly concerns, the bodhisattva had no regard for ordinary attire—for how could such a person possess elegant clothing and adornments? “But now,” they agreed, “because we are sending our son to liberation, certainly we should wear elegant clothes,” and so all three of them dressed well.

At the Dharma-Wheel temple in the village of Alci lived Lama bLobzang bStan’dzin, who was both a scholar and an accomplished practitioner. Father, mother, and son went together to have an audience with him.

Inside the garden of Dharma-Wheel temple, they paid their greatest respect to the lama. Their son offered the lama the last tuft of hair from the crown of his head, which pleased the lama, who then cut it off in accordance with traditional ritual. They clad the child in renunciate’s garb, and the lama awarded him the name Yeshes Rabrgyas. The excellent lama and both parents rejoiced, and conversed about the Dharma.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Now the third incarnation of this Lama is now in his 90s, a former dGa’ ldan Khri pa known in Ladakh as Rizong Sras Rin po che, whose name is Thub bsTan Nyi ma Lung rTogs bsTan ’dzin Nor bu.

<sup>8</sup> Nawang Tsering Shakspo, ed. *The Biography of Lama Tsultrim Nyima* p.54

## **Journey to Enter the Religious Life**

To close down the business that he had been conducting for his maternal cousin, that summer Khache Nono traveled to Ruthog to settle his accounts.

After that, when he asked lama bLobzang bStan’dzin for advice about entering the religious life, there came the reply, “If you have the intention of entering the religious life yourself, bear in mind what I shall tell you.”

He continued, “There is a holy place called mTholding Monastery, founded by the great translator Rinchen bZangpo. The supreme Atisha had actually set foot there. Renowned in all three kingdoms of mNga’ris, it is a place where many bodhisattvas have visited. Now you should meet with the supreme abbot of that monastery, then return back to Ladakh,”<sup>9</sup>

Afterwards, as he sat in the cool shade of a tree, Khache Nono saw a small boy who was running, jumping, and playing games despite the recent death of his father. The young boy evinced no sorrow about his father’s passing. Khache Nono felt that his own son would not grieve his departure into the religious life in the same way, he promised to renounce the life of a householder.

Thus in 1829, he “cut the noose” of wife, son, and wealth, and from that day forth he kept his solemn promise never again to set foot in his family house. He traveled as far as gSerkhri village in the company of traders, then sent the others ahead. “Each of you carry on as before,” Khache Nono said, and he remained behind. He had with him the book *The Quick Stages of Path to Enlightenment*, just enough roasted barley flour for three days, and a horse. Thus, he remained as he made preparations, sewing a cloth tent just big enough to fit his frame.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.69

A lone man with a lone horse, he made the journey across Byang La (“North Mountain Pass”) to arrive at the village of Grangrtse. Khache Nono tied a white ceremonial scarf around the neck of the horse, which he called Nagkhra (“Black Stripe”), and said, “Go wherever you like,” and let the horse go free.

From there on, Khache Nono carried all his provisions and books on his back. He had kept in his possession three silver coins for buying roasted barley flour, which he left behind on a three-stoned hearth. And, he meditated for long periods on what are known as the „Three Principals of The Path“: The Renunciation, the Thought of Enlightenment (*bodhichitta*), and the Correct View.

After traveling some distance, he encountered three monks who were returning to Ladakh from Central Tibet. When Khache Nono recognized that they were severely under-provisioned, he informed them that at a certain distance, “upon the stones of the hearth you will find three silver coins I left behind. Each of you please take one.”

Arriving in bKrahis sGang, he pitched his tent in a meadow for the night. The next day there began a series of audiences with the abbot. On the third day of these audiences, as Khache Nono sat in the assembly and listened to the teaching<sup>10</sup> the Abbot took note of him, and called him over, saying, “O beggar, come here. Have you understood the teaching?”

Khache Nono said that for the most part he had understood. The Abbot asked him what then he understood. “You began to teach regarding a certain point, and then you left off at another point,” he replied, answering in detail.

The assembly gathered immediately, and when the Abbot asked them what they had understood about the teaching, no one

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. pp.69-72



responded; the abbot gave them all a little scolding. Some monks became jealous of Khache Nono and slandered him in the presence of the Abbot, at which the precious Abbot showed a little displeasure.

Around that time, a certain Sunni Muslim merchant from Ladakh had an audience with the Abbot, who inquired with him regarding Khache Nono, “What kind of person is this beggar?”

“Him?” the man replied. “How could he possibly be a beggar? We Ladakhis aren’t worthy even to sip water from his holy shoes.”

Nevertheless, the Abbot secretly sent a supervisor to inspect the contents of Khache Nono’s tent. He reported that there was nothing other than a few incidental supplies and two books of texts on Mind Training. The abbot was pleased, and allowed Khache Nono to sit in the center row and to meet with him whenever he wished. He furthermore granted Khache Nono whatever provisions were needed for the duration of his stay.

### **Monastic Ordination, Empowerment, and Return**

It was during that time that in an assembly of ten monks, Khache Nono received the vows of monastic ordination from abbot bStan’dzin Chosdar, and was given the name Tshulkhirms Nyima (“Sun of Morality”).<sup>11</sup> This narrative will henceforth refer to him with this Dharma name. Departing from bKrashis sGang, he went to visit Mount Kailash, traveling on foot in the guise of a beggar. As he was on his way, it happened that at fort Gangsbskor Myangpo, the great and glorious Nyingmapa adept Rig’dzin Orgyan rNamrgyal was bestowing the great empowerment of „The One Hundred Lineages of Peaceful and Wrathful Deities.”

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp.72-76

Since the venerable monk Tshulkhriims Nyima received this great empowerment with purest belief and faith, he perceived the body and melodious speech of his lama as the actual Ācārya Padmasambhava. To perform the summer retreat, he brought with him nothing other than five measures of unhusked barley, one cup of dried cheese, and one package of leftover tea. Though people offered him more of these, he would not accept. When a Muslim named Mahmood arrived and gave him a load of rice, he gave the greater part of it to others, keeping only a very small portion to sustain himself in the retreat.

It was under such conditions on the rocky-mountains above the back side of the Cave of Miracles that he made his strict retreat. Living only on the barest necessities of food and clothing, he did not so much as boil tea. Here the lama remained for more than three months.

When autumn came, during a break, he joined another practitioner, who was going to circumambulate Lake Mapham. Along the way, they had to cross the bShachu Grogpo river gorge. Emaciated from lack of food, Lama Tshulkhriims Nyima was swept away in the current like a leaf. Throughout all of this, he experienced great ecstasy, and smiled broadly without fear, when he reached the mouth of the Lake Maphan, he climbed out onto the bank. After further traveling a little more distance, he encountered by chance his sister bStan'dzin Sgron ma leading a group of three who had come to look for him, and bring him back to his own country. She wept with joy and embraced his feet. When his sister presented him with a letter from Lama bLobzang bStan'dzin wholeheartedly, requesting his return, he promised to return to Ladakh from Tibet.

His elder sister Tshedbang Kunsyid had sent him a string of pearl prayer beads. When he arrived at bKrashis sGang, this he offered to the abbot who ordained him, and requested him additionally to bestow the ritual of generating the Thought of Enlightenment.

“You should return next year,” the Abbot replied. “You need the ritual for Generating the Thought of Supreme Enlightenment, and certainly that of the Secret Mantra Empowerment as well.”

Venerable Tshulkhriims Nyima responded, “Thank you for your most excellent idea, but I have nothing to offer for the empowerment.” Replied the Abbot, “Since you already know how to perform the ceremonial *maṇḍala* offering, that will be sufficient. There is no need for anything else.”<sup>12</sup> At this, great joy welled up in the heart of Lama Tshulkhriims Nyima.

On the due time, he arrived in his homeland. All the people of the villages, young and old, received his blessings with faith and devotion.

### **Final Retreat**

When he came to the retreat summit, he was reunited with Lama bLobzang Tshulkhriims. The spiritual father and son were delighted to see each other, and they made a pleasant conversation. Tshulkhriims Nyima’s former wife, gYang’dzom, formally requested the monastic ordination in his presence. Then in the presence of Lama bLobzang and bStan’dzin, she took the vows of layperson

For seven days, Lama Tshulkhriims Nyima stayed in Saspola village. Then he climbed a mountain valley called rDzong lung, which was situated between the villages of Sasportse and kLu’khyil, to carry out his practice. There Lama Tshulkhriims Nyima, the Supreme Being, the Great Sun of Morality, gathered the favorable circumstances from which sprouted the flowers and fruits of the Dharma for the fortunate beings of Ladakh.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.81

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.77-90

# Early Buddhism: A New Definition

Vijitha Kumara

## Abstract

The Buddhist teachings are stratified in varied forms and purposes by modern scholars to seek its originality. After observing the layers of the teachings, the academics recognize original/early Buddhism relative to the traditional Buddhism. Therein, historical, linguistic and literary evidence are taken into consideration in order to layout the teachings. The questionable fact here is whether we have an acceptable agreement on what early Buddhism is and how far the current views are valid in defining the teachings to be uncorrupted/original. Hence, this article examines the accuracy of the current standpoints and suggests a new definition on „early Buddhism“.

## Introduction

The current Buddhist world, under three major traditions,<sup>1</sup> tends to study and practice the early Buddhist teachings than the traditional Buddhism. Since the scholars are representing three major traditions, they desire to understand/define „early Buddhist teachings“ inclining to their traditions. This has led not to find any clear-cut agreement in this regard. Especially, philosophical teachings developed by the scholars under the schools zealed the distance between the original Buddhism and the later Buddhism. In this circumstance, the later Buddhism is known to be the sectarian Buddhism too. Though the schools held their identities based on the philosophical thoughts only, later, the practices were also formed accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Namely, they are Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. The significance is that they present their teachings in four different languages. Vajrayana mainly uses Tibetan. Theravada predominately depends on the language Pali (Nevertheless, Sanskrit is also used). Mahayana sources are available in both Sanskrit and classical Chinese languages.

## Existing Views

For more clarity of this point, two different groups of existing views have to be examined. The first group bears direct interpretations on „early Buddhism“ and the second group communicates indirect views in a synthesis form. On the direct interpretations, infrequently the scholars have defined what early Buddhism is. Inquiring into the point, Nalinaksha Dutt divides history of Buddhism into three layers as follows,

1. From the period of the Buddha to 350 BC.
2. From 350 BC to 100 BC.
3. From 100 BC to onward.<sup>2</sup>

As he understands, the period of early Buddhist teachings was over in 350 BC. It seems that his definition depends on the historical facts of Buddhism and he thinks that the early Buddhist teachings prevailed up to the second Buddhist council. Writing on the same proposition, Mr. Nanayakkara suggests that the source for early Buddhism is the Suttapitaka.<sup>3</sup> The interesting point is that the same view was made by Prof. Sumanapala Galmangoda too in one of his books written in Sinhalese language.<sup>4</sup> Sue Hamilton also in her „Early Buddhism: A New Approach“ provided the same view.<sup>5</sup> Apart from that, Prof. Chandima Wijebandara and H.M. Moratuwagama in a preface of one of their Sinhalese publications have noted that the teachings that existed in the first 250 years after the enlightenment (pre-Abhidhammic) would be the uncorrupted doctrine.<sup>6</sup> Addressing the same point, Venerable Koswatte Ariyawimala Thera advocates that early Buddhism has

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<sup>2</sup> Nalinaksha, Dutt, *Buddhist Sects in India*, (New Delhi: Banarasidas, 1978.), 222-228

<sup>3</sup> Sanath Nanayakkara, *Mulbududahame sita vajrayānaya dakwā*, (Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center, 2003) 9

<sup>4</sup> Sumanapala Galmangoda, *Ādi Bauddha Darśanaya* (Diwulapitiya: Saraswathi, 2012.) 11p

<sup>5</sup> Sue Hamilton, *Early Buddhism: A New Approach*, (London: Routledge, 2000.), 1

<sup>6</sup> Chandima Wijebandara, & H.M. Moratuwagama, *Ādi Bauddha Cintanaya: adahas khipaya*, (Boralesgamuwa: Prabuddha, 1985.), (Preface)

to be understood relative to sectarian Buddhism.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he thinks that it existed before the Abhidhammic as well as Mahayanic traditions.<sup>8</sup> Venerable Pategama Gnanarama, who did an outstanding research on this, has gathered a few misinterpretations made by Mrs. Rhys Davids, Paul Dalke and George Grimm etc.<sup>9</sup> Further in his study; he estimates that the teachings which are common to all the three traditions would be taken as the early Buddhist teachings.<sup>10</sup> In an overview of the above interpretations, it can be believed that there is not a specific or a definite agreement on this. A remarkable fact found after further examination of the above interpretations was that the authors have raised questions on trusting the sources for the early Buddhist teachings. For instance, Mr. Nanayakkara discloses a few problems on the relaying of the Suttapiṭaka. Therein, he reveals that the current Suttapiṭaka could decidedly not be accepted as a perfect source since certain suttas have been dropped from it.<sup>11</sup> Besides, there are certain suttas which were obviously added later in the four nikayas as G. C. Pande has pointed out in his „Studies in Origins of Buddhism“.<sup>12</sup>

Taking into account the above views, I would summarize all the arguments into three groups.

1. **Literature/sources-based argument.** In this argument, early Buddhism is defined according to the source materials and their trustworthiness or stratifications.

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<sup>7</sup> Koswatte Ariyawimala Thera, *Buddhadharmaya*, (Colombo: Samayawardhene, 1996.), 226

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> I am not interested in repeating the work that Ven. P. Gnanarama has already done. For that, please refer to 3-4 pages of Early Buddhism and Problems of Interpretations for more details.

<sup>10</sup> The common key teachings among the three traditions has to be known as the early Buddhist teachings. Accordingly, it is presumable that there is no disagreement on the following key teachings among these three traditions. 1. Four noble truths. 2. Cause and effect theory 3. Three characteristics 4. Five aggregates. 5. Kamma and Rebirth 6. Nibbāna 7. Noble eight fold path 8. Thirty seven enlightenment factors.

<sup>11</sup> S. Nanayakkara, 10

<sup>12</sup> Pande, G. C., *Studies in the Origin of Buddhism*, 1974, 17

2. **Referring to the historical facts of Buddhism.** This argument depends on the historical evidence of splitting the Sangha community. In other words, pre-sectarian Buddhism is known as the early Buddhist teachings.
3. **Commonly agreed key-doctrines of the Buddha.** The teachings accepted by all three different traditions would be the early Buddhist teachings.<sup>13</sup>

The second group of interpretations is discerned in a synthesis form when the scholars write on the early Buddhist teachings. Nevertheless, it is impossible to find a direct definition on early Buddhism in their works. The standpoints of the scholars can be discerned when one goes through the content of the whole book. For instance, Y. Karunadasa's *Early Buddhist Teachings: The Middle Position in Theory and Practice*, *Early Buddhist Philosophy* by Galmangoda, etc could be listed.<sup>14</sup>

## Discussion

In addition to the three arguments given above, my effort is to build the fourth argument placing a hypothesis in this discussion that the early Buddhist teaching would be defined as „the four noble truths only“. The following arguments will affirm hypothesis what I hold here.

- A. If there are number of teachings to be counted as the early Buddhist teachings, why did the Buddha discoursed the four noble truths only in his first sermon? [In relation to this argument, I also accept that the first sermon of the Buddha was the wheel of the Dhamma

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<sup>13</sup> 1.For noble truths. 2. Course and effect they 3. There characteristics 4. Five aggregates. 5. Kamma and Rebirth 6. Nibbāna 7. Noble eight fold path 8.Thirty seven enlightenment factors.

<sup>14</sup> There are number of publications which are entitled “early Buddhism...early Buddhist Teaching... and so on. But they do not specifically interpret what early Buddhism is. But, the content of the publication gives an overall idea about early Buddhism. In such a synthesis way, early Buddhism is recognized with the key teachings of the Buddha referring to the canon.

(*Dhammacakkappavattana*). Indeed my belief is that the first sermon of the Buddha could be the *Ariyapariyesana sutta*<sup>15</sup> of the *Majjhima-nikaya*.]

- B. If there is the only truth in the world, shouldn't all the discourses delivered by the Buddha consist in it?<sup>16</sup>

In any circumstance, as the third argument revealed, it is provable that all three traditions accept the key teachings of the Buddha without any contrast.<sup>17</sup> However, my argument does not support the third argument at all.

### Analysis-01

The first noble truth contains not only the truth of suffering, but also 1) the concept of three characteristics and 2) Five aggregates too. One who understands the first noble truth, his understanding is strengthened with the knowledge of „three characteristics“ and „five aggregates“. Impermanence (*anicca*) is the first characteristic which leads to suffering (*dukkha*). We used to understand *jāti*, *jarā* *vyādhī* and *marāṇa* merely as sufferings. Nevertheless, after inquiring how the suffering come to exist, it is obvious that they are due to impermanence. Thus, it is confirmed that impermanence is hidden in the first truth. In addition, the following three components: *appiyeḥi sampayoga*, *piyeḥi vippayoga* and *yampicchaṃ na labati tampi dukkhaṃ* are directly designated

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<sup>15</sup> There is no doubt that the discourse of the Dhamma wheel discusses the most essential teachings in Buddhism. Nonetheless, considering the historical features revealed in the *Ariyapariyesana sutta* and the *Dhammacakkappavattana sutta*, I prefer to accept that the first sermon of the Buddha was the *Ariyapariyesana sutta*.

<sup>16</sup> Referring to the above two arguments I am motivated to examine similarities and dissimilarities accepted by the modern scholars as unique concepts to the three major traditions. The notable fact is that the Mahayanists and Vajirayanist highly respect to the cause and effect theory. It is obvious that Nagarjuna was also interested in accepting *paṭiccasamnpāda* as the key teaching of the Buddha. Therefore, he links *paṭiccasamuppāda* to emptiness and emptiness to Nibbana. Comparatively, while Mahayanist admire to the *paṭiccasamuppada* Theravada is interested in the four noble truths.

<sup>17</sup> Refer to footnote number 13



because of impermanence. The last component of suffering<sup>18</sup> is directed at the five aggregates and five aggregate clinging that is connected to the concept of soul (*atta*). Except that, it is interesting to see that certain sources speak about the six senses, twelve bases and eighteen elements too, under the first component of sufferings (*jāti*).<sup>19</sup> Referring to the above analysis, undoubtedly it can be affirmed that the first noble truth discusses three characteristics as well as the concepts of aggregate.

### Analysis – 02

The second noble truth speaks about the causes of suffering. Meanwhile it explains *paṭiccasamuppāda* since the causes of suffering have to be understood with *paṭiccasamuppāda* only. In explaining the cause and effect theory, this truth further reveals the connection between Kamma and rebirth too.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, the second truth offers two more extra concepts.

### Analysis – 03

The third truth, Nibbāna, is counted to be an experience. The notable thing is that there is no extra concept under the third truth.

### Analysis – 04

The fourth noble truth discusses about the path directed to the ultimate release. Especially, this path is known as the noble eight fold path or the middle way. [The „middle path“ and the middle are two different things. The middle way (noble fold path) refers to a practice. „The middle“ (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is known as a

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<sup>18</sup> The last component is *saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā* L. Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya*, ed. vols. V. (London: Pali Text Society, 1976.) 421

<sup>19</sup> *Yā tesam tesam sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho, ayaṃ vuccatāvuso – ‘jāti’* R. Chalmers, *Majjhimanikāya*. eds. vols. III. (London: Pali Text Society, 1951.), 249

<sup>20</sup> *Yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandīrāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī, seyyathidaṃ – kāmataṇhā bhavataṇhā vibhavataṇhā, idaṃ vuccatāvuso – ‘dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ’* R. Chalmers, *Majjhimanikāya*. III.250

theory/knowledge to be understood.<sup>21</sup>] Accordingly, the fourth truth is the only truth which is to be practiced. Examining the others, the first two truths are to be understood and the third is to be experienced. In certain primary discourses, the noble eight fold path is divided into three trainings (groups) like Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā too.<sup>22</sup> Hence, the concepts of noble eight fold path, the middle way, and three trainings come under the fourth truth.

As the above analysis has put forward, all the key concepts of Buddhism are merely derived from the four noble truths. For that reason, I would argue that the four noble truths could be considered to be the „early Buddhist teachings“. In reverse way, whatever teaching which is eligible to be placed under the four noble truths should be counted as the early Buddhist teachings. Under this circumstance, the early Buddhist teachings cannot be interpreted referring to the time. Thus, the dhamma exposition and even the thoughts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which are matchable to the four noble truths should also be reflected as the early Buddhist teachings.

## Marginal Issues – 01

### Paṭiccasamuppāda, Four Noble Truths and Perfections.

Evidently, Mahayana sticks strongly to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* than the four noble truths. Consequently, they could develop the concept of emptiness.<sup>23</sup> For instance, the *Madhyamaka Kārikā* is entirely based on the *paṭiccasamuppāda*. As we have pointed out

<sup>21</sup> Vijitha Kumara, S., *Buddhist Teachings about the Middle: a critical study of the Majjhima-sutta of the Aṅguttara-nikāya*, Prajñā Vihāra Vol. 17 No 2, 2016, 1-2

<sup>22</sup> āvuso visākha, khandhehi ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅgahito. Yā cāvuso visākha, sammāvācā yo ca sammākammanto yo ca sammāājīvo ime dhammā sīlakkhandhe saṅgahitā. Yo ca sammāvāyāmo yā ca sammāsati yo ca sammāsamādhi ime dhammā samādhikkhandhe saṅgahitā. Yā ca sammādiṭṭhi yo ca sammāsāṅkappo, ime dhammā paññākkhandhe saṅgahitā”ti V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. eds. vols. I. (London: Pali Text Society, 1993.), 300

<sup>23</sup> anirodham anupādam anucchedam aśāsvatam |  
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam ||  
yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcopaśamaṃ śivam |  
deśayāmāsa sambuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ varam|| Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura, *nāgārjuna's middle way*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2013.), 13

above, *paṭiccasamuppāda* comes under the second truth which should be understood (not to be practiced). However, *paṭiccasamuppāda* appears in the first noble path (*sammādiṭṭhi*),<sup>24</sup> in the noble eight fold path.<sup>25</sup> If the *paṭiccasamuppāda* is considered to be a theory than a practice, what could be its role in the noble eight fold path? The concept of perfections (*pāramitā*) was not a teaching in the early period of the Buddha.<sup>26</sup> It was systematically developed by Mahayanists up to a vast literature to be the practical approach of the *paṭiccasamuppāda*. In other words, when the *paṭiccasamuppāda* is a theory, its practice will be the perfections.<sup>27</sup> Now, comparing those perfections with the noble eight-fold path, we can understand clearly the relationship between them.

The *vīrya-pāramitā* which Mahayanist developed under their perfections is similar to the right effort (*sammāvāyāma*) in the noble eight fold path. Also, *dyāna-pāramitā* equals to right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). The perfection of *Kṣānti* connects to the two fold paths like *sammāsamādhi* and *sammāvāyāma*. The first perfection cannot be practiced unless overcoming the wrong views because he who practiced *dānapāramitā* needs to believe on the right ten views.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the first fold path links to the

<sup>24</sup> The Buddha illustrated *paṭiccasamuppāda* to be twelve links as teaching the right view in the Kaccānagotta sutta of the Samyutta-nikāya. By this, we have a few ways to understand right views; 1. Views opposite to the ten wrong views, 2. 16 ways as explained in the Sammādiṭṭhi sutta 3. Twelve links as recorded the kaccānagotta sutta. '*sammādiṭṭhi sammādiṭṭhi*'ti, bhante, vuccati. Kittāvatā nu kho, bhante, sammādiṭṭhi hoti' ti?... 'Sabbaṃ atthi' ti kho, kaccāna, ayameko anto. 'Sabbaṃ natthi' ti ayaṃ dutiyo anto. Ete te, kaccāna, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammaṃ deseti – 'avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā; saṅkhārāpaccayā... L. Feer, *Samyutta-nikāya*, V. 16

<sup>25</sup> Because in *paṭiccasamuppāda* is taught sammaditthi only. Sammaditthi and sammasankappa are considered to be pre knowledge or psychological preparation for the path unless a practice. Therefore, even in the context of noble eight fold path the concept of *paṭiccasamuppāda* which comes under Sammaditthi should be taken as a theory which prepares a practitioner psychologically for the path.

<sup>26</sup> In the Pali tipitaka concept of perfection is coming in the Cariyāpitaka for the first time.

<sup>27</sup> *Yāḥ prāṭhyasamupādāḥ - śūnyatām tāṃ pracakṣmahe, sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā.* MMK 24-18

<sup>28</sup> *Micchādiṭṭhiko kho pana hoti viparītadassano – 'natthi dinnam natthi yijjham natthi hutam, natthi sukata dukkāṇaṃ,* R. Chalmers, *Majjhimanikāya*. III. 71

perfection of *dāna*. However, *sīlapāramitā* covers *sammāvācā*, *sammākammanta* and *sammā-ājīva*. This comparison demonstrates that the above five perfections are related to the noble eight-fold path. The *prajñāpāramitā* is covered by the *sammāñāṇa* and *sammāvimutta*.<sup>29</sup> In this manner, the perfections introduced by Mahayanist have to be recognized as a transfigured form of the fourth truth. Though the perfections were discovered later, they keep connections to the fourth truth. For this reason, the perfections have to be accepted undoubtedly to be the early Buddhist teachings. The numerical differences displayed in Theravada and Mahayana will not be an issue regarding this point. Thus, the perfections are to be reckoned as the early (original) Buddhist teachings.

## Marginal Issues – 02

### Thirty Seven Factors and Four Noble Truths

Thirty seven factors are highly reputed teachings in Buddhism. However, it is arguable whether they come under the early Buddhist teachings. The term *bodhipakkhiya* found in the four nikāyas is never referred the thirty seven dhammas numerically. In relation to the first direct reference, the thirty seven *bodhipakkhiya dhammas* is found in the Milindapañha. An interesting fact to this point is that the *bodhipakkhiya vagga* of the Mahāvagga of the *Samyutta nikāya*<sup>30</sup> gives five number of *bodhipakkhiya dhammas* only. In the Itivuttaka, its number changes up to seven. Therefore, thirty seven number would be a later usage. However, the following analyses will affirm that a relationship existed between the fourth truth and the thirty seven factors. In this regard, two arguments are set up as follows:

<sup>29</sup> *sammāsamādhissa sammāñāṇaṃ pahoti, sammāñāṇassa sammāvimutti pahoti*, R. Chalmers, *Majjhimanikāya*. eds. vols. III. 75

<sup>30</sup> To the Bodhipakkhiyavagga of the Samyutta-nikāya, there are five number of enlightenment factors. They are quiet similar to the five spiritual faculties (indriya). This means that the early stage, the number of bodhipakkhiya was five and they were presented under the Indriya samyutta itself. Number „thirty seven“ should be a later developed number.

- I. **Direct argument:** There are a lot of references in the Suttapiṭaka where we can see seven groups of the dhammas,<sup>31</sup> numerically present „thirty seven“, but does not clearly mention the term thirty seven. Therefore, the only lack here is a direct term unless the content becomes similar.
- II. **Indirect argument:** We can also argue that these thirty seven factors come under the fourth truth as these bear the nature of practicing For instance, 1) four foundations (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are parallel to the right mindfulness (*sammāsati*). Not only that, but also 2) the four efforts link to the right effort (*sammā vāyāma*). Taking into consideration the 3) Four supernatural power (*Iddhipāda*) is extended as below. [*Chanda*, relates to *saddhā* which is included in the *sammādiṭṭhi*. As the discourses confirmed, one who needs to gain *saddhā*, he should gain *sammādiṭṭhi*. *Citta* is similar to *samādhi*. The commentary to the *paṭisambhidā* defines *citta* to be concentration.<sup>32</sup> Here, *virīya* links to the right effort (*sammāvāyāma*). *Vīmaṃsā* (wisdom) connects to *sammāñāṇa* and *sammāvimutta* which are the steps after the noble eight fold path.] Afterward, 4) five faculties can also be compared to the noble eight fold path. *Saddhā* undoubtedly connects to *sammādiṭṭhi* and *sati* parallels to *sammāsati*. *Virīya* stands with *sammā vāyāma*. *Samādhi* peers to *sammāsamādhi*. *paññā* relates to *sammāñāṇa* and *sammāvimutta*. 5)

<sup>31</sup> There are a lot of references for the parallel phrases throughout the suttapiṭaka. Herein, we can understand that though the number „thirty seven“ has not been mentioned, the „thirty seven“ features are found. “mayā dhammā abhiññā desitā, seyyathidaṃ – cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cattāro sammappadhānā cattāro iddhipādā pañcindriyāni pañca balāni satta bojjhaṅgā ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, tattha sabbeheva samaggehi sammodamānehi avivadamānehi sikkhitabbaṃ.” V. Trenckner, *Majjhimanikāya*. II. 238

<sup>32</sup> *Samādhīti ekārammaṇe samam ādhīyati tena cittanti samādhi nāmāti attho*. C.V. Joshi, *Paṭisambhidāmagga aṭṭhakathā*, ed. Vol I. (London: Pali Text Society, 1933.), 310

Similarly, five powers are also comparable like above. Then, 6) sati connects to *sammāsaṭi* under the thirty seven factors. The Niddesa records that the *dharmavicaya* relates to the *sammādiṭṭhi*.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, *pīti*, *passaddhi* and *upekkhā* are connected to *sammāsamādhi*.<sup>34</sup> *Viriya* again links to *sammāvāyāma*. Considering the comparisons of the seven enlightenment factors, it can be said that they are inter-connected to the noble eight-fold path. The last group of thirty seven factors is 7) noble eight fold path. Indeed, there is nothing to compare. Thus, it is clear now that the thirty seven factors are also designed under the fourth truth. At this point, a contrasted view could arise that the thirty seven factors cannot be accepted to be the middle way. Nonetheless, as the thirty seven factors do not contain the four noble truths, it can clearly be emphasized that these teachings are connected to the fourth truth.

According to the above discussions and arguments, three major concepts related to the practice of Buddhism can be traced under the fourth truth as follows.

- I. Noble eight-fold path
- II. Concept of perfection
- III. Thirty-seven factors

The problem is that all the scholars are hurry to accept the noble eight-fold path to be the middle way, but, they are reluctant to accept the perfections and the thirty seven factors as the middle ways. The viewpoint that I hold is that if the four noble truths is accepted to be the early Buddhist teachings, there is no barrier to

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<sup>33</sup> *paññāpajjoto paññāratanaṃ amoho dhammavicayo sammādiṭṭhi*, L. de La Vallée Poussin and E.J. Thomas, ed. Vol. I. (London: Pali Text Society, 1916.), 44

<sup>34</sup> As they all are the states of the meditation.

admit the thirty seven factors or perfections also to be the middle way. Similarly, the individual group of Dhammas such as four foundations, four efforts, can also be taken as the middle way or the „practices“ in Buddhism. At the end, I would like to conclude that a number of definitions to understand what is the early Buddhist teaching, is not required; but merely the four noble truths is adequate either in Theravada or Mahayana tradition. Finally, whatever exposition presented by the scholars regarding the four noble truths, should be admitted to be the early Buddhist teachings because what they have done is not far from the discourses delivered by the disciples in the Suttaṭṭaka. Their common criteria is the four noble truths which was explained as the „sutta“ in the commentary to the Nettippakaraṇa.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

In the research, all the existing views were summarized into three groups and the discussion of the paper led to a new aspect of the concept of „early Buddhism“ as the fourth view. A new standpoint that briefs the key concepts of Buddhism into the four noble truths was set up. In the conclusion, all the arguments and the findings incorporated with the fourth view are solidly considered. If the findings traced in the fourth argument are agreeable, it is feasible to conclude that the four noble truths is the only early Buddhist teaching. Consequently, the rest of the teachings become secondary. The Dhammas discoursed by the disciples during the time of the Buddha adhered to the four noble truths and as a result of that, their teachings are also known to be the word of the Buddha. Similarly, if the writings of the scholars in the 21<sup>st</sup> century also comply with the Four Noble Truths, where is the

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<sup>35</sup> *sutteti padassa atthaṃ dassetuṃ „catūsu ariyasaccesu“ti vuttaṃ, CSCD 81*

disparity between the two generations? Hence, the usage of „early-later Buddhism” is unjustifiable and illogical since the above point demonstrates that the four noble truths are beyond the time. As the four noble truths exist beyond the time, the usage of “early Buddhism” should be repudiated.

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# **Liberation Buddhology: A Thai Global Perspective**

**Tavivat Puntarigivat**

Buddhology is the study of the Buddha or Buddhahood. The term is also used as a synonym for Buddhist Studies (Wikipedia). Buddhology is the theology of the deified Buddha (Merriam-Webster). The earliest use of the term Buddhology is found in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Estlin Carpenter (1824-1927), Unitarian minister and college head (Oxford Dictionary). I use the term Liberation Buddhology in this paper as a provocative term for Buddhists in Asia, the same way as Liberation Theology is used in Latin America.

The purpose of Buddhism is to solve the problems of human sufferings. There are three kinds of human sufferings in Buddhism: physical, psychological, and socio-political sufferings. With the ideal of *Bodhisattva*, Mahayana Buddhism has done a good job in relieving human physical sufferings by building Buddhist hospitals and training Buddhist medical doctors and nurses. With the emphasis on Meditation (*samādhi*), Theravada and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism have provided the way of practice to release human beings from psychological sufferings.

Socio-political suffering is a more complex issue. In the colonial period, most South and Southeast Asian Buddhist countries were colonized by Western colonialism. In the Post-colonial period of today, most Buddhists in the Third World have been not only oppressed by their own governments, but also exploited by the transnational corporations and increasingly a new global casino that threatens the financial base of the real economy where every day we humans try to find work in order to live. In response to

these social and political oppressions and economic exploitations, South and Southeast Asian Buddhists have proposed theories and praxis to cope with the problems, including Buddhist Socialism, Buddhist Economics, Gross National Happiness (GNH), and Engaged Buddhism. Liberation Buddhology, as a provocative term, is an attempt to address the socio-political oppressions and economic exploitations at the structural levels from the experiences of Southeast Asian people. Buddhism is the peaceful way not only for personal liberation, but also for social liberation.

Thailand is the socio-political context from which Liberation Buddhology will be presented. Thai history under the global market economy will be explored: Siam under colonial threats, the integration of Siam into the global market economy, and the contemporary Thai political economy. Buddhist social liberation and a new Buddhist model of Market Dhammic Socialism will be discussed as an alternative way to respond to the world crisis of today. Lastly, Liberation Buddhology from the Asian context will be presented to cope with the threats and challenges of Buddhism in contemporary Asia.

## **1. Thailand under Global Market Economy**

Although Siam (the original name of Thailand)<sup>1</sup> has always managed to maintain her political independence, the Siamese government was forced to sign unequal treaties with the West and Japan. Consequently, Siam needed to restructure its polity and economy. The restructuring of Siamese society resulted in the centralization of power and an economy increasingly tied to the global market. As a result, the self-sufficient economy and the decentralized polity of Siam in the early nineteenth century turned into a more globally dependent economic and authoritarian political structures in the later part of the twentieth century. Hence Thailand has become part of the Third World in the global

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<sup>1</sup> The original name of the country is Siam. The name was changed to Thailand by the government of Phibun Songkham, shortly after he became prime minister at the end of December 1938, as part of his efforts to westernize the country.

economic structure.

### **A. Siam under Colonial Threats**

The signing of the Bowring Treaty between Siam and Britain in 1855, during the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV), marked the beginning of the modern history of Siam under the threat of Western colonialism. The Bowring Treaty provided for British authorities to have extraterritorial rights over British subjects, including those from the colonies of Burma, Malaya, and India. It also provided for the removal of all restrictions on trade and for the fixing of very low export and import duties. The extraterritoriality provision in the Bowring Treaty was to be followed and included in subsequent treaties negotiated with other European countries, the United States, and Japan during the last half of the nineteenth century. In these treaties, Siam surrendered several aspects of political, legal, and economic sovereignty. Despite its loss of sovereignty, Siam was able to retain its independence while all the other countries of Southeast and South Asia were colonized by Western countries. Since the end of World War II, beginning especially with the Sarit regime in 1957, Siam has been increasingly integrated into an international order and the global market economy dominated by Western powers and Japan.

By the time Mongkut succeeded to the throne in 1851, he had already begun to perceive the growing role of Western powers in neighboring countries. In the mid-nineteenth century, the British appeared to the Siamese to be the most significant imperial power. In the later part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, Penang, Singapore, and Malacca—the Straits Settlements—fell under British rule. As a consequence of the 1826-1824 war with Burma, the British incorporated a part of lower Burma into their empire, and in 1852 the British took the rest of lower Burma in another war with the Burmese. The British

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<sup>2</sup> See Charles F. Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987).

conquest of lower Burma led to the formation of an Anglo-Siamese border commission to determine the boundaries between the two polities. For the first time in their history, Siamese rulers had to think in terms of territorial boundaries rather than in terms of vassals and subjects.<sup>3</sup>

During King Mongkut's reign, France also emerged as a colonial power in the region. In the late 1850s, the French took over the southern part of Annam (today Vietnam) and created the colony of Cochinchina. In 1863, the king of Cambodia was persuaded to allow the French to make his country a protectorate. Mongkut and his court were incensed because they considered Cambodia to be a Siamese vassal state. The king of Cambodia signed an agreement with the Siamese attesting to his vassal status, but the French forced him to renege on the agreement. The Siamese had little choice other than to allow the French to control the Khmer kingdom. Concern over the colonial expansion on the borders of Siam led Mongkut to send members of the royal family and the nobility to the West to be educated, in order for Siam to be in a better position to deal with the West. Such education included not only language but also Western science and technology.

During the 1880s, the British extended their control over additional territory in Burma and the French did the same in Indochina. A crisis after the death of King Mindon in Burma, followed by palace intrigues and unrest in the kingdom, provided the British with an excuse for invading upper Burma. By 1886, the British had brought the Burmese kingdom under British rule. At the same time, France extended its "protectorate" over central and northern Vietnam. By 1888 the French were indicating that they intended to advance further into Laos, which the French claimed was subordinate to the Vietnamese court. Siam, however, also claimed these territories.

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<sup>3</sup> For more details on the history of Thailand, see David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984).

In 1888 the French forces pushed Siamese forces out of what is today northwestern Laos. The French envoy in Bangkok demanded that the Siamese recognize French suzerainty over the whole of the area east of the Mekong River. This meant Siam had to give up an area it had controlled since the time of Rama I (reign, 1782-1809). The Siamese refused to accede to the French demand but agreed to the setting up of a border commission. This commission reached no conclusions. Following a series of incidents, the French sent several gunboats up the Cao Phraya River to Bangkok in July 1893. The king counted on recent improvements in the military to prevent the boats from making their way to the capital. The French succeeded, however, in getting past the Siamese defenses. With three gunboats facing them from the banks below the French consulate, the Siamese had little option but to agree to the French ultimatum.

In retrospect, Siam may be seen as fortunate in having escaped with only having had to accede to a relatively limited set of demands. The court was forced to give up territories east of the Mekong River, to withdraw Siamese forces from Siemreap and Battambang and from within twenty-five kilometers of the Mekong River in northeastern Siam, to pay indemnities for the damages inflicted during the Cao Phraya battle, and to punish the people responsible for manning the Siamese defense.<sup>4</sup> By the end of Chulalongkorn's reign in 1910, Siam had been forced to cede parts of what are today Laos and Cambodia to France and some areas in the north to Britain, as well as to recognize British control over several Malay sultanates that had once been Siamese vassals.

The modern state of Siam retained the Siamese heartland of central Thailand, the Lanna Thai principalities of what is today northern Thailand, the Lao and some Khmer and Khmer-related domains in northeastern Thailand, and the sultanate of Pattani as well as some other Malay-speaking areas in southern Thailand. Under Chulalongkorn's reforms of 1892, the peoples of these

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<sup>4</sup> Charles F. Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State*, pp. 54-55.

disparate areas were not only brought under the control of a centralized state but were also to be made to feel that they belonged to a single nation.

## **B. Integration of Siam into Global Market Economy**

The extraterritoriality provisions of the Bowring and subsequent treaties had a great impact on the Siamese economy and on the integration of Siam into the global market economy. The Siamese crown had long derived a portion of its revenues from the control of trade. Internally, it had imposed taxes on commerce carried out in the territories under its control; externally, it had fixed duties on goods flowing through the main port of the country. By agreeing to remove restrictions on trade and to fix very low duties on exports and imports, the Siamese government was forced to restructure radically the fiscal basis of the state. Sir John Bowring himself said that the treaty “involved a total revolution in all the financial machinery of the government.”<sup>5</sup>

The expansion of international trade after the Bowring Treaty was signed attracted a large number of Chinese workers to construct the many new facilities or to work as stevedores, and it also drew an increasing number of Siamese peasants into the commercial economy. The government of King Mongkut and especially of King Chulalongkorn began to demand that the steadily increasing taxes be paid in cash. Moreover, the Bowring Treaty also stimulated the introduction of foreign products into Siamese markets, products which could only be purchased with money. From the 1870s on, Siamese peasants began to generate cash income primarily through the production of crops for export.

Rice became the major export of the country, and that product continues to generate a significant proportion of foreign exchange for Thailand even today. But rather than intensifying production on existing fields in order to produce more for home consumption and for sale, Thai peasants increasingly expanded the amount of

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Charles F. Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State*, p. 45.

acreage under cultivation. In addition to rice, rubber, tin, and teak generated significant amounts of foreign exchange for the country; but from the latter part of the nineteenth century until after World War II, most rural people earned cash income by producing a rice surplus. The rice was sold to local middlemen who in turn would sell it to the mainly Chinese-owned major firms that were part of the international rice market.

Although rice remained the country's major export for over a century after the Bowring Treaty, Siamese governments did very little to improve rice production or to promote agricultural diversification. Before the era of agribusiness, most productive land was owned by individual farmers rather than by large landlords; the Siamese elites believed that they would gain little from government investment in agriculture. And since more money could be made through investments in urban areas than in agriculture, they had little direct interest in raising productivity. For their part, peasants had no way to make their interests felt by the political leadership of the country. From the time of King Chulalongkorn on, all taxes were to be paid in money, not in kind. This requirement, together with the greater efficiency of the central government's tax system, imposed a considerable degree of hardship on those peasants who had little cash income.

King Vajiravudh (1910-1925) has been characterized as the founder of modern Thai nationalism. He coined the three pillars of Thai nationalism as the "nation" (*chāt*), Buddhism (*sāsana*), and king (*phramahākasat*), symbolized by the tricolor national flag. He also promoted national organizations such as the boy scouts and the paramilitary Wild Tiger Corps (*sua pa*). Although members of this corps actually came from only a small proportion of the populace and were overwhelmingly members of the elite, the king often appeared in public wearing his *sua pa* uniform as a way of presenting himself as a citizen king. King Vajiravudh was not a very strong or able political leader. This spurred some



members of the growing military and civil bureaucracy to look toward a type of government not based on an absolute monarch.<sup>6</sup>

The reign of King Prajadhipok (1925-1935) was seriously troubled by the world economic crisis of the 1930s. Rice prices dropped sharply and so did government revenues. Despite the hardships that the Great Depression created for the peasantry, especially in the central plains, it did not stimulate peasant unrest. Thai peasants were able to maintain their farms and to grow most of the foodstuffs needed for their families. The citizens who were hardest hit came from the salaried middle class and comprised mainly those who had recently been recruited into the bureaucracy and the military. This class, whose members faced a deteriorating economic situation and harbored a sense of resentment toward the king, formed —the Promoters,” the group which staged the successful revolution of 1932.

### **C. Thai Political Economy**

The 1932 revolution was led by groups of civilians, bureaucratic and military officers, and ended the Thai absolute monarchy, putting the monarchy under a constitution. It was influenced by the Western idea of democracy and marked the beginning of a new political system in Thailand. Thailand has experimented with so-called democracy for over 80 years, during which time Thai politics has been overwhelmingly dominated by the military—there have been more than 20 coups d'état or attempted coups and 20 rewritings of the constitution. For the same period of time, Thailand has also experimented with capitalism decisively influenced by the global market economy. From the 1932 revolution to the fall of Phibun's regime in 1957, Thailand was ruled primarily by military dictatorships under democratic constitutions<sup>7</sup> and the economy of state-owned enterprises. During

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<sup>6</sup> See Joseph J. Wright Jr., *The Balancing Act: A History of Modern Thailand* (Bangkok: Asia Books, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> From 1932 to 1957, Thailand had the interim government of Phraya Mano Pakorn (1932-1933), the military-led parliamentary government of Phahon Phonphayahasena (1933-1938), the military-led parliamentary government of Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944), the civilian

this period, the military—particularly Phibun Songkhram—suppressed the institution of the monarchy.

From the 1957 coup d'état led by Sarit Thanarat to the fall of Thanom-Praphat's regime in 1973, the country was largely ruled by direct military dictatorship without a constitution<sup>8</sup> with an economy of rising private-enterprises and capitalism. During this same period, the Thai monarchy gained support from the military and wide respect among the Thai people.

In both the 1973 student led revolution and the 1992 middle-class revolution,<sup>9</sup> Thailand experienced for the first time in its modern history, revolutions by the people. Although neither revolution changed the fundamental social and political structures of the country, they demonstrated that common people, particularly the middle-class, are increasingly a new power in Thai politics. During the past twenty years, Thailand has experienced an economic boom under the global market economy, dominated by the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, with a widening income gap between urban elites and rural poor, accompanied by the destruction of the forests and natural environment. With this

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governments of Khuang Aphaiwong, Thawi Bunyaket and Seni Pramoj (1944-1945), the civilian government of Pridi Banomyong (1946), the interim government of Luang Thamrongnawasawat and Khuang Aphaiwong (1946-1948), and the military-led parliamentary government of Phibun Songkhram (1948-1957).

<sup>8</sup> From 1957 to 1973, Thailand had the interim government of Phot Sarasin (1957), the short military-dominated parliamentary government of Thanom Kittikhachorn (1958), the direct military dictatorship of Sarit Thanarat (1958-1963), and the authoritarian regime of Thanom Kittikhachorn (1963-1973) with a short period of military-dominated parliamentary experience between 1969 and 1971.

<sup>9</sup> From 1973 to 1992, Thailand had a short period of political freedom with the interim government of Sanya Thammasak (1973-1975), the civilian governments of Seni Pramoj and Kukrit Pramoj (1975-1976), the military dictatorship under "civilian" government of Thanin Kraivichien (1976-1977), the military-dominated parliamentary governments of Kriangsak Chamanan (1977-1980) and Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1989), the elected civilian government of Chatichai Choonhavan (1989-1991), the military-appointed civilian government of Anand Panyarachun (1991-1992), the short-lived (48 days) military-dominated parliamentary government of Suchinda Kraprayun (1992), the interim government of Anand Panyarachun (1992), and the civilian government of Chuan Leekpai (1992-1995), the civilian government of Banhan Silapa-archa (1995-1996) and the civilian government of Chavalit Yongchaiyut (1996-1997).

economic expansion, moreover, Thailand has experienced the rise of an affluent upper middle class.

During this period of time, the military exerted its power by staging a number of coups d'état and through military-dominated parliamentary governments. The monarchy has also continued to gain wide respect and support from the Thai people and has increasingly gained the power to negotiate with the military, as seen, for example, by the king's intervention in the resignation of Thanom Kittikhachorn in 1973 and Suchinda Kraprayun in 1992, and in the appointment of Sanya Thammasak as prime minister in 1973 and Anand Panyarachun in 1992. Pro-democracy movements of the Thai people, especially the 1992 revolution demanding the elected Prime Ministers, have gained international support and a more democratic parliament and a civilian government have gradually begun to take shape.

The three revolutions in modern Thai history (1932, 1973, and 1992) were led by urban Thai people, especially in the capital city of Bangkok. They were the "urban revolutions." The 1932 revolution was staged against the absolute monarchy by a relatively small number of people who belonged to the Thai civilian, bureaucratic and military elites, and brought a radical change in the power structure from rule from above to a so-called democracy with a constitutional monarchy. The 1973 revolution was basically a student led uprising against a dictatorial regime; although it was a successful uprising, the movement had no real bargaining power to establish a new regime, nor did it effect change in the basic social and political structures. Soon the military staged the bloody 1976 coup d'état that undermined the student, farmer and labor movements and returned the military to its domination of Thai politics.

Although the 1992 revolution was in many ways similar to the one in 1973, the Thai middle class emerged as a new social force. The social and economic structure of the urban Thai society has changed during the last two decades. The 1992 middle-class

revolution brought a new face to Thai democracy, with the bureaucratic and business elites having more say in Thai politics. Again, it was an “urban revolution” and Thai politics would be dominated by a struggle for power among the military, the bureaucratic and the business elites. With the economic crisis of late 1997 (“Tom-yam-kung” crisis) and the pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Transnational Capitalism gained more influence in Thailand, and business elites became more influential in Thai politics.

Due to the economic boom in Thailand during the decades of 1980s–1990s and the promulgation of the 1997 Reformed Constitution, a more democratic parliament and a civilian government took shape with the rise of an affluent upper class. Thai politics then was under capitalist leadership, with the prominent role of Thaksin Shinnawatra. In 2001–2006, Thaksin (*Thai-Rak-Thai* Party) rose to power by his populist policies, such as, “village fund” (one million Baht per one village), a massive “social health care system” (30 Baht per each illness), and the reformed Thai bureaucratic system called “one stop service.” His government made “underground gambling” legal, and suppressed the “underground drug trade,” killing those involved in the illegal drug trade - almost 6,000 people. These policies have improved the well-being of poor people in the Northeast and the North.

In 2006, Thaksin Shinnawatra sold his private owned THAICOM satellite and AIS cell phone system to TEMASEK, the state-owned fund of Singapore, making a profit of 60 billion Baht without paying any tax. Although the law allowed him to do so, the people in Bangkok and other cities in Thailand were disappointed and formed the “Yellow Shirt” demonstration against him. Later in 2006, Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin staged a bloodless coup d’etat to oust Thaksin and his government. The military governments took power from 2006 to 2008, then allowed the country to have general election. In 2008 the People’s Power Party (*Palang Prachachon*), the successor of Thaksin’s political party,

won the general election. The three short-lived elected governments were persecuted by the Constitutional Court.

The government of Abhisit Vejjajeva (2008-2011) was set up by the military and supported by the Yellow Shirts—the bureaucratic elites and the upper middle class in Bangkok and other urban areas. The vast majority of poor people in the Northeast and the North who supported Thaksin's populist policies, formed the “Red Shirt” demonstration, demanding for re-election. Abhisit sent troops to suppress the Red Shirts—99 people were killed and hundreds injured. His government became the first civilian government in Thai history that suppressed the people by military forces.

In 2011, Yingluck Shinawatra, the leader of For-Thai Party (*Pheu Thai*), won the general election and became the first female Prime Minister in Thailand. Yingluck was a billionaire and a sister of Thaksin. As a capitalist, her government (2011-2014) was supported ironically by the Red Shirts—the rural poor, the urban workers, and the lower middle class—who shared the same interests against the Thai aristocratic bureaucracy. During the period of 2005-2014, Thailand faced the street politics of Yellow Shirts and Red Shirts, and the chaotic atmosphere of demonstrations in Bangkok and other major cities. The whole country was split into two socio-economic groups.

In 2014, Gen. Prayut Chan-o-cha staged a coup d'état to end political chaos. His military government shared power with the aristocracy, the bureaucracy, and the upper class in an attempt to establish a “Militaristic Ruling Class” in Thailand. After taking power for more than five years, Prayut eventually let the Thai people vote in the 2019 general election under the lopsided constitution. Under his constitution, 250 senators would be appointed by the military, and 500 representatives would be elected by the people. The Senate together with the House of Representative would vote for a new Prime Minister who need not come from the election. In this unfair game, it is likely that

Prayut will continue to take his office for the next two terms (another 8 years) under the present constitution.

## **2. Buddhist Social Liberation**

The social and economic development of Thailand within the global market economy in the last several decades has created an ever-increasing gap between urban and rural Thai societies. While industries and services in urban areas have been emphasized, the agricultural sector in rural areas has been neglected. Education and economic growth have been concentrated in Bangkok and other urban areas, leaving most of the rural people, especially in the Northeastern and the North, undereducated, poor, and far behind in access to public services.

Tenancy and agribusiness corporations have uprooted Thai traditional farmers from their own lands and forced many of them, especially younger men and women, to migrate from the countryside to the cities in search of jobs. This social dislocation has caused the continuing decline of rural social structures, tradition and culture, and has created the problem of overpopulation in the big cities like Bangkok. Most of the young rural men migrating to cities have become laborers and, since the 1980s, many have left to work in the Middle East, while many young women from the countryside, particularly from the northern region and recently from the neighboring countries, have become prostitutes in Bangkok and other cities, and latterly have traveled to Japan and elsewhere to work in prostitution.

The widening income gap, as well as educational gap, between urban and rural Thai societies has turned Thailand into two worlds: the world of the urban rich and the middle class, and the world of the rural poor. Thai democracy needs a foundation not only in the urban middle class but also among the majority of Thai people who live in the countryside. For Thai democracy to continue to grow, the livelihood of the rural people needs to be dramatically improved to reduce the income gap with their urban counterparts. The Thai government, under capitalism and the influence of

multinational corporations, has failed to address the real problems facing Thai farmers and rural people. Government development projects tend to draw human and natural resources from the peripheries to the centers, leaving the country people, especially in the Northeastern and the North of Thailand, in poverty.

### **A. Market Dhammic Socialism: A New Buddhist Model**

The social and cultural crises in the Western capitalist world and Japan, and the failure of political and economic programs in the Eastern socialist world—including the former regimes of Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Maoist China—have challenged most existing ideologies and have posed a serious question about which direction the world should take.

The capitalist ideology, which has promoted material wealth and military power for the Western world, has created a social structural crisis in which the rich get richer and the poor poorer.<sup>10</sup> The income gap between the rich and the poor has been widening in the First World. Even in the wealthy United States, the majority of those in the American middle class are under the threat of losing their middle class status, not to mention the increasing number of people in the lower class, underclass, unemployed and homeless. Members of the American family all over the country have to work harder for less income relative to expenses. The American federal government faces a serious problem of controlling the huge budget deficit, while the billionaires at the top of the income pyramid steadily increase their wealth. Capitalism under the contemporary technologically dominated global market economic structure has brought devastation to the world's natural resources and environment unknown in the previous history of mankind.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Denny Braun, *The Rich Get Richer: The Rise of Income Inequality in the United States and the World* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Equally true is what communism did to the natural environment in Eastern Europe.

The Marxist ideology that existed in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China did address pervasive problems of social injustice in those countries in the short-run. Those communist regimes effectively stopped the private capitalist exploitation of their people, but only at the expense of people being exploited by state capitalism. Marxism as a social theory is an important tool of social analysis in understanding the exploitative nature of capitalism. But Marxism as such has failed to offer a sound alternative political and economic system. China, with the shift in its ideology from Maoist socialism to the so-called “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” finds itself, in fact, in a stage of “capitalism with Chinese characteristics.” Although China today seems to be a successful model of economic development for the Third World, it appears to be repeating the mistakes of the West, particularly cultural and ecological degradation, together with its own particular problems of authoritarian politics.

As for Thailand, the Thai people have been suffering from oppression under militarism and capitalism within the global market economy. The majority of rural Thai people have been in poverty; there have been increases in the size of the lower class and underclass in big cities. Only a small number among the Thai elites and a portion of the middle class in Thai cities benefit from this capitalist economic development.

Since the amnesty policy of Prem Tinsulanonda in the early 1980s, membership in the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) has declined sharply due to internal conflicts within the party and changes in world politics. By the late 1980s, the CPT had lost its attractiveness as an alternative ideology and ceased to be a force to alter the political and economic structure of Thailand. As an ideology, the CPT could not cope with the new ideas and new experiences the Thai socialist students brought with them when they joined the party after the violence of the 1976 coup d'état. In the light of the experiences of the former communist superpowers like the former Soviet Union and China and the neighboring Third



World communist regimes in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, it is clear that authoritarianism is not a viable alternative for the Thai people.

Without a market economy, the former Soviet Union, Maoist China and other communist countries had stagnant economies and low productivity, insufficient to serve their people properly. This we can learn from socialism as such. With a capitalist market economy, most Third World countries suffer from an oppressive global economic structure dominated by the First World. And within Third World countries themselves, the majority of the people have been oppressed by the social and economic structures controlled by their own military and capitalist elites, who work closely with multinational corporations. This we, the Thai people, have learned from our own experience. It seems that the right combination of a market economy and socialism could be a solution for a Third World country like Thailand. Buddhist social ethical values, as Buddhism is the predominant religion in Thailand, could also play an important role in the formation of this new ideology of —Market Dhammic Socialism.”<sup>12</sup>

In Market Dhammic Socialism, a market economy is maintained with Buddhist Economic values and administered by a socialized-democratic parliament and government. In this market economy, people who are informed by Buddhist Economics have the freedom to produce and consume according to the law of supply and demand and the principle of *minimizing the use of resources and maximizing human well-being*. In Market Dhammic Socialism, economics is ideally separated from politics to prevent those who have more economic power from controlling politics. Unlike Western capitalism, the rich are strictly prevented from dominating the economy by the self-sufficient economic structure

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<sup>12</sup> The idea of “market socialism” comes from my study and discussions with Jay R. Mandle, Professor of Economics at Colgate University at Hamilton, New York, who has introduced me many new economic ideas current in the West.

of local communities.<sup>13</sup> The role of multinational corporations in shattering the self-sufficient local economy of a Market Dhammic Socialist country could and should be prevented by the conscience of the First World people and by the active resistance of Third World people.

Unlike Eastern Stalinism, people from all sectors of the society will be represented in the parliament and the government through a general election. The decentralization of political power, together with the self-sufficiency of local communities, would guarantee that people from all walks of life are well represented and the control of state power by any particular group is prevented. Throughout this process, the spirit of self-restraint, compassion, sharing and cooperation as articulated in Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's philosophy of Dhammic Socialism could play a significant role as dominant personal and social values.

### **B. Toward Buddhist Social Liberation**

As human beings, we have physical bodies and minds. The mind is not an independent entity separable from the body. Where the body is, the mind is. Without the mind, the body is not different from other non-living things; without the body, the mind cannot exist. Physical activities affect the development and quality of the mind. At the same time, the quality of the mind also affects the well-being of the physical body. The body and the mind are mutually dependent.

We are not born in a vacuum but in a society and a culture. We grow up and live in particular social and cultural environments. Our life is affected by the quality of food, health care and the physical environment as well as the social, cultural, economic and political environment. We do not live alone, but we live in a network of complex social relationships. Many Buddhists believe

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<sup>13</sup> For new paradigm for economics, public policy, and social ethics, see Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

that with inner liberation from psychological suffering, they can automatically overcome socio-political problems. Buddhism, in this sense, lacks the structural perspective from which to address social, economic, and political problems of the modern world.

This individualistic attitude might work for a Buddhist hermit who renounces the world. But most Buddhists are not hermits; they live in a complex, interconnected world. Today, even a hermit cannot escape this complex nexus. Buddhist monks in Thailand are part of a unified hierarchical *Sangha* which in turn is controlled by the government. Buddhist monks all over Thailand daily eat food given to them by Thai people, the majority of whom are poor and oppressed, whose sons become cheap laborers in construction and factories, and whose daughters become prostitutes or cheap laborers. How can a Buddhist escape or avoid social responsibility under these circumstances? With the awareness of these socio-political issues and their underlying structures, Buddhist liberation is extended not only in the sphere of personal liberation but also social liberation.

In conclusion, Market Dhammic Socialism as a Thai Buddhist approach to the situation created by the global market economy, has two broad applications. One is the development of a more viable Buddhist Social Ethic developed out of a Third World perspective on economic dependence, and a theory of work developed as a form of human flourishing in both social and spiritual terms. The other application, and one particularly appropriate to Buddhadasa's particular vision of Dhammic Socialism, is the development of what I have termed Buddhist base communities. We have looked at several of them. While, in many respects, they embody the utopian ideals of Buddhadasa's vision, as we have seen, they are not self-contained. Rather, these communities function in an exemplary manner in Thai society and function in concrete, practical terms to address a wide range of social, economic, and cultural problems.

In response to Thailand's economic and social realities, for example, rural poverty, prostitution and environment degradation, Dhammic Socialism has been reconstructed within a broad structural context from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed. A new Buddhist model for society has been proposed, namely, a society under Market Dhammic Socialism. Unlike Western Capitalism, it emphasizes economic self-sufficiency for local communities and political decentralization to empower the people who live in those communities. Unlike Eastern Stalinism, it promotes the democratic process—including general elections and checks and balances on power. People within a Market Dhammic Socialism are to be informed by Buddhist Economics—especially the principle of minimizing the use of natural resources and maximizing human well-being. Being aware of the human condition as well as social realities, the goal in life for Dhammic Socialists is not only toward personal liberation but also toward social liberation.

### **3. Liberation Buddhology: Coping with Threats and Challenges of Buddhism in Asia**

Buddhism in Asia, particularly in South and Southeast Asia, has been facing the threats from inside and outside of the religion. The inside threats are from the misbehavior of a number of monks who have not followed the Buddhist disciplines. They are also from the spread of “supernaturalism” (*saivasāt*), “magic spell” (*vetmon-khāthā*), and the sale of “merit” (*puññā*) by some monastery in Buddhist countries in Asia, including Thailand.

The outside threats are from the expansion of other religions which have been trying to undermine Buddhism since the colonial period. Some other faith has been trying to influence the key persons in the government and the parliament, including the court, by money and marriage, so that they could use political and legal powers for the expansion of their faith. Sometime they use military action, including terrorism, to establish a state of their

faith. They ultimately want to convert Buddhist countries in Asia to countries of their faith.

Throughout history, Buddhism has been facing both prosperity and decline in many places and so many times in Asia. The vicissitudes of Buddhism has happened in regions such as Central Asia and the Maritime of Southeast Asia—especially the Sri Vijaya Buddhist Empire, and at different time in history up until today. The fall of Buddhism in Asian history were undeniable, and should be researched more for the causes so that the history do not repeat itself. The decline and the fall of Buddhism in Asia can be analyzed into the following three patterns:

#### **A. The Fall of Buddhism by Military Attacks**

Buddhism had been prosperous in Central Asia for at least 1,000 years (from the 1<sup>st</sup> century to the 10<sup>th</sup> century). Buddhism in Central Asia were Mahayana and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism flourished and spread from India around five hundred years after the Buddha. It had turned Central Asia a peaceful region and the unique Buddhist cultures, arts and architectures along the Silk Road from China to the West. From the tenth century onwards, Central Asian Buddhism had faced the invasion and the military attacks from the Turk Muslim armies. By the fifteenth century, the region of Central Asia had fallen under the occupation of the Turk Muslim. With the Muslim military power, people in Central Asia had been forced and converted to Islam for the whole region.

The Muslim armies had invaded the northern part of India, and converted Indian people under their occupation into Islam. The Hindus fought against the Muslim invasion to protect their land and faith, consequently Hinduism has continued to exist and flourish as the main religion in India. The Muslim armies also invaded Nalanda, the last strong hold of Buddhism in India, and destroyed the great Nalanda University and Monastery complex, including the Nalanda Library which contained invaluable comprehensive and numerous volumes on the different schools of Buddhist Philosophy. Buddhists in India had failed to defend their

land and faith, so soon after Buddhism disappeared from India, the birth place of the Buddha. The defeated Buddhist people were forced and converted to Islam in the original land of Buddhism.

In late twentieth century after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, they destroyed the highest and oldest Buddha statues—the world heritage built over 2,000 years ago and were visited by many Chinese pilgrimage monks, including the well-known Xuan Zang, in the long history of Buddhism—at the Bamiyan Cliff and mountain ranges, amid the concern of UNESCO and the protests from people around the world.

Today the invasion of Buddhism in Asia has continued, and the military attacks has come in the form of terrorism. There has been the attempt to set up an Islamic state by the violent means of terrorism in Pattani, the southern-most province of Thailand, for over a decade and more than 7,000 people were killed. The same pattern of Muslim terrorism can be found in Mindanao in the Philippines, and Xinjiang in China. Although China today is politically atheist and socialist state, but culturally China was and still is a Buddhist country. What happens in China will greatly affect the Buddhist world. The conflict in Xinjiang should be considered as a part of threats and challenges of Buddhism in Asia.

### **B. The Fall of Buddhism by Seizing State's Political Power**

In the maritime of Southeast Asia there was a great Buddhist empire called Sri Vijaya. This great empire was located in the major islands of present day Indonesia, with its great architecture of Borobudur in Java, and the Malay Peninsula up to present day Southern Thailand. Sri Vijaya Buddhist Empire had been flourishing for over 700 years (from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the 13<sup>th</sup> century) during which the empire greatly produced Buddhist arts, architectures, and peaceful culture to the region.

Toward the end of the empire, the Arabian merchants who had come to Sri Vijaya for trade, and at the same time for spreading their faith, failed to convert King Angavijaya, the empire leader.

Then they turned to his son, Prince Radenpata, and successfully converted the prince to Islam. With the help of the Arabian merchants, the prince assassinated the king, his own father, and seized the state's political power. He then changed his political position from traditional king to Sultan. The new Sultan used his political power to convert people, afterwards most parts of Buddhist Indonesia fell under Islam. The same pattern had happened in Brunei and Malaysia. Today Buddhists have become the Non-*Bhumiputra*, the second-class citizen in Malaysia, the land that used to be part of the great Sri Vijaya Empire.

The pattern of seizing political and legal power of a state has gradually and quietly been happening in Thailand, a center of Buddhism in the world. While the Extremists militarily campaign via terrorism to establish an independent Islamic state in Pattani, other Muslims use the Thai state's legal system to change the country's administrative structure in favor of Islam. With the doubtful claim for big markets in the Muslim world, the Central Islamic Council of Thailand have been collecting the annual fees for the Halal mark from almost all products producers in Thailand, and earn billions of dollars each year without paying tax or sending the revenue to the government.

Muslims use this financial power from the Halal mark to induce the Thai government and parliament to pass a number of Islamic laws in favor of them, including the Hajj Act, the funding of pilgrimages by Thai Muslims to Mecca, the Islamic Bank Act to establish the Islamic Bank of Thailand, and the Islamic Council Act that allows Provincial Islamic Councils to provide advice to the governor of every province in Thailand. There has been also an attempt to establish Sharia Law to replace the nation's legal system among Muslim in Thailand. By so doing, Muslim who are the minority of the country (around 4.9% of the total Thai population) have been steadily gaining more power and control of the Thai state.

### **C. The Fall of Buddhism by Converting People through Marriage**

Marriage is the result of love and affection between a man and a woman. It should be free from outside pressure, be it traditional, political, or religious. In Thailand and elsewhere in Asia, when a Buddhist marries to a Muslim, there is a demand that the Buddhist, either male or female, is converted to a Muslim, and never the reverse. People could change their religion because they have faith in the new religion, but not because of the pressure from marriage. Most Thai Buddhists who marry Muslims change their religion to Islam by their own ignorance. They do not have faith in Islam, but they comply with the request and pressure of their spouse's relatives. This is a big mistake.

They simply think that religion is just a kind of culture or tradition, nothing is serious. They simply follow their spouse's tradition, keeping in mind that they are still Buddhist. However, after being converted to Muslim, they are pressured to follow the strict tradition by going to Mosque every Friday, praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, and travelling to Mecca for Hajj. At first they may not be willing to follow the tradition, but with time, they may get used to it. When the couple have children, all the children have to be Muslim, no negotiation nor other choice. For the first generation of those who marry Muslims, they may remain half Buddhist half Muslim, but from the second generation onward, their family have completely become Muslim. In a way, Islam increases their number through this biological multiplication.

According to an interpretation of the Muslim tradition, after marriage a woman needs to be converted to her husband's faith, not the other way round. By keeping this in mind and taking tactical advantage, most Muslims would ask a man of other faith be converted to Islam first before marriage, then they follow the tradition that a woman takes the faith of her husband. This tradition has been kept secret in order to convert more people into Islam and multiply Muslims all over the world. Once people become a Muslim, it is almost impossible to change to other



religion. In some strict tradition, a father could dignifiedly kill his own daughter, simply because she followed her husband's faith.

Because a big number of Buddhists have been converted to other religions through marriage, the Myanmar's government recently issues a law that protects Buddhists from being converted to other faith because of marriage. This legal measurement is an efficient response from a Buddhist country to protect their own religious and cultural heritages among their people amid the threats and challenges of Buddhism in Asia.

Recognizing the urgent problems facing Buddhism in Asia today, the AEC Buddhist Conference—a series of conference on Buddhism—was founded, and the host has been yearly rotated among Buddhist countries in Asia. Started in Pattaya (2014), the AEC Buddhist Conference has been continued in Penang (2015), Phnom Penh (2016), Mandalay (2017), and Nakhon Pathom (2019) on the occasion of the Makhapuja Day. The conference aims at creating a network and cooperation among Buddhist scholars, who are aware of the inner and outer threats and challenges of Buddhism, for peace, security and the future of Buddhism in Asia and beyond. The conference and the related activities, both theory and praxis, are part of the struggles toward Liberation Buddhology.

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# The Development of *Aśubha* Meditation in the Sarvāstivādin Tradition

Fa Qing

## Introduction

*Aśubha* (Pali, *asubha*, impurity, foulness)<sup>1</sup> meditation is practiced in the Buddhist schools, both Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda. The contemplation of the body's foulness is an antidote to the hindrance of sense-desire.

In S.54:9, Buddha taught mindfulness of breathing after hearing bhikkhus committed suicide by practicing *asubha bhāvanā* (contemplation on the impure). This indicates that the Buddha first only taught *asubha* meditation to the monks. The importance of *asubha* meditation is reflected in the fact that the Visuddhimagga dedicates one chapter to it (Vism. VI).

In the *Prajñāpāramitā-updeśa* (*Da zhi du lun*) of Nāgārjuna, *aśubha* is identical with *kāyena kāyānusmṛti* (mindfulness on body as body 循身觀) alone.<sup>2</sup>

In China, the very first meditation text was the translation of the *Ānāpāna Mindfulness Sūtra* (T602 *An-pan shou yi jing*) by An Shigao at Loyang around 147 to 171 C.E., which classifies the

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1 Sanskrit term *aśubha* is used in reference to Sarvāstivāda and Chinese sources; *asubha* is used when it comes from Pāli sources.

2 T1509, p0404a: “循身觀”者，尋隨觀察，知其不淨，衰老病死，爛壞臭處，骨節腐敗，摩滅歸土。如我此身，覆以薄皮，令人狂惑，憂畏萬端。以是故，如身相內外隨逐，本末觀察。又如佛說循身觀法。

contemplation of the impure (*aśubha*) as a more advanced “inner” practice compared with mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti*).<sup>3</sup>

In general, Sarvāstivādins stress more on *aśubha* meditation than Theravādins. *Aśubha* is essential for Buddhist monks to counteract sensual desire; and is an advanced and effective meditation technique to attain *dhyāna* (Pāli, *jhāna*; absorption, trance).

To overcome the side effects of *aśubha* meditation: risk of suicide, attacks by demons (when one meditates on a corpse at midnight in a remote place, one may become frightened), the Buddha taught mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasmṛti*), the Sarvāstivādins use white-bone to replace the impurity of body.<sup>4</sup> In the *Vibhāṣā*, they developed an abridged version of *aśubha* (one does not need to see a real corpse, but simply to visualize the impurity of a corpse). In Kumārajīva’s meditation texts, which represent Sarvāstivāda and Early Mahāyāna tradition, contemplation or visualization of white-bone is often listed as a separate meditation method after *aśubha*.<sup>5</sup>

Mahāyāna stresses white-bone meditation to overcome the side effects of *aśubha* meditation. Mindfulness of white-bone is considered as pure (*śubha*) and radiant light, which is the key method used in Mahāyāna and later in Vajrayāna.

For practical purpose, *aśubha* can be used to scan and relax one’s body to prepare for other meditations, i.e. mindfulness of breathing.

### In Pāli Tradition

In the *Girimānanda Sutta* (A. X., 50)<sup>6</sup> and the *Bhāradvāja Sutta* (S.35:127)<sup>7</sup>, the perception of impurity (*aśubha-saññā*) refers to

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3 T602, 165b1-2.

4 T617, 298c16. If one is utterly disgusted with the body, one should advance to the visualization of white bones. 若極厭惡其身，當進白骨觀。

5 T617, 298c19ff.

6 Bhikkhu Bodhi, A10:60.

7 The *Bhāradvāja Sutta* (S35:127) offers 3 kinds of solutions regarding how a monk maintain his holy life. 1) see all women as your mothers, sisters and daughters. 2)

the contemplation of the 32 parts of the body (*kāya-gatā-sati*)<sup>8</sup>. In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (D22, M10), contemplation of impurity of the 32 parts of one's own body and 9 signs of a dead body (cemetery or charnel ground contemplation) are under contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*).

In the Sampasādanīya Sutta (D28), there are four levels of impure meditation regarding the attainment of vision (*dassanasamāpatti* 見定).

1. impurities of 32 parts of our body.
2. bones (white-bones in the Chinese Āgama).<sup>9</sup>
3. practice further to know the unbroken stream of human consciousness as established both in this world and in the next.
4. practice further to know the unbroken stream of human consciousness that is not established either in this world or in the next.<sup>10</sup>

Here, the Sampasādanīya Sutta indicates that meditation on bones (DĀ18 uses white-bone) is an advanced level, while mindfulness on the 32 parts of one's body is an initial stage. Mindfulness of white-bone as advanced *aśubha* meditation can be found in Sarvāstivāda meditation books.<sup>11</sup>

In A7:49 (Saññā Sutta), seven perceptions were taught by the Buddha, the first one is the perception of impurity:

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contemplate impurities of the body (32 parts full of impurities). 3) guarding the doors of the sense faculties with mindfulness (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind).

8 In the sutta, it actually lists 31 parts, increased to 32 in the commentaries by the addition of the brain.

9 In Chinese DĀ, it says only white-bone and teeth. DĀ18, T1, 77b: 唯觀白骨及與牙齒，是為二見定。

10 DĀ: The stream of consciousness is broken down in this world, but continuous in the next world. 識在後世，不在今世；今世斷，後世不斷；今世解脫，後世不解脫，是為四見定。

11 T617, 298c16-18.

—It was said: “The perception of unattractiveness, bhikkhus, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit, culminating in the deathless, having the deathless as its consummation.” For what reason was this said?

—When a bhikkhu often dwells with a mind accustomed to the perception of unattractiveness, his mind shrinks away from sexual intercourse, turns back from it, rolls away from it.”

Practicing *asubha*, one can gain great fruits, even attain the deathless.

In the Visuddhimagga, it is the cemetery contemplation (*sīvathika*) that are called 'meditation-subjects of impurity' (*asubha-kammaṭṭhāna*). It refers to ten kinds of impurity related to corpses—reflection on corpses in different stages of decomposition (Vis., VI, 110). It develops from the Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (D22 and M10), because they are dealing with corpses. The Visuddhimagga explains in detail how to obtain a proper dead body, which is not applicable in modern times. The last stage is mindfulness on a skeleton (Vis., VI, 110):

This foulness, while of ten kinds, has only one characteristic. For though it is of ten kinds, nevertheless its characteristic is only its impure, stinking, disgusting and repulsive state (essence). And foulness appears with this characteristic not only in a dead body but also in a living one...

The Visuddhimagga stresses on the 10 foul signs of a corpse as *asubha* meditation. White-bone (skeleton with white color) is the last stage.

## In Sarvāstivāda

Ven. Dhammajoti points out that the whole of *Abhidharma* is fundamentally concerned with meditative praxis.<sup>12</sup> *Abhidharma* is essentially meant for none other than the most advanced meditators, namely *aśubha* and *ānāpānasamṛti*.<sup>13</sup>

In the path of spiritual progress, the higher stage is called “the path of insight” (*darśana-mārga*): one sees directly the true nature of dharmas. This process is also called “direct realization” (*abhisamaya*). For the term *abhidharma*, “*abhi*” (facing) clearly has the significance of *abhisamaya*, directly facing the characteristics of *dharmas*.<sup>14</sup>

Sarvāstivāda developed visualization of the body as being impure and pure under the term *adhimukti* (or, *adhimokṣa*, a mental element). Also, it seems Ābhidharmikas also mixed the *aśubha* of 36 parts of one's own body and a dead body (charnel-ground) together. In Sarvāstivāda, two kinds of meditation further developed from *aśubha*:

1. *aśubha*: 36 parts of body, dead body;
2. *śubha*: white-bone meditation, bones illuminating with white.

## Pratimukhī Smṛti

*Pratimukhī smṛti* (對面念 lit. face-to-face, around the face mindfulness) appears in most sūtras both in Pali and Mahāyāna traditions:

Here a *bhikṣu*, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise (*paryāṅkam ābhujya*), set his body

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12 Dhammajoti, *The aśubha Meditation in the Sarvāstivāda*, 248.

13 T1545, 3b08-10: 又由此故發起殊勝思所成慧, 謂不淨觀持息念等。以能別總觀諸蘊故, 亦得名為阿毘達磨。

14 Dhammajoti, *The aśubha Meditation in the Sarvāstivāda*, 249.



erect (*ṛjuṃ kāyam praṇidhāya*), and established mindfulness in front of him (*pratimukhī smṛti*).

When the meditator abides in this mindfulness – whether in the sense of 'facing' or 'opposing' – one is said to be abiding in the *pratimukhī smṛti*.<sup>15</sup> In the Vibhāṣā, *pratimukhī smṛti* is explained related to *aśubha*, not *ānāpānasmṛti* or *dhātu-bheda* contemplation.<sup>16</sup> Various reasons are given:<sup>17</sup>

- (i) The other two could indeed also be so-called.
- (ii) The *aśubha* is the first of all meditations, hence when it is so-called, the other can also be known likewise.
- (iii) Most meditators rely on the *aśubha*, not the other two, to enter into the Noble Path.
- (iv) Kātyāyanīputra(迦多衍尼子) explains based on the Āgama where it explains, for Buddhist monks, sensual desire is the foremost of the hindrances, when it is counteracted by *aśubha*, the other hindrances will be abandoned accordingly. The *aśubha*, being thus the proximate counteraction, is called the ~~face-to-face~~ mindfulness.”

The description of *aśubha* meditation as *pratimukhī smṛti* in Vibhāṣā is explained as follows:

Question: Why is it called ~~around~~ the face mindfulness” (對面念, *pratimukhī smṛti*)?

Answer: The meditator fixes his mindfulness between the eye-brows. He contemplates [the cadaver] as turning bluish or becoming swollen or rotting or disintegrating or turning unusual red, or being eaten

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15 Dhammajoti, *The aśubha Meditation in the Sarvāstivāda*, 254.

16 T1545, 205a11-15: 問何緣繫念在眉間耶。答修觀行者。先依此處生賢聖樂後漸遍身。是故彼於眉間繫念。如受欲者男女根處先生欲樂後漸遍身。此亦如是。

17 T1545, 205a21-b09. Cf. Dhammajoti, *The aśubha Meditation in the Sarvāstivāda*, 255; Suen, 220-221

[by worms, etc.], or being torn apart; or he contemplates the white bones (白骨, *śvetāsthī*), or a chain of bones. These are called —face-to-face mindfulness.”<sup>18</sup>

Question: Why does he fix his mindfulness between the eye-brows?

Answer: The meditator initially produces the happiness of the noble ones with this spot as the support and [the happiness] gradually permeates the whole body. Thus, he fixes mindfulness between the eye-brows. This is like one who experiences sensuality: the sensual pleasure initially arises at the place of the male or female organs, and gradually permeates the whole body. Likewise is the case here.<sup>19</sup>

When the meditator in this way fixes his mindfulness between the eye-brows and contemplates on the cadaver’s appearance as being bluish, etc. It is the contemplation on the impure (*aśubha*). Here, it is called —around the face mindfulness.”<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in Vibhāṣā, *pratimukhī smṛti* (around the face mindfulness) is identical with *aśubha*, which starts with focusing on the glabella. In another words, Buddhist monks, according to Vibhāṣā, always practice *aśubha* meditation first to cut off sensual thought, to counteract sensual desire.

## Adhimukti

Visualization in meditation is called *adhimukti* (or *abhimokṣa*; Pali, *adhimokkha*, a mental element, function of making clear exactly what the object is) by Ābhidharmikas. It is an important role in the

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18 T1545, 205a08-11.

19 T1545, 205a11-15.

20 T1545, 205a19-21: 修觀行者如是繫念在眉間等。觀察死屍青瘀等相即不淨觀。此中名為住對面念。

Abhidharma category—*adhimukti-manaskāra*—that is, an imaginative visualization. It is imaginative but it is done with clear awareness and good intention. It is an instrument for the contemplation of the impure.

The term *adhimukti* has various shades of meaning. Those which pertain to this context are “resolve” and “determination,” signifying a state of firm resolution in which the mind is totally freed from doubt. *Adhimukti-manaskāra* (勝解作意) — this mental application proceeds from *adhimukti*, in contrast to the “mental application to the real” (*tattva-manaskāra*; 真實作意). It is constructed by the imagination, and essential for the contemplation of *aśubha*, *apramāṇas* (四無量), *abhibhv-āyatanas* (勝處), *kṛtsnāyatanas* (遍處) and so forth.<sup>21</sup>

According to the Sarvāstivāda, a practice such as *aśubha* contemplation, which operates by virtue of an *adhimukti-manaskāra*, can lead to the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. Although it is not a *tattva-manaskāra*, neither is it an “illusion” in the ordinary sense.<sup>22</sup>

In general, there are two types of *aśubha* meditation, one relies on the real belonging to oneself, the other relies on *adhimukti*. *Adhimukti*, one visualizes (假想思惟) the various impurities. This is opposed to the nature of the defilements. —Although the objects are not entirely bones, for the sake of subduing defilements, I should see them all as bones through *adhimukti*.”

The Vibhāṣā comments: It should be said that this is the imaginative mental application of resolution conjoined with non-greed. There is thus no fault no matter what objects one likes to take.

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21 T1545, 53a17-19: 勝解作意者。如不淨觀持息念。無量解脫勝處遍處等。

22 T1545, T1545, 841b02-10.

Doctrinally, the teaching that *adhimukti* makes possible the meditative experience of the pure and beautiful on the basis of the *aśubha* is of tremendous significance in the development in the Mahāyāna. Ven. Dhammajoti concludes:<sup>23</sup>

The nature, role and importance of *adhimukti* as a mental force is particularly brought out in the Sarvāstivāda tradition. And this most probably was a development occurring in their system of meditative praxis. The development of Mahāyāna conception of the pure land must have been influenced by the meditative experience of the pure and beautiful visualized through the power of *adhimukti*. Furthermore, the Mahāyāna Yogācāras, evolving as they did from the broad Sarvāstivāda lineage, seemed to have been much inspired by this doctrinal development. Some of them eventually came to be convinced that the whole of phenomenal existence is nothing but a projection of one's own mind, and moreover find it indispensable as a major support for their distinctive doctrine of *vijñaptimātratā*.

The Dharmatrāta-dhyāna sūtra is also called “The sūtra on *aśubha* meditation in the level of practice” (修行地不淨觀經), which again is called “The Perfectly Pure *Dharma-maṇḍala*”.<sup>24</sup> This text uses the term “*maṇḍala*” (曼荼羅 seals) in the signs of higher advancement (*parākramaṇa-bhāgīya*).<sup>25</sup> This indicates the Vajravāda meditation was possibly developed on the base of *aśubha*, white-bone contemplation.

### **Practice *Aśubha*, White-Bone Meditation in the Vibhāṣā**

The Vibhāṣā explains *aśubha* practice in detail in **two** places:

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23 Dhammajoti, *The Sarvastivada Doctrine of Adhimukti*, 173.

24 《出三藏記集卷九·修行地不淨觀經序》(T2145, 66c): 此一部典, 名為具足清淨法場。Also Ven. Yinshun, it is also called 圓滿清淨法曼荼羅。

25 T618, 308c1: 一切升進相, 殊妙種種印。

- the first is under the discussion of *pratimukhī smṛti*, one fixes one's mindfulness between the eye-brows (T1545, 205b-c, the first section of Vibhāṣā) and;
- the second is under the ten perceptions (T1545, 839b-840a, the seventh section of Vibhāṣā). When one has the perception of *aśubha*, one also perceives another four: the perception of non-delight in the entire world (一切世間不可樂), the perception of abandoning (斷 cutting off sensual thought), the perception of dispassion (離) and the perception of cessation (滅).<sup>26</sup>

Those two places share similar contents. The following is outline of the practice.

The general practice of *aśubha*: the meditator grasps skillfully the various signs of the corpse and apprehends these signs in his own body through meditation with the force of resolution (*adhimokṣa*). The meditation involves contemplation of the blotchy color of the skin and the various parts of the skeleton from the bones of the feet up to the skull. Contemplating all the signs clearly, the meditator can move to focus on glabella.<sup>27</sup>

Based on the general practice, there are three types of contemplation of the impure.

1. Preferable to brevity (樂略)
  2. Preferable to details (樂廣) and
  3. Preferable to both brevity and details.
1. Preferable to brevity, upon completion of the contemplation of those impure objects, the meditator brings his consciousness to the point between his

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26 T1545, 839b24-25: 不淨想厭食想轉時。各四想隨轉。謂一切世間不可樂想。及斷離滅想。Cf. A10:60, Girimānanda sutta: the tenfold perception (*saññā*), *aśubha*, *marāṇa*, *āhāre paṭikkūla*, *sabbaloke anabhirata*, *anicca*, *anicce dukkha*, *dukkhe anatta*, *pahāna*, *virāga*, *nirodha*. Also, S46.74-76.

27 See, Suen, 223-4. T1545, 839b28-c18.

eyebrows in a tranquil manner. Then, mindfulness is turned into body, feeling, mind and dharma.<sup>28</sup>

2. Preferable to details, the above process is carried out until the abode of mindfulness lies between the eyebrows. The meditator then contemplates the skull, followed by the various parts of the skeleton down to the bones of the feet. He goes further, contemplating the border of the bones, then the bed, room, temple, garden, boundary of the house, field, river, country, border of the sea and finally, the whole world, which is full of bones. The order of contemplation is then reversed, from the world back to the skull. Upon completion of the contemplation of these impure objects, the meditator brings his attention back to the point between his eyebrows in a tranquil manner. Then, mindfulness is turned into body, feeling, mind and dharma.<sup>29</sup>
3. Preferable to both brevity and details, the process is carried out until mindfulness abides at the point between the eyebrows. This process is repeatedly practiced until full familiarity is achieved; then, mindfulness is turned into body, feeling, mind and dharma.<sup>30</sup>

When contemplating on impurity, one may have four alternatives:<sup>31</sup>

1. Contemplation of the impure with one's own body only.
2. Contemplation of the impure with surroundings only.
3. Contemplation of the impure with decreasing self and decreasing circumstances.
4. Contemplation of the impure without self or circumstances.

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28 T1545, 839c18-21; T1545, 205b14-29.

29 T1545, 839c21-840a01; T1545, 205b29-c11.

30 T1545, 840a01-02; T1545, 205c11-18.

31 T1545, 206c04-07.

### Three Levels of Contemplation on the Impure

Among the three types of *aśubha*, each type can be divided into 3 levels of practice based on the outcome: whether they can perceive clearly the skeleton or white-bone, or glabella. In other words, when one practices any one of these three types, one may enter into three levels of mastery of *aśubha* (T1545, 206a-c). The Vibhāṣā offers four interpretations represented by four groups. Here is the general meaning:<sup>32</sup>

- (i) a beginner (*ādikarmika*; 初習業): The meditator goes to the cemetery and observes the decomposition of the body. Later, he goes back to his hut, uses the power of visualization to observe his own body as a corpse. Until he can see only his own skeleton 骨瑣.
- (ii) one who has mastered the practice (*kṛta-parijaya*; 已熟修): The meditator contemplates his skeleton starting from his foot bones, progressively visualizing part by part, until he sees the white-bone skull 觀髑髏.
- (iii) one who has gone beyond mental application (*atikrānta-manaskāra*; 超作意). The meditator focuses his awareness on the point between the eyebrows. 繫念眉間湛然而住.

The Vibhāṣa also mentions three alternative explanations.<sup>33</sup> Some masters explain the differences of the three levels are related to mind.<sup>34</sup>

- 1. In the beginning level *ādikarmika*, one's mind is not focused.
- 2. In the mastery level *kṛta-parijaya*, one's mind is focused, but not clear.
- 3. In the highest level, *atikrānta-manaskāra*, one's mind is focused and clear.

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32 T1545, 206a-c.

33 T1545, 206b08-c07 (有作是說唯樂略者... 有餘師說.....復有說者...)

34 T1545, 206a12-c03.

## Attainment

*The Dhyānasamādhi-sūtra* of Kumārajīva (坐禪三昧經, T614) states that there are three marks of attainment after one practices *aśubha*. If one enters *samādhi*, there would be three signs:

1. The body feels pleasant, soft and light.
2. The sheen to the bones is just like white snow.
3. When the mind reaches this quiet space, it is the contemplation of purity.<sup>35</sup>

*The Outline of the Way to Reflection*,<sup>36</sup> another meditation text translated by Kumārajīva, explains:

If one is utterly disgusted with the body, one should advance to the visualization of white bones. One may also enter the first *dhyāna* (absorption; Pali: *jhāna*). When the meditator earnestly seeks for the great vehicle, at his life's end he will, as he wishes, be reborn in front of the Buddhas. If not, he will certainly reach the Tuṣita heaven and see Maitreya.<sup>37</sup>

By practicing white-bone meditation, one can overcome the side effects of *aśubha* meditation. One can enter the meditation stages. One can follow the Mahāyāna to be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven.

Pa Auk, a modern Burmese meditation teacher, claims that if one can perceive the skeleton, one can go further and meditate on the white *kaṣiṇa*.

Taking one direction at a time, wherever your light of concentration reaches, develop each direction in the same way. You should apply your penetrating

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35 T614, 272a 若得禪定即有三相。身體和悅柔軟輕便。白骨流光猶如白珂。心得靜住，是為觀淨。

36 T15, 298c16-18: 《思惟略要法》 English translation was made by Prof. Willemen. The book is mainly about the Buddhānusmṛti developed in Mahāsaṅghika tradition. It is informative book on Sarvāstivāda and Early Mahāyāna Meditation.

37 T15, 298c16-18: 若極厭惡其身，當進白骨觀，亦可入初禪。行者志求大乘者，命終隨意生諸佛前，不爾必至兜率天上得見彌勒。 See, Willemen, 27-28



knowledge both near and far, in all directions, once internally and once externally. Practice until wherever you look in the ten directions, you see only skeletons. Once you have succeeded, you are ready to develop the white *kaṣiṇa* meditation.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

The Buddha first taught *aśubha* meditation to the monks. *Aśubha* has a powerful effect in counteracting sensual desires. Later, Buddha also taught *ānāpāna* for monks leading to insight. To overcome the side effects of *aśubha*, Sarvāstivādins encourage meditators to start with white-bone contemplation bypassing loathsomeness of the body contemplation.

In the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, *aśubha* refers to impurities of 36 parts of the body. Sarvāstivāda Ābhidharmikas mixed the *aśubha* of one's own body and others' corpses (the cemetery contemplation) together. The Sarvāstivādins have further developed the *aśubha* meditation. It developed visualization of the body as impure (*aśubha*) and white-bone as pure (*śubhā*) under the *abhimokṣa*.

From *aśubha* to *śubha*, from observing impurity of the body to visualizing white-bones and white lights, one enters the first *jhāna/dhyāna*. The development of *aśubha* leads to the arising Mahāyāna meditation.

In meditation practice, *aśubha* or white-bone contemplation can be used to scan and relax one's body to prepare for other meditations, i.e. mindfulness of breathing.

## Abbreviation

A      Aṅguttara Nikāya. For example, —A7:49” means —the book of 7s, the 49th sutta in the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Sutta numbers refers to Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation. The

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38 Pa-Auk, *Knowing and Seeing*, pp 59-61.

numerical discourses of the Buddha: a translation of the  
Aṅguttara Nikāya. Somerville: Wisdom Publications,  
2012.

CBETA Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (中華電子  
佛典協會)

- D Dīgha Nikāya.  
DĀ Dīrgha Āgama  
M Majjhima Nikāya.  
S Saṃyutta Nikāya. For example, “S.54.7” means the 54th  
Saṃyutta in the Saṃyutta-nikāya, the 7th sutta. Sutta  
numbers refers to Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation. The  
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followed by page, column and line number(s). For  
example, “T603,1a24” means Taishō number 603, page1,  
column a, line 24.

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# **Realities of Human Slavery and Buddhist Theoretical Explanations**

**Samantha Rajapaksha**

## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

This paper investigates briefly quantitative details of the modern-day slavery with the help of the materials from the United Nations reports on Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in 2012 and 2014. The paper then discusses how early Buddhist texts interpret the practice of selling and buying human slavery and how it is related with other forms of wrong livelihood. Some core Buddhist principles which are alluded to trafficking in person are also discussed. The interpretation of slaves in general is also discussed. The area has been less discussed even though it practically happens anywhere in the world at any time even though most sophisticated technology in place. Although Buddhist texts have shed a very little light on the form of coercion but Buddha sanctions trade of human slavery as one of the wrong livelihoods. In the beginning, the paper discusses some aspects of the modern-day slavery with the help of UN reports in order to understand the problem and latter section examines how Buddhist texts oppose sale of human slavery and interpretation of slavery including in the later Buddhist texts.

## **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a lucrative business which generates 150 billion USD annually. It is one of the growing issues in the contemporary global context given the fact that economic

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally presented at the International Conference on Human Trafficking/Trade in Buddhist Perspective: Ethical Problems and Solutions according to the Buddhist Teachings in 2016.

marginalization of the victims and offenders is more likely to be leading cause. It is widely regarded that human trafficking might occur anywhere in the world when the circumstances are conducive to traffickers. Statistically, it is on the rise in the recent past even in the developed countries as sophisticated technology has become a powerful tool to traffickers. Women and children are more vulnerable in particular women for sexual exploitation. Though, necessary mechanism to curb trafficking in persons in place, it is inevitable being happened. There seems no territory for the operation of human trafficking. This global scale issue seems to be dealt with global scale awareness without which it might prevail and seem no ending to the problem.

### **Human Slavery**

“Trade in human”, “human trafficking”, and “trafficking in persons” are the terms used to denote the practice of human trafficking. Human trafficking encompasses the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. According to the trafficking victim’s protection act, the human trafficking is described as involuntary servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labour. According to the United Nations definition human slavery is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” Human trafficking is a crime with multiple motives. Fundamentally, traffickers are in decline of moral values. They are no longer appreciative of human potent. Human trafficking has several aspects in the status of operation.

Sex trafficking is the widely practiced in the world for the commercial purposes.

### **Legal Status Quo of the Human Trafficking**

Although the history of human trafficking dates back very long. The criminalization of human traffickers by law has been in the jurisdiction is relatively recent phenomenon. Even the UN clearly identifies since 2000's. Practically, some countries are yet to criminalize the human trafficking. This signals that the crime of human trafficking yet to be legalized. Strictly speaking, the lower level of awareness among communities on this crime lead to the lack of acceptance and knowledge on the subject. Therefore, knowledge and awareness is key factors in the trade in human. In order to tackle this crime, high level of support is critical in particular from the communities. Exchanging information to the relevant authorities are immensely supportive to discourage human traffickers. Some are not even aware of the magnitude of the issue. Victims seek no refuge in fear of death threat.

### **Stigmatization**

Some of the cases of the human trafficking remain silent given the fact that victims are afraid to tell their victimization due to various reasons. Apparently, due to stigmatization, most afraid of telling their stories. As most of the cases occur in secrecy so is the victims are sometimes are fear of the community where they are coming from. Sometimes, embarrassment comes from their own family members. Such circumstances prevent victims to report the unfair happens to them.

### **Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2012 and 2014**

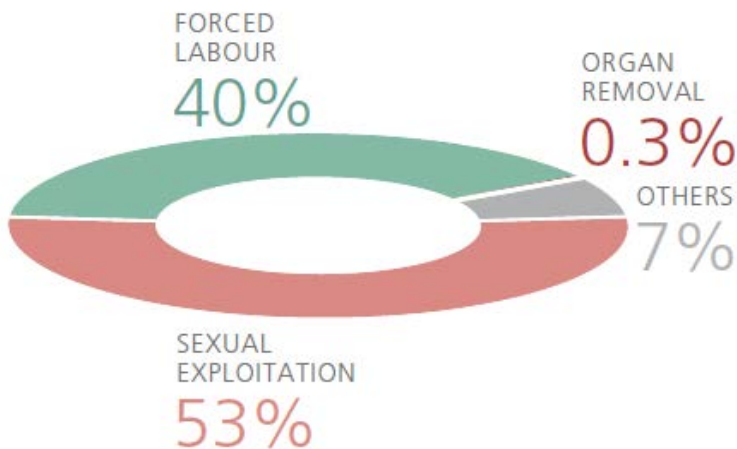
UN publishes a report pertaining to global scale human trafficking every two years. The study is based on 2012 and 2014 reports. The findings presented in both reports well indicate the global scale human trafficking. UNODC gains momentum since 2003 in collecting statistics on victims of human trafficking, despite the fact various challenges are encountered. The both reports



highlight the global scale issue of the human trafficking. The two reports find that the majority of the human trafficking are women although men and boys are trafficked in significant numbers. It is widespread global phenomenon. The figure 1 indicates the percentage of the victims in terms of area of the exploitation. Vast majority of victims are subjected to sexual exploitation. According to the 2014 report, the main form detected for the sexual exploitation. Disproportionally, women are victims of human trafficking. Forced labour has been tremendously increased over the years both in developed and underdeveloped regions. Thus, the report concludes that sexual exploitation is the leading purpose for the human trafficking. The report further discloses that by gender men outnumber in conviction of the human trafficking and women are the victims of the human trafficking.

## Forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, 2011\*

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Source: UNODC elaboration on national data.

Figure 1

### Key Findings of the Reports

Both reports indicate that women are the most vulnerable in the human trafficking than men which transcends more than 50%. The human trafficking offenders are vastly outnumbered by gender as men than women. The main purpose of human trafficking is detected as for the sexual exploitation which occurs in most part of the world. The reports further speaks that 134 countries have criminalized trafficking by means a specific offence in line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. However, the accusation being levelled for the human trafficking conviction is recorded very low. Between 2007 and 2010, 16% has not recorded any single case related to the human trafficking. Traffickers often engage such heinous acts given the fact that moral deterioration of

the traffickers. On given any civilized society, selling human is decline. Money is main driven factor in the engagement of human trafficking. It is a good indication that moral deterioration in traffickers who engage in this misdeed. Often victims are powerless and helpless in seeking justice.

### **Buddha's Direct Words on Selling Human Slavery**

Theravāda tradition believes that what appears in the Pāli canon is some direct utterances of the Buddha. This seems to be the case at least for some portions in the Sutta and Vinaya. However, when the entire Pāli canon is observed very little has the aspects related to human slavery including the sanction of human selling. The scanty textual statements are enough to reconstruct how Buddha sanctions such trade among other trades and why Buddha denied so. Buddha advocates trade in human slavery as one of the wrong type of livelihoods. *Vaṇijjāsutta* of *Aṅguttaranikāya* where Buddha advocates selling human being should not be done.

A. III. 208, 13-17

*pañcimā bhikkhave vaṇijjā upāsakena akaraṇīyā. katamā pañca? satthavaṇijjā, **sattavaṇijjā**, maṃsavaṇijjā, majjavaṇijjā, visavaṇijjā. imā kho bhikkhave pañca vaṇijjā upāsakena akaraṇīyā.*

The lay followers of the Buddha are discouraged to engage in five types of trades. These include selling of arms, selling of human beings, selling of meats, selling of liquors and selling of poisons respectively. Selling of all these trades and their moral consequences are discussed more or less in Buddhist texts except selling human slavery. The question needs to be asked why Buddha denied person in selling as one of the wrong livelihoods. In order to answer this question, in the first place, we can draw some other trades which are equally denied by Buddha and their moral matters relating to it. The other all four are related to making harm to others. In other words, the wrong types of trades are harming sentient beings including humans. Selling human

slavery is equally regarded morally unfitting just as the other four trades. Therefore, when it comes to selling in person, *Vaṇijjāsutta* is the only canonical statement where Buddha opposes sale of human slavery. Hence, in terms of specifying the act of human trafficking in the early Buddhist texts, this bears a great value. In fact, it is the only occurrence in the early Buddhist texts where Buddha specifically discourages trade in human slavery. In the first place, it is clear that at the time of the Buddha, the trade of selling human was apparently taking place, however, no such incident (s) being cited in the texts as such. Probably, Buddha being aware trade in human slavery just as other wrong types of trades in the society may have imposed such moral obligation. *sattavaṇijjā* or trade in human beings include buying and selling of any human beings adults or children, slave trading.

It is good to examine why Buddha denied such type of trade as one of the wrong livelihoods. The compound *sattavaṇijjā* could be rendered as trade of human or human selling. *satta* or *satva* can be referred to *living being* and *vaṇijjā* is referred to *trading*. When combined it has the sense of *trading of living being*. However, *satta* or *satva* has meaning not only for human being but simply for other living being. By looking at the Pāli text, we even can conclude that selling of living being. The definition of *sattavaṇijjā* or selling of human being cannot be found in *vaṇijjāsutta*. Therefore, in the first glance, it is barely noticeable that this directly affirm to indicate selling human slavery. However, this can be solvable by examining simply if *satta* directly to refers to human being. In the *Dīghanikāya*, a mention is made three good conducts of *satva* or human being. This context is specific to human being than sentient being.

D. I. 83, 21-23

*sattā kāyasucaritena samannāgatā vacīsucaritena  
samannāgatā manosucaritena samannāgatā.*

There are innumerable canonical statements where Buddha refers *satta* for human being even though it has the sense for other sentient being. The preceding excerpt directly expression of

human being in which being is possessed with good bodily, verbally and mentally conduct. However, *Satta* can also be seen referring to sentient being. The following speaks of any sentient being born in the world not necessarily the rational being i.e human being. In the *Dīghanikāya*, a mention is made on sentient being.

D. I. 17, 19  
*loko yebhuyyena sattā.*

Therefore, we can conclude that selling both human slavery and living being are equally possible since there are no additional interpretation for the *sattavaṇijjā* in the early Buddhist text. However, since early Buddhist texts distinguish both *satta-s*. The text refers here selling human being. This is also backed up by commentarial explanation. The commentary even the sub-commentary are of the same definition of *sattavaṇijjā*. The following is the explanation given by the *aṭṭhakathā*, *Manorathapūraṇī*.

Mp. 303,14-16  
*upāsakenā ti saraṇagatena.. sattavaṇijjā ti  
manussavikkayo.*

The *aṭṭhakathā* has identified *sattavaṇijjā* as *manussavikkayo*. The commentary straightforwardly defines *sattavaṇijjā* to be *manussavikkayo* or *selling of human being*. The commentary simply has given synonym. However not much is explained about the selling human being other than giving a synonym. In the first place, the commentary identifies the lay follower who has faith towards three departments i.e the Buddha, the teaching of the Buddha and the monastic community. Therefore, based on the commentarial explanation we can conclude that Buddhist texts both earlier and later sanctions selling of human slavery. Even the sub-commentary defines slavery using commonly used Pāli term to explain slavery as *bhujissa-*. The following is the excerpt of the *ṭīkā*, sub-commentary.

*sattavaṇijjā abhujissabhāvakaraṇato.*

The sub-commentary defines *sattavaṇijjā* as *abhujissabhāvakaraṇato* which literally means *not making state of being freed*. The *ṭīkā* further clarifies the meaning of the state of slavery. *bhujissabhāva* or *state of being freed* is one of the commonly used compounds to denote the freed slave. The compound of the *ṭīkā* explains how the slave's freedom being confined. The capture of slave forcibly or the involuntary capture of human being is perfectly explained in the use of the compound *abhujissabhāvakaraṇato* or *not making state of being freed*. Both earlier and later Buddhist texts are advocating human slavery not to be sold out and not morally accepted trading.

### **Buddha Rejects Owning of Slaves**

When the virtuous behaviour, *sīla* of the Buddha being interpreted, Buddha refrains from accepting certain things including both male and female slaves. Probably, the idea of being simple in life and monk attendant would be suitable in attending Buddha's needs. The same idea being interpreted in the *aṭṭhakathā*, when the reason why Buddha has rejected accepting slaves.

D.I. 5, 14-15

*dāsidāsaṇṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato samaṇo gotamo.*

### **Treating Slaves**

Buddha proposes five essential duties to be fulfilled towards slaves by their masters. Master-slave relationship being described so that both parties are contented in particular the latter.

D.III. 191, 1-4

*yathābalaṃ*

*bhattavetanānuppādānena*

*acchariyānaṃ rasānaṃ*

*vossaggena.*

*kammantaṣaṃvidhānena*

*gilānupaṭṭhānena*

*saṃvibhāgena samaye*

It is to make sure that slaves are not overworked but doing their work according to their capacity, their service being paid off so that it is not the exploitation of slave labour, at times slaves are ill, they should be treated properly so that they can continue their work.

### **Variable Income Source Generating Plan for Selling Human Slavery**

A well-defined secular economic policy has been proposed by the Buddha avoiding wrong means of trades, *micchāvaṇijjā*. Buddha advocates to renounce *micchāvaṇijjā* and make use *sammāvaṇijjā* or right means of trades in order to generate income source to survive.

Sv 235, 6-7

***ko ājīvo ti? pañca micchāvaṇijjā pahāya dhammena samena jīvitakappanam.***

While rejecting the wrong method of livelihood, it is recommended the right type of livelihood in order to gain successful wealth. Righteous living (*dhammena jīvitakappanam*) impartial living (*samena jīvitakappanam*) are key to achieve such goal. In several places in the *aṭṭhakathā*, it is recommended that avoiding these types of wrong livelihood instead to be engaged in just and earnest living in order to accumulate wealth. The wealth accumulated through *micchāvaṇijjā* is not considered righteous living (*dhammena jīvitakappanam*) which eventually lead to ruin the economy (*apāyamukha*) and moral deterioration and being born in the realm of suffering. The criteria on which the wealth can be accumulated have been stated in the early Buddhist texts in innumerable places. Financial success can be achieved through *uṭṭhānasampadā* or earned by hard working not by harming others. It simply refers not to find short cuts for success but earnest intention and well planning and gradual success with hard working. Material wealth can be gained if person is consciously practicing the moral consequences and stick to the right principles. What

Buddha rejected as *micchāvaṇijjā* including human slavery can be easily done and requires no such hard working.

### **Some Core Principles Which are Alluded to Denial of Human Slavery**

Any violent means to sentient beings or rational beings is foreign to fundamentals of Buddhism. Buddha advocates that non-violent means in your deeds. He encourages to be non-violent in any form. When somebody is forced to engage any involuntary acts, it is the violation of freedom of any sentient being. In the Dhammapada, a mention is made, take oneself as example, do not engage harming others. Even though it is not alluded to human slavery, the idea is clear that slaves are just as any other human beings are willing to live freely.

Dhp 37, 130

*sabbesaṃ jīvitam piyaṃ, attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na  
haneyya na ghātaye.*

This is a powerful rhetoric to discourage and devalue sell of human slavery. In the definition of human trafficking, it is clear that use of force, fraud, or coercion are essential factors in carrying out the human trafficking. It is also an involuntary servitude which is utterly denied by Buddhism. Further, In the *Dāṇḍasutta* of the *udānapāli*, it continues to mention that if you expect happiness by harming other, you will not attain happiness for sure.

Ud 12, 3-4

*yo daṇḍena vihiṃsati attano sukham esāno pecca so na  
labhate sukham.*

In other words, deed of coercion will return as coercion sooner or later. Further, human trafficking demands several planning and meticulously done work of harming to another one. So according



to Buddhism, person accumulates all corruptible qualities due to seek happy living by confining others independency.

### Interpretations of Slavery in the Buddhist Texts

Even though grouping and work task assigned to slaves considerably vary, ancient Indian texts including Vedic texts commonly term *dāsa* to refer slave, servant. The Buddhist texts are no exception to this. Even gender identification of slave varies slightly. Male slave is known as *dāsa* while female is known *dāsī*. Even though most often *dāsa-s* or slaves represent the lower scale of the social grades, some slaves represent superior level of the ancient society which is relatively rare. Slavery known to Buddhist texts has multifaceted. These include **enemies captured** as slaves, **debtors** as slaves, **voluntary** slaves, **convicted** as slaves.<sup>2</sup>

The early Buddhist texts most often use compound *dāsakammakāraporisā-* or slaves and labourers. The texts mainly refer to classify this group as one of the social graders in the ancient society, *kammakāra* or labourer both paid and unpaid would include in this category. In the Majjhimanikāya, *dāsakammakāraporisā-* is used to describe this specific social group along with such other compound terms. These include pair words labourer and slave, mother and father, wife and children etc.

M.I.186-187,30-31, 7-32

*mātāpitūnaṃ....puttadārassa...dāsakammakaraporisass  
a...mittāmaccānaṃ...ñātisālohitānaṃ.*

Even though early Buddhist texts explain different roles assigned to slaves, the later commentaries sometimes are specific on the works and duties assigned to slaves. It seems *dāsakammakāraporisā-* is a specific type of slaves which are hired on the daily basis and obtained their service rather than stationed domestically and served for the master. The commentary defines

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<sup>2</sup> See also Law (1948-3).

them to be type of labourer who works and lives on the daily basis wage labour. This specific group seems to be male servant rather than female.

Mp. II. 241,9-11

*dāsakammakaraporisassā ti dāsānañ ceva  
devasikabhattavetanabhatānaṃ kammakarānañ ca  
nissāya jīvamānapurisānañ ca*

In order to show one's social status, owning of property is a reflection especially owning of human asset in the ancient Indian society. Thus far, owning of slaves and unpaid labourer is a part of owning such property and expression of the social status. Some texts reflect how slaves were treated and how even they were fed with. There were slaves who were serving for royals and non-royals. Buddha says even in his early part of life, the slaves who were serving him at his father's palace were fed with good kind of rice, *sālimamsodana* while non-royal slaves were fed with porridge with broken rice, *kaṇājakam* which is accompanied by sour gruel, *bilaṅga*.

A.I.145, 18-20

*kaṇajakam bhojanam diyyati bilaṅgadutiyam....  
sālimamsodano diyyati.*

In the Vinaya, three types of slaves are identified. These three types of slaves are believed to have existed at the time of the Buddha. However, earlier texts do not define these three groups in the texts.

Vin IV 224, 33

*dāso nāma antojāto dhanakkīto karamarānīto.*

These three types of slaves are defined not in the Vinaya but in the samantapāsādikā, the Vinaya Commentary. The *dāsavatthu* which groups the types of slaves in details. One type is *children of slave women (antojāto)*, second type is *purchased slaves (dhanakkīto)* and third type is *imported slaves (karamarānīto)*.

Sp.V.1000, 20-27

*antojāto nāma jātidāso gharadāsiyā putto. dhanakkīto nāma mātāpitūnaṃ santikā putto vā sāmikānaṃ santikā dāso vā dhaṇaṃ datvā dāsacārittaṃ āropetvā kīto. ete dvepi na pabbājetabbā. pabbājentena tattha tattha cārittavasena adāsaṃ katvā pabbājetabbā karamarāṇīto nāma tiroraṭṭhaṃ vilopaṃ vā katvā upalāpetvā vā tiroraṭṭhato bhujissamānusakāni āharanti.*

According to the commentary, the former two types of slaves should not be ordained. If they were to be ordained, their status of slavery should be renounced.

Jātaka texts present some stories which reflect the types of slaves and status of slaves. One of which is the Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka in which four kinds of slaves are spoken. This is perhaps the expanding account of the Vinaya account of three slave categories. The one grouping besides three what Vinaya identifies is the self-proclaimed slaves, *sāmaṃdābyamupagatā*.

### Status Quo of Human Slave

Buddha speaks of manumission of a slave in several occasions given the fact that upon release from slavery. One regains his or her former position as an average human being. The status of being freed from slavery (*bhuijssabhāva*) is a delighting factor. In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. The status of a slave upon release is equated to a taintless monk's psychological status.

D.I. 72-73, 23-29, 1-2

*seyyathāpi mahārāja puriso dāso assa anattādhīno parādhīno na yena kāmaṃ gamo. so aparena samayena tamhā dāsabyā mucceyya attādhīno aparādhīno bhujisso yena kāmaṃ gamo. tassa evamassa – ‘ahaṃ kho pubbe dāso aho siṃ anattādhīno parādhīno na yena kāmaṃ gamo. somhi etarahi tamhā dāsabyā mutto attādhīno aparādhīno bhujisso yena kāmaṃ gamo’ ti. so tato nidānaṃ labhetha pāmojjaṃ, adhigaccheyya somanassaṃ.*

Buddha uses the simile of slave to express the psychology of taintless monk who renounced taints. The status of slave is explained as not autonomous (*anattādhīno*). The slave is not on his own, he is no longer capable of taking decision on his own. He has to be defendant on the master (*parādhīno*). Slave's own privileges being neglected and his life is governed by his master. Upon release, former slave regains a status which is delighted and rejoiced.

### **Changing Status of Slave**

In rejecting the idea of slave status, Buddha opines that it is due to somebody's deed that determine one's status as a slave or a noble one. The idea of social ranking in the ancient Indian context was designated by birth not by deed. Hence, slaves occupy the social status similar to lower graders. Buddha advocates that those had become noble ones once later they have become slaves and vice versa. Thus, it is a reflection the simile of slave being used to denote the inferiority class of the society. Further, it is a reflection that slaves are outcaste in opposite to noble ones, *ariya*.

M. II. 149, 6-7

*ayyo hutvā dāso hoti dāso hutvā ayyo hoti.*

Further in order to point out the taints which bind one being unable to freed, Buddha takes the simile of slave is who is bound by and finds himself cannot be freed.

Sv 214, 19-20

*evaṃ dāsavyaṃ viya uddhaccakukkuccaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ.*

### **Buddha Rejects Owning of Slaves**

When the virtuous behaviour, *sīla* of the Buddha being interpreted, Buddha refrains from accepting certain things including both male and female slaves. Probably, the idea of being simple in life and monk attendant would be suitable in attending Buddha's needs.

The same idea being interpreted in the *aṭṭhakathā*, when the reason why Buddha has rejected accepting slaves.

D.I.5, 14-15

*dāsidāsapaṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato samaṇo gotamo.*

### **Some Incompatible Textual Interpretation on Human Slavery**

Despite the fact that Buddha sanctions trafficking in persons as one of the wrong means of livings, there are some textual statements which support that the slaves were ill-treated or they were facing discrimination even in obtaining the monkhood. One of which is that Buddha imposes Vinaya rule not to ordain slave. If someone does so, it is considered an offense of wrongdoing.

Vin. I. 76, 26-27

*na bhikkhave, dāso pabbājetabbo. yo pabbājeyya, āpatti dukkaṭassā ti.*

It seems that Buddha imposes such Vinaya rule as certain slaves take the advantage of being a monastic to evade from certain obligations towards their masters as presumably they were bound previously. If slaves are bound by certain obligations, they cannot be freed until they would end serving for master.

### **Conclusions**

Both reports of the UN are explicit that human trafficking has no boundaries and it might practically occur anywhere. Some victims are even unaware that they are victims of human traffickers. As criminalization of human trafficking is relatively quiet recent law which even in some countries are yet to criminalize. Economic backwardness and marginalization causes for the victims and offenders to be in the social crime. Male offenders outnumber their female counterparts in the trafficking while most trafficking cases detected for sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation is a widely prevalent human trafficking issue. It is imperative to have a higher level consciousness in the whole process of the human trafficking by which victimization could be lessened to a

significant level. Buddhism is explicit slavery on various grounds. One which is that Buddha vehemently rejects selling human being, *manussavikkayo* as one of wrong means of livings. Probably, Buddha, being aware that trade in human slavery taking place widely in the society, imposed such moral obligation just as other wrong types of trades. Even Buddha refrained owning slave as part of his virtuous behaviour. Buddha speaks of the welfare of slaves if slave owned by master. Even though in certain cases, Buddha imposes Vinaya rule on slave not to be ordained. Overall Buddhist texts speak negative aspects of human slavery.

### Abbreviations

A	Āṅguttaranikāya. E. Hardy. Ed. 1976. Āṅguttaranikāya. London: Pali Text Society
D	Dīghnikāya. Rhys Davids. T.W. Estlin Carpenter. J. ed. 1975. Dīghnikāya.i. London. Pali Text Society
Dhp	Dhammapada. O.von. Hinuber, Norman. K.R. ed. 1995. Dhammapada. Oxford. Pali Text Society.
M	Majjhimanikāya. Chalmers, Robert. ed.1977. Majjhimanikāya. London: Pali ext Society
Mp	Manorathapūranī. Kopp, Hermann. ed. 1966. Manorathapūranī. London. Pali Text Society
PED	Pali-English Dictionary.ed. 1986. Pali-English Dictionary. London: Pali Text Society
Sp	Samantapāsādikā.Takakusu, J.,Nagai,Makoto. ed. 1966. Samantapāsādikā. Pali Text Society
Sv	Sumaṅgalavilāsinī. Rhys Davids, T.W.,Carpenter, Estlin.J. ed.1968. Sumaṅgalavilāsinī. London: Pali Text Society
Ud	Udāna. P.Steinthal. ed.1982. Udāna. London. Pali Text Society
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	United States Dollar
Vin	Vinayapiṭaka. Oldernberg. H. ed. 1993. Vinayapiṭaka. Oxford: Pali Text Society

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# Abhidharmadīpa and Vibhāṣāprabhā<sup>1</sup>, on Sāṃkhya: Reconstructing a Lesser-Known Refutation of *pradhāna*<sup>1</sup>

Mattia Salvini

## Abstract

Buddhist texts often debate non-Buddhist positions, and the Sāṃkhya system recurs as an especially prominent opponent; Sāṃkhya philosophy differs from the Buddhist in at least two important aspects, i.e. the acceptance of a permanent self, and a view of causation that is incompatible with the Buddhist doctrine of dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*).

A lesser known refutation of Sāṃkhya is found in the Abhidharmadīpa (“The Lamp of Abhidharma”) and its commentary, the Vibhāṣāprabhā (“The Light of the Vibhāṣā”, referring to the Mahāvibhāṣā). The title “Vibhāṣāprabhā” indicates an affiliation with the Vaibhāṣika position, and possibly suggests that the Mahāvibhāṣā, while being a commentary, is as close to the root Abhidharma text that it comments upon as light would be to the lamp that produces it – suggesting the authenticity and authority of the Vaibhāṣika tradition.

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This refutation of Sāṃkhya (specifically, of the permanent *pradhāna*) may be less known not just in the sense that this text is not as commonly studied as other Buddhist philosophical texts, but also in terms of its specific context and line of argumentation. Other Buddhist refutations of Sāṃkhya, at least those known to me, focus on the rejection of the doctrine that the effect pre-exists in some form in its cause (*satkāryavāda*), while the present text tackles the Sāṃkhya from a different angle.

In this article, I will offer an annotated translation of the relevant section of the text, and a topical outline, as an attempt to reconstruct the steps of argumentation according to the interpretation that I find to be most plausible. I acknowledge, however, that I find some key steps in the debate to be somewhat obscure, as they could be understood in more than one way and it is not immediately obvious to me which interpretation should be considered the most plausible.

## Introduction

In the initial sections of the Abhidharmadīpa and its commentary, the Vibhāṣāprabhā (as represented in Jaini's edition) we find a debate against the Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya systems. The purpose of this section is to establish that there exist only three types of permanent entities, i.e. the three unproduced (*asaṃskṛta*) *dharmas* as accepted by the Vaibhāṣika.

Although only the very last part of the refutation of the Vaiśeṣika is available in Jaini's edition, the refutation of the Sāṃkhya is preserved in its entirety. It offers a glimpse into a form of Buddhist-Sāṃkhya debate that may have been prominent much earlier than the Abhidharmadīpa. At least another section of the Abhidharmadīpa and its commentary offer a refutation of Sāṃkhya, and in that case we find the more recurrent argument against the doctrine that the effect pre-exists in its cause (*satkāryavāda*).<sup>2</sup> Both in terms of overall context and content,

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<sup>2</sup> sāmkyah paśyati- vidyamānam eva jāyate | tadyathā kṣīre vidyamānam dadhi,  
kāryakāraṇayorekatvāt | taṃ pratyapadiśyate- *dvitīyaṃ janma jātasya vastuno nopapadyate*

however, the section of the text that is the focus of the present article is rather different from the other, better known mode of Buddhist-Sāṃkhya debate.

Since the amount of Vaibhāṣika literature surviving in Sanskrit is limited, most readers may not be familiar with polemical treatises meant to distinguish permanent categories accepted by the Buddhist from the permanent entities accepted by the non-Buddhist. Buddhist schools other than the Vaibhāṣika, better represented in Sanskrit, do not emphasize the existence of permanent entities. Especially with texts in the tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, the primary emphasis becomes a refutation of any permanent entity, rather than an attempt to distinguish between acceptable versus non-acceptable permanent things. On the other hand, the three non-produced *dharma*s (space and the two types of cessation) play an important role in Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma; it is therefore understandable that exponents of this systems may have wished to refute other types of permanent entities accepted by the non-Buddhist, in order to preserve the integrity of their own system as a form of authentic Buddhist philosophy. From that perspective, discarding the Sāṃkhya view of a permanent element in causation (*pradhāna*) highlights that the acceptance of the three permanent and

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| yadi khalu kṣīre dadhyādayo vikārāḥ santi bīje cāṅkurādayaḥ śukraśoṇite ca kalalādayaḥ, teṣāṃ jātānāṃ kṣīrādivaj janma punar na yujyate | yathā ca na yujyate tathā pūrvam evāviṣkṛtaṃ | Abhidharmadīpavibhāṣāprabhāvr̥tti, JAINI 1977: 274 (italics mine).

The above argument could be compared, partly also due to its terminology, to the following section of the Madhyamakāvatāra:

tasmād dhi tasya bhavane na guṇo 'sti kaścij *jātasya janma punar eva ca naiva yuktaṃ* || 6.8cd ||  
*jātasya janmani punaḥ parikalpyamāne* naivāṅkurādaya iha prabhavaṃ labheran |  
bījasya ca prabhava eva bhaved bhavāntaṃ tenaiva tasya hi kathaṃ ca bhaved vināśaḥ || 6.9 ||  
LI 2015 (italics mine). Note that 6.8d is also quoted in Prasannapadā on MMK 1.4a, MACDONALD 2014.

unproduced *dharma*s does not involve a violation of the key Buddhist principles about the nature of causation.

We should further note that the Abhidharmadīpa and its commentary are partly a response to Vasubandhu's criticisms of Vaibhāṣika positions in the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, and the three non-produced *dharma*s are one of the main targets of what later *siddhānta* literature would classify as the Sautrāntika. We can understand this discussion of the Sāmkhya system as a particularly thorough attempt to re-establish the Vaibhāṣika doctrine of permanent entities against such criticism as that found in Vasubandhu's Bhāṣya.

While reproducing the text, as well as in the translation, I have used the verse numbering as given by Jaini; however, additional folios of the manuscript used by Jaini, now available but not yet edited, indicate that, in fact, what was numbered as verse 1.2 by Jaini followed a long section.<sup>3</sup> This means that the broader context of the refutation cannot yet be determined with confidence or

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<sup>3</sup> LI 2012, LI 2013. I understand that before what is numbered as 1.2 by Jaini there are 30 newly found folios. LI presents the first 17 verses from those folios: *yo duḥkha hetu vyapaśāntimārgam pradarśayāmāsa narāmarebhyah | tam satpathajñam praṇipaty buddham śāstram kariṣyāmy abhidharmadīpam ||1|| dharmāva bodhena vinā na yasmān mokṣārthinām bandhanahānam asti | vimuktipākopaṇiṣatsamādhiṃ tasmād imā sarvavid ācacakṣe ||2|| cihnadvayī hetuphalavyavasthā sasamprayogā saha saṃgrahaṇa | salabdhyalābhā munināṣṭadhoktā yā dharmatā tadvicayo 'bhidharmah ||3|| yā mātṛkā yat pīṭakam tṛtīyam śikṣā ca yāntyā khalu yac ca śāstram | yaś copadeśo muninopadiṣṭo vaibhāṣikānām sa mato 'bhidharmah ||4|| sūtrasya tattvaṃ vinayasya cātmā samādhiṣṭe vimale tathaiva | ajñānatṛṣṇāpratighatrayasya nirdiṣṭam etat tritayam kṣayāya ||5|| aṅgāṅgibhāvena yatas trayasya kriyāphalaṃ nānyatamād rte 'sti | sarvatra tasmāt tritayopadeśah prādhānyatas tu vyapadeśasiddhiḥ ||6|| śīlam pratiṣṭhā kathitam samādheḥ prajñendriyasyāpy uditas samādhiḥ | śīlam pratiṣṭhā kathitam samādheḥ prajñendriyasyāpy uditas samādhiḥ | tatra sthītā paśyati dhīḥ ca tattvaṃ tadbodhanārtham pīṭakatrayoktiḥ ||7|| śāstre mahāyānam idam yathoktam kaṇṭhopadiṣṭam munisattamena | mahāmuni vyūhanīṣevitatvān mahāpadasthānanijojakatvāt ||8|| brahma itad ādyam munipuṅgavānām jñānāmakaṃ bhrama yato 'bhyudeti | tat prāpya santaḥ param āpnvanti kṣemaṃ dhruvaṃ bhṛāmaṇajuṣṭam agryam ||9|| kudṛṣṭitimirāndhānām asanmārgāvalambinām | satpathodyotanāyāyam dīpaḥ prajvālyate mayā ||10|| tarkāgamabahirbhūtair unūttā ye kutārkikaiḥ | teṣāṃ teṣāṃ ca daurbuddhyaṃ dīpenānena lakṣyatām ||11|| utpannapratisaṃvitkāṇ ye cābhyācakṣate munīn | teṣāṃ ca duṣṭadṛṣṭīnām*

precision; the portion of the commentary available in Jaini's edition, however, allows to determine that the refutation is meant to support the Vaibhāṣika view: asserting the existence of three permanent entities (the three *asaṃskṛtadharmas*), while excluding the possibility of any other permanent entity.

Reconstructing the argument is complicated by the possibility of reading *pāda* 1.3a in at least three different ways: *na karmasvakatā, utsargāt*; *na karma, svakatā-utsargāt*; *na, karma-svakatā-utsargāt*. I have listed them in what I consider to be their descending order of plausibility, and further discussed them in the note to that verse. Even after we decide which way to parse the *pāda*, I find the argument remains not immediately apparent; it is not easy to match the *pāda* to its commentary. I think that the most plausible option is to understand that “there is no karma ownership (*na karmasvakatā*)” is explained by “If for each *puruṣa* there exist karmas in the *pradhāna*, whether they be preceded by *buddhi* or not produced by *buddhi* [...]” and that “because it would be discarded (*utsargāt*)” is explained by “[...] it then follows that it is futile to imagine a *pradhāna* that is common (to all of them).” In other words, *utsargāt* should be understood as an unwanted consequence (*prasaṅga*) that debars the possibility of *karmasvakatā*, which in turn debars the hypothetical response found in the final section of the commentary to the previous verse. I have taken up a further option in the note, yet, against Jaini's decision to space as *na karma svakatotsargāt*, I believe it preferable to read *karmasvakatā* as one compound, given its recurrence in Buddhist texts.

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*ḍṛṇmalo 'nena lakṣyatām ||12|| śabdābhidharmasūtrārthakā[vy]anyāyagatam prati | yaḥ śramaḥ kośakāryasya sa cānena samikṣyatām ||13|| abhidharmapradīpena sphuṭatarkāgamārciṣā | eṣa vaḥ paśyatām kośo dahyate śuṣkakakṣavat ||14|| durgrhītatayāśrāddhair duṣṭātmakatayā khalaiḥ | nistejitam mataṃ boddhuṃ punar uddyotyate mayā ||15|| lakṣaṇadvayasamsyūtāḥ satyadvaitānupātinaḥ | śuddhena paramātmānaḥ sadasadbuddhyupādheyah ||16|| buddhāveditasadbhāvāḥ sarvalokapralambinaḥ | śrotṛṇām āśugatyartham prastūyanta ime mayā ||17|| LI 2013 376-375.*

## Structure of the Argument

1 There is no such eternal entity as *pradhāna*

1.2 the *guṇas* either do not change or they do change

1.2.1 if they do not change, there is no *vyakta*  
[because one could not explain what change  
in the causes produces *vyakta* at a certain  
time]

1.2.2 if they do change, they are impermanent and  
*prakṛti* too is impermanent

1.2.2.1 the opponent replies that *vyakta*  
arises due to karma, not due to a change  
in the *prakṛti*, therefore there is no flaw

1.2.2.2 there cannot be *karmasvakatā* [or:  
it cannot be due to karma]. Karma would  
have to belong to *the pradhāna*, or to the  
*puruṣa*, or to the *vyakta*

1.2.2.2.1 if it belongs to the  
*pradhāna* for each *puruṣa*, there  
is no need to imagine a common  
*pradhāna* [because the common  
*vyakta* too would be arising from  
the *pradhāna* belonging to each  
*puruṣa*, where the karma resides,  
rather than from a common  
*pradhāna*, which cannot have  
causal power as karma would not  
reside in it]

1.2.2.2.2 if it has the nature of the  
*puruṣa*, there cannot be liberation  
and there will be other flaws

1.2.2.2.3[option a] if it has the nature of the *prādhāna* (=vyakta), there will be even more flaws, since due to its being common there would be the flaw of receiving the result of something one has not done, and thus the absence of liberation too.

1.2.2.2.3[option b] if it has the nature of the common *pradhāna*, there will be even more flaws, since due to its being common there would be the flaw of receiving the result of something one has not done, and the absence of liberation too. [This option requires emending  
*jñavyaktātmatatā* to  
*jñāvyaktātmatatā*]

2 therefore, it is established that there are only three permanent entities, namely the three *asaṃskṛtas*.

### Translation

The *pradhāna* accepted by the Sāṃkhya is also not permanent.<sup>4</sup> Why so? As for the three *guṇas*,

[1.2] if *sattva*, etc., do not change, it follows that the manifest does not exist;  
*prakṛti* also changes if they change,<sup>5</sup> as it is not different from them.

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Tattvasaṃgraha 41a: *ekaṃ tatkāraṇaṃ nityaṃ*, and pañjikā: *eko nityas triguṇātmakaḥ kāraṇabhūto dharmāḥ sādhayitum iṣṭaḥ [...]*

<sup>5</sup> I could find several instances of the expression *tadvikāravikāritva* in Buddhist texts (while none in non-Buddhist texts). A relevant occurrence is Abhidharmakośakārikā 1.45: *tadvikāravikāritvād āśrayāś caḥsurādayaḥ* (PRADHAN 1967, page 34). Here the principle

If the *guṇas*, starting from *sattva*, do not change by decreasing and increasing, then no „manifest“ whatsoever arises from them.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, if they do change, it follows that they are impermanent.<sup>7</sup> If you say that „it is because of karma, therefore there is no flaw“, then we say that:

[1.3a] There is no karma-ownership (*karmasvakatā*),<sup>8</sup>

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is used to explain the sense in which the eye-faculty, etc., are called *āśraya* in respect to the respective consciousness that arises in dependence upon them and the support/point of reference (*ālambana*). The occurrence of *tadvikāravikāritva* in Prasannapadā Chapter 1 is also in a similar context (MACDONALD 2015, page 270).

<sup>6</sup> According to Sāṃkhya cosmogony, the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* go from a state of *prakṛti/pradhāna* to *vikṛti*, becoming all the effects existing in a potential state as *prakṛti/pradhāna* (the suffix *pra-* here being understood in the sense of temporal and causal anteriority).

<sup>7</sup> *api ca | yadi nāma prakṛtir asyārtham upanayati tathāpi bhoktṛtvam asyāyuktam avikāritvād iti darśayati - arthopabhogakāke cetyādi | arthopabhogakāle ca yadi naivāśya vikriyā | naiva bhoktṛtvam asya syāt prakṛtiś copakāriṇī ||294|| vikriyāyāś ca sadbhāve nityatvam avahīyate | anyathātvam vikāro hi tādavasthye ca tat katham ||295|| yadi hi sukhaduḥkhādīnāhlādaparitāpādirūpām vikṛtiṃ nopaṇīyate tadākāśavad abhoktṛtva eva syāt | prakṛtiś copakāriṇī na syād it sambandhaḥ | avikṛtātmany upakārasya kartum aśakyatvāt | atha vikāritvam asyābhyupagamyate tadā nityatvahānīprasaṅgaḥ | yato 'tādavasthyam evānityatām brūmaḥ | tac ca vikāritve saty astīti katham asya nityatā syāt | tādavasthyarūpatvān nityatvasya || Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā on Tattvasaṃgraha 294-295.*

<sup>8</sup> On the meaning of *karmasvakatā*, see another section of the vṛtti: *atha yad uktaṃ bhagavatā- "karmasvako 'yaṃ bhikṣavo lokaḥ" iti | tat keyaṃ karmasvakatā nāma ? tad ārabhyate- kuśalaṃ vāthavā pāpaṃ yad atītaṃ dadat phalaṃ | svaṃ kāyavāṇmanaskarma sā karmasvakatā matā || Abhidharmadīpa 214 || yat khalu kāyavāṇmanaskarma svayaṃ kṛtaṃ kuśalakuśalam abhyatītaṃ dadat phalaṃ sā karmasvakatā draṣṭavyā || JAINI 183.* If I understand this correctly, this means the past karma, while it is giving fruit. *Karmasvakatā* in compound is a recurrent expression, found in the *Abhidharmadīpa* itself; thus, I offer an interpretation by reading *na karmasvakatotsargāt* rather than (as Jaini does, or at least as the text appears in his edition) *na karma svakatotsargāt*.

The question remains as to whether *karmasvakatā* and *utsargāt* should be read in compound or not. I suggest not. *na karmasvakatā* could respond to *karmavaśād adōṣaḥ*, while I would prefer to take *utsargāt* as an unwanted consequence matching the *vaiarthya* in the commentary. *Karmasvakatā* is a Buddhist term: see EDGERTON 1953: 171, but especially CONE 2001: 642. Cone explains *kamassaka* as “with one’s (past) action as one’s own property or responsibility; being the owner of the (consequences) of one’s actions.” All the instances of *svakatā* I could find are in the compound *karmasvakatā*;

because it would be discarded (*utsargāt*); [or; it cannot be karma, because *svakatā* is discarded<sup>9</sup>]

If for each *puruṣa* there exist karmas in the *pradhāna*, whether they be preceded by *buddhi* or not produced by *buddhi*, it then follows that it is futile to imagine a *pradhāna* that is common (to all of them).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore:

[1.3bcd] stains may have either the nature of awareness, or the nature of the [non?]manifest.

In case of the first position, liberation too does not exist. In case of the second position, there are also other flaws.

If those karmas have the nature of the *puruṣa*, then, things being so, it would follow that there is no liberation, because, since the *puruṣa* is permanent, the karmas too would be permanent. The word „too“ indicates that there would be other flaws such as the *puruṣa* being an agent, etc. „In case of the second position, there are also other flaws.“ If the position is that the karmas have the nature of the what is derived from the *pradhāna* (*prādhāna*), these flaws and others too would follow due to commonality, like receiving something corresponding to something one has not done, and the absence of liberation. Therefore, it is established that only

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however, the form is theoretically possible, and I found one instance of *svakatva-nirdeśāt* in Jīvagosaṁvāmin’s Satsandarbha, Kṛṣṇasandarbha.

The argument in the commentary may be compared with Vasubandhu’s argument against the necessity of postulating the existence of real elements that take specific shapes due to the karmas of sentient beings in a specific realm. The point of similarity is that in both arguments once karma belonging to the persons is introduced to explain change, another element in the explanation is then deemed superfluous: *yadi tatkarṁmabhis tatra bhūtānām sambhavas tathā | iṣyate pariṇāmaś ca kiṁ vijñānasya neṣyate || (vi)jñānasyaiva tatkarṁmabhis tathāpariṇāmaś kasmān neṣyate (!) kim punar bhūtāni kalpyante ||* Viṁśikā 6 and vṛtti, in SILK 2016: 57.

<sup>9</sup> This could mean: karma cannot work for the Sāṁkhya, since its distribution among different *puruṣas* is precluded by the rejection of *svakatā*, i.e. by the Sāṁkhya definition of *pradhāna* as *sāmānya* (as in Sāṁkhyakārikā 11). In that case we may understand *sādhāraṇapradhānakalpanāvaiyarthya* as = *pradhānasādhāraṇatvakalpanāvaiyarthya*.

<sup>10</sup> Compare: *sa ca puruṣaḥ śubhāśubhakarmaphalasya pradhānopanītasya bhoktā |* Tattvasaṁgrahapañjikā on Tattvasaṁgraha 284.



three things are permanent, namely the non-produced, as spoken by the Omniscient One.

### Sanskrit Text as in JAINI 1977: 4

[ ] Jaini's restoration

( ) Jaini's emendation

sām̐khyīyam api pradhānam na nityam | kutaḥ ? traiguṇyasya

*sattvādyananyathābhāve vyaktābhāvaḥ prasajyate |  
tadvikārād vikāritvaṃ prakṛtes tadabhedataḥ || [1.2]*

yadi sattvādayo [guṇāḥ] nānyathā bhavanti hrāsavṛddhibhāvena,  
na tarhi kiñcit tebhyo vyaktam utpadyate | athānyathā bhavanti,  
anityās tarhi prāpnuvanti | karmavaśād adoṣa iti cet, atra brūmaḥ |

*na karmasvakatotsargāt<sup>11</sup> [1.3a]*

yadi pratipurusaṃ karmāṇi buddhipūrvāṇy abuddhikṛtāni vā  
pradhāne vidyante sādharmaṇapradhānakalpanāvaiyarthyaṃ tarhi  
prāptam iti | kiñ ca,

*jñavyaktātmakatā<sup>12</sup> malāḥ |  
prākpaḥṣe muktyabhāvaś ca dvitīye 'nye 'py upaplavāḥ ||  
[1.3bcd]*

yadi tāni karmāṇi puruṣātmakāni natv(nv) evaṃ sati mokṣābhāvaḥ  
prāpnoti | puruṣanityatve karmaṇi(ni)tya[tva]prasaṅgāt | caśabdāt  
puruṣakartṛtvādidoṣa(śā)ś ca | dvitīye 'nye 'py upaplavāḥ |  
prādhānātmakapakṣa<sup>13</sup> ete ca doṣāḥ prasajanty anye 'pi copaplavāḥ  
sādharmaṇatvād akṛtābhyāgamānirmokṣaprasaṅgāt | tasmāt trīṇy eva  
ca sarvajñābhihitānyasaṃskṛtāni nityānīti siddham |

<sup>11</sup> *na karma svakatotsargāt* ] Jaini<sup>ED</sup>. Jaini's spacing may also work, as it will be seen from the translation.

<sup>12</sup> A possible emendation: *jñavyaktātmakatā malāḥ*.

<sup>13</sup> I understand *prādhāna* as a taddhita formation from *pradhāna*, meaning „what is derived from *pradhāna*“ or „what pertains to the *pradhāna*“, perhaps formed with the pratyaya *aṇ*.

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# **The Buddhist Concept of Hospitality: A Value That “Connects” People**

**G. A. Somaratne**

## **Abstract**

This article has a normative aim, that is, to sketch few theories and cultural practices of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition under the cross-cultural category, “hospitality”, for the benefit of the global citizen. A global citizen is a type of person who, living in modern cities and towns, finds his or her identity with the “global community”, that is, “humanity”, while acknowledging the diversity of the society, accepting that the individuals, groups and communities with different interests, languages, convictions and lifestyles, that is, with different cultural identities, can co-exist and interact with mutual respect and tolerance, as human beings. For recommending the practice of hospitality by the global citizen, this article briefly discusses both the Buddhist social teachings on hospitality as found in the Pāli Canonical texts and their Commentaries, the representative texts of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, and the hospitality practice in the Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhist culture drawing from the author’s personal experience as a citizen of Sri Lanka.

## **Cultural Identities and the Global Citizen**

For Buddhism, cultural identities are mere conventions and are meaningful only in certain cultural contexts. As it is expressed in a Canonical text, “For what has been designated name and clan in the world is indeed a mere name. What has been designated here and there has arisen by a common assent”. The same text asks us to find the common core of “humanity” that lies beneath all sorts of cultural prejudices: “Only the ignorant say that one becomes a

*brāhmaṇa*, a high caste person, by birth”.<sup>1</sup> As the Buddha points out, “Not by birth does one become a *brāhmaṇa*; not by birth does one become a non-*brāhmaṇa*. By action one becomes a *brāhmaṇa*; by action one becomes a non- *brāhmaṇa*.”<sup>2</sup> Buddhism advises people that they take precautions not to cling dogmatically to their cultural identities and norms of the conventional world. By penetrating the conventional truth, they could discover the deeper truth of “humanity” that gives all people their “human” identity. This is also a point that the *Janavamsa*, a classical Sinhalese poem on caste, belonging to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, endeavours by saying: “all humans are really of one race though occupied in different ways.”<sup>3</sup> The Buddhist view is that all humans irrespective of their race, caste or class have the ability and capacity to reach the moral and spiritual heights. The differences in cultural attainment are due to historical circumstances and not to any innate faculties. All humans are born equal.

Buddhist nuns and monks (*bhikkhu*) constitute the “global citizen” in Buddhism, for they have renounced the cultural identities to which they were born and have accepted the membership in the noble monastic community, *saṅgha*. While practicing the teachings of the Buddha, these nuns and monks have understood the impermanent, suffering and selfless nature of their life. They have made themselves free from their attachment to the world, and are now radiating their compassion boundlessly towards all living beings and things. “Cultivating at the right time loving-kindness, equanimity, pity, release and sympathetic joy,” these nuns and monks are, as a text puts it, “unimpeded by the whole world.”<sup>4</sup> Formerly their attachment to the cultural conventions made their ways of thinking and behaviour limited to concentrate only for

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<sup>1</sup> Sn. v. 448–449; \*all references to the Pāli canonical texts in this article are to the editions of the Pali Text Society.

<sup>2</sup> Sn. v. 650.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in “Buddhism and the Race Question” by K.N. Jayatilleke and G. P. Malalasekera, reprinted in *Facets of Buddhist Thought: Collected Essay* by K.N. Jayatilleke, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010, p. 365.

<sup>4</sup> Sn. v. 73.

caring for themselves, their families and communities. Now, having transcended the cultural bounds, being independent, they even instruct their lay devotees to work for the benefit of both themselves (*atta-hita*) and others (*para-hita*), incorporating all living beings and things. In Buddhist ethics, it is “one who is practising for his own well-being and that of others is the highest, the greatest, the chief, the best and the noblest.”<sup>5</sup>

## Hospitality in Buddhism

Hospitality (*sakkāra-sammāna*)<sup>6</sup> is a virtue far excellence for it relates to our social, moral, and spiritual value system. It is about treating and respecting<sup>7</sup> guests. It is a social act: its practice builds benevolent “social” bonds connecting peoples and communities across cultures. It is a moral act: its doer undergoes an internal moral transformation to care for others. It is a spiritual act: (a) its practice generates religious “merits” that bring happiness to the doer here and now and in the future; and (b) moves the doer upward in his or her spiritual journey from the ignoble state of selfishness to the noble state of selflessness.

Either as a collective act or as a series of individual acts, hospitality is rooted in the wholesome roots of non-greed (generosity), non-hatred (love) and non-delusion (wisdom), and it falls within the Buddhist category of “meritorious” deeds (*puñña-kamma*). That „The deeds done with good intention generate merits for the doer“ is also the Buddhist theory. As it is stated by the Buddha in a text, “When a virtuous person, with a trusting heart, gives a righteously obtained gift to a virtuous person, having confidence that the fruit of this action is great, this is gift with an abundant fruit, I say.”<sup>8</sup> The guests are considered as a “merit-field” (*puñña-kkhetta*) where the hosts could plant the seeds of “religious merits”. The good deeds purify one’s mind, and the bad deeds defile it. Hence, the good deeds are “purifying” or

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<sup>5</sup> A.II.95.

<sup>6</sup> Ja.III.13.

<sup>7</sup> A-a.III.25: *sakkatvā garukatvā ti sakkāraṇ c'eva garukāraṇ ca upaṭṭhapetvā.*

<sup>8</sup> M.III.257.

“meritorious” acts, and bad deeds are “sinful” or “evil” acts (*pāpa-kamma*).

As Buddhism views it, the practice of hospitality brings happiness. Happiness is the best indicator of the spiritual quality of an act. “Merits” condition happiness here in this very life and in the next. As a Canonical text puts it: “When one departs this life, the self-control over body, speech, and mind, and the deeds of merit lead him to a happy destiny”.<sup>9</sup> The same text concludes: “One should do deeds of merit that bring happiness”.<sup>10</sup>

From the Buddhist perspective, then, hospitality, itself a meritorious act, could be considered as a thoughtful good investment for future. By recollecting the past good deeds one could derive happiness throughout this life, even at the time of one’s death. Understanding this utility, the Buddhists in Sri Lanka used to keep a “book of merits” (*pin-pota*) in which they recorded all their good deeds. It is this investment that is intended in the following poetic expression: “The world is ablaze with old age and death like one’s house is ablaze; one should take out by giving just like one takes out a vessel from the house ablaze; what is given is well taken out like the vessel taken out will be useful to you”.<sup>11</sup> It is this investment that people inherit as they inhabit this world. As the man sows, so he reaps; living beings are inheritors of their deeds (*kamma-dāyādā sattā*).<sup>12</sup>

Hospitality fulfils all requirements for constituting a moral act. A moral act is to be measured by: (a) to what extent both the doer and the society could benefit from it, and (b) the good intention of the doer. Moral conduct springs from the inner will of the

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<sup>9</sup> A.I.155 (3.51): *yo ’dha kāyena saṃyamo vācāya uda cetasā; taṃ tassa petassa sukhāya hoti, yaṃ jīvamāno pakaroti puññaṃ.*

<sup>10</sup> A.I.155 (3.51): *puññāni kayirātha sukhāvahāni.*

<sup>11</sup> A.I.156 (3.52): *āditasmim agārasmim yaṃ nīharati bhājanaṃ; taṃ tassa hoti atthāya no ca yaṃ tattha ḍayihati. evaṃ āditto kho loko jarāya maraṇena ca; nīhareth ’eva dānena dīnaṃ hoti sunīhataṃ.*

<sup>12</sup> M.I.390.

individual. The moral quality of an act depends on the intention behind it, and the intensity of the act depends on the extent to which it is performed deliberately (*sañcicca*). Only the volitional act (*sañcetanikaṃ kammaṃ*) is ethically significant. “It is volition that I call action” (*cetanāhaṃ kammaṃ vadāmi*) for having willed, one acts by body, speech, or mind,<sup>13</sup> says the Buddha. Every good deed done benefiting others enriches the doer morally. As a text has it, “whatever one does by it one arises” (*yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati*).<sup>14</sup> The present good work lays the foundation for future good works.

Hospitality could also be defined as a wholesome act for it constitutes a series of selfless thoughts, words and acts extended towards the guest. If practiced genuinely, it could transform the individual internally from “selfishness” to “selflessness” (*anattatā*). As it is a “wholesome” act (*kusala-kamma*), hospitality contributes to higher spiritual attainments. The act of hospitality has the potential to transform our perception of the world and allow us to penetrate the deeper truth of life, that is, selflessness.

### Sources of Treatment

Hospitality is in practice where the guest is treated with the four “sources of treatment” (*saṅgaha-vatthu*): generosity (*dāna*), endearing words (*peyya-vajja*), beneficent conduct (*attha-cariyā*), and impartiality (*samānattatā*). These four values sustain relationships and make people connected and belonging to each other as a social unit. They glue the host-guest connection and, in turn, family-community relationship. They are like the linchpin of a rolling chariot.<sup>15</sup> “The society remains intact so long as the four sources of treatment are in practice” (*imesu saṅgahesu sati yeva loko vattati, asati na vattati*).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A.III.415.

<sup>14</sup> M.I.390.

<sup>15</sup> A.II.32 (4.32): *ete kho saṅgahā loka rathass’āñīva yāyato*.

<sup>16</sup> D-a.958.



Generosity (*dāna*), the first source of treatment, demonstrates the habit of giving and sharing. If a man with abundant wealth, gold and food, to enjoy his dainties alone, it is not really a characteristic of a successful life.<sup>17</sup> It is not the economic richness that makes the host generous, but his or her mere willingness to share food, drink and gifts with another. The host's pure intention of looking out for guest's well-being itself purifies the mind and generates merits. Generosity is an expression of one's faith in the receiver and one's trust in the efficacy of one's good acts for one's own well-being. A text characterizes the faithful person (*saddho pasanno*) as someone who "dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing".<sup>18</sup> The generous person who is responsive to requests, who has sympathy for all beings, who distributes things with delight and says „give, give“ is compared to a rain cloud that thunders, roars and rains, filling the plateau and plain, drenching with water.<sup>19</sup> In the social context, for some people are to be sustained by a gift, a gift should be given to them.<sup>20</sup> The gifts could be less value things like a portion of a meal or a cloth. However, as a text advises, the receiver should neither despise a small gift nor disparage the giver.<sup>21</sup>

As a constituent of hospitality, the offering of water to the arriving guest is highlighted in the texts. For a person who comes from afar, particularly in a tropical climate, the water is much desired. The resident monks, for example, provide the guest monks with water for both washing feet and drinking and show them facilities such as beds, toilet and water.<sup>22</sup> Setting out water for washing the feet is mentioned in many contexts. As one discourse has it, “when the

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<sup>17</sup> Sn. v. 102.

<sup>18</sup> A.I.150 (3.42); II.66: *vigatamalamaccherena cetasā agāraṃ ajjhāvasati muttacāgo payatapāṇī vossaggarato yācayogo dānaṣaṃvibhāgarato*.

<sup>19</sup> It.66.

<sup>20</sup> A-a.III.64: *ekacco dānen 'eva saṃgahitabbo hoti tassa dānam eva dātabbam*.

<sup>21</sup> Sn. v. 713.

<sup>22</sup> *Vinaya-Vattakkhandhaka: Āgantukavattakathā*.

venerable Bhagu saw the Buddha coming in the distance, he prepared a seat and set out water for washing the feet. The Buddha sat down on the seat and washed his feet”.<sup>23</sup> The same discourse, referring to another context, reads: “Then all three monks went to meet the Buddha, and one took his bowl and outer robe, one prepared a seat, and one set out water for washing the feet”.<sup>24</sup> In the lay society too when a guest arrives in, the host arranges water for the guest to wash his feet (*pāde dhovāpetvā*).<sup>25</sup> Further, in the lay society, as the textual evidence shows, the guest is also offered to have an oil foot massage (*pāde dhovitvā gandhatelena makkhesi*).<sup>26</sup>

Endearing speech constitutes the second source of treatment. The guests expect, more than material gifts, a warm welcome accompanied by endearing words. “People should be addressed with pleasant words”.<sup>27</sup> With good words, the hosts could appreciate the fact that the guests have come to see them, perhaps, enduring much hardships in their journey. The Buddha asks his guest monks: “How was the travel, have you faced with difficulties, have you found enough food and rest on the way?” Such expressions made the visitors feel connected to the host. Sometimes, when the host is a junior, it is the visitor who first expresses the caring words. In the following context where the Buddha as the guest speaks to his hosts: “I hope you are all keeping well, Anuruddha, I hope you are comfortable, I hope you are not having any trouble getting alms-food.” Here the hosts’ reply was: “we are keeping well, Venerable sir, we are

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<sup>23</sup> M.III.155 (128:7): *addasā kho āyasmā bhagu bhagavantam dūrato va āgacchantam; disvāna āsanam paññāpesi udakañ ca pādānam dhovanam.*

<sup>24</sup> M.III.155 (128:10): *atha kho āyasmā ca anuruddho āyasmā ca nandiyo āyasmā ca kimbilo bhagavantam paccuggantvā eko bhagavato pattacīvaram paṭiggahesi eko āsanam paññāpesi eko pādodakam upaṭṭhāpesi. nisīdi bhagavā paññatte āsane nisajja pāde pakkhālesi.*

<sup>25</sup> Ja.III.9.

<sup>26</sup> Ja.III.10.

<sup>27</sup> A-a.III.64: *tassa piyavacanam eva vattabham.*

comfortable, and we are not having any trouble getting alms-food”.<sup>28</sup>

Beneficent conduct (*attha-cariyā*), the third source of treatment, constitutes the care taken for others’ well-being. “Beneficent conduct is a talk on increasing goodness; these people should be told, „you should do this, you shouldn’t do that; you should associate with this person, not with that person””.<sup>29</sup> A group of texts mostly meant to be for the lay community contains immensity of such adages preserved in verses such as the ones in the Great Good-fortune<sup>30</sup> and the Outcaste<sup>31</sup> discourses.

The practice of impartiality (*samānattatā*), the last of the four sources of treatment, requires treating all persons equally as human beings. To be impartial one must go beyond one’s parochial considerations of gender, ethnicity, colour, religion or country. “Impartiality is being the same in both happiness and suffering. This means sitting together with them, living together, and eating together”.<sup>32</sup> However, one can treat those spiritually virtuous guests first, and this favouritism cannot be considered discriminatory, rather it is more meritorious a deed. The reason is that one becomes virtuous not by birth, but by one’s good deeds. The special treatments extended to the virtuous will also convey a message and encouragement to others to be virtuous.

### **Hospitality in the Extended Family**

Hospitality constitutes the warm welcome and care that the family members extend to the guests. In this family setting, the man and his wife, their children, parents, and workers who live together are the hosts. The friends, relatives, spiritual teachers, officials or any

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<sup>28</sup> M.III.155-6 (128.10): *kacci vo anuruddhā khamanīyaṃ kacci yāpanīyaṃ kacci piṇḍakena na kilamathā ti. khamanīyaṃ bhagavā yāpanīyaṃ bhagavā na ca mayaṃ bhante piṇḍakena kilamāma ti.*

<sup>29</sup> A-a.III.64: *idaṃ te kātabbāṃ idaṃ na kātabbāṃ evarūpo puggalo sevitabbo evarūpo na sevitabbo ti evaṃ atthacariyakathā va kātabbā.*

<sup>30</sup> Sn. vv. 258–269.

<sup>31</sup> Sn. vv. 116–141.

<sup>32</sup> A-a.III.65.

other person or persons who make visits to this family in a formal or informal context, invited or impromptu, are the guests.

As it is stated in the texts, the role of the family head is crucial as he is often emulated by the other family members. “When the head of a family possesses faith [and virtue], the family members grow in faith, virtuous behaviour, and wisdom”,<sup>33</sup> “Seeing the virtuous man’s good conduct, generosity and good deeds, those possessed of discernment emulate his example”.<sup>34</sup>

Hospitality is a family value par excellence. In the extended family and its wider social context, the family man plays multiple roles. He is son to parents, student to teachers, husband to wife, father to children, friend to friends, relative to relatives, employer to employees or employee to employer, and devotee to religious teachers. He supports his family and treats his guests with hospitality.<sup>35</sup> The woman too plays her multiple roles as mother to children, wife to the family man, and relative to relatives. She also is the house-manager, and takes the responsibility for welcoming and treating family guests. In the list of duties of the husband towards his wife, as presented in a Canonical text, one important duty, that is, that the husband should hand over the authority of the family wealth to his wife,<sup>36</sup> enables her to carry out her role as one who welcomes and treats the family guests. The woman is expected to perform her household duties earnestly, being hospitable to her husband’s relatives, remaining strictly faithful to her husband, protecting his earnings and being skilful and industrious in all her affairs.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> A.I.152 (3.48): *saddham kulapatiṃ nissāya anto jano tīhi vaḍḍhīhi vaḍḍhati... saddhāya vaḍḍhati sīlena vaḍḍhati paññāya vaḍḍhati.*

<sup>34</sup> A.I.153 (3.48): *tyāssa sīlavato sīlaṃ cāgaṃ sucaritāni ca; passamānānukubbanti attamatthaṃ vicakkhaṇā.*

<sup>35</sup> D.III: *Sigālaka Sutta.*

<sup>36</sup> D.III.190.

<sup>37</sup> D.III.190.

It is also emphasized in the social teachings of the Buddha that one who receives hospitality at someone's home must extend hospitality when that person visits one's own home. Not to do so is mean. As a text puts it, "Whoever indeed having gone to another's house and having eaten pure food, does not honour the other in return when he comes to his house, him one should know to be an outcaste."<sup>38</sup> It is also customary to show hospitality with food and drink to religious persons when they visit one's home during lunch time. As the same text points out, "Whoever when mealtime has arrived angers with his words a brahmin or recluse and does not give food, him one should know to be an outcaste."<sup>39</sup>

Hospitality is an important business value for its practice connects people to one's business. A good businessman practices hospitality towards his customers, bankers and other businessmen. Through hospitality, he builds a good reputation and inspires confidence in his character and business. The bankers and other businessmen trust him, and lend him money and wealth at times of his downfall.<sup>40</sup>

Hospitality is a community-wide value. It is to be practiced as a community to welcome its visitors. When guests arrive in town, the community leaders are to come out of their homes and welcome the guests (*paccuggamana*). As a text has it: "The guests are to be received hospitably; they should be respected, valued, adored, and esteemed by us".<sup>41</sup>

Hospitality also defines the purpose of earning a wealth. A man earns his wealth, as the Buddhist texts state, with two aims in mind: (a) to use for oneself and (b) to share with others. The family man gives to others by way of fulfilling his family and

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<sup>38</sup> Sn. v. 128.

<sup>39</sup> Sn. v. 130.

<sup>40</sup> A.I.117 (3.20).

<sup>41</sup> D.I.117: *atithi kho pan'amhehi sakkātabbā garukātabba mānetabbā pūjetabbā apacetabbā.*

social duties and responsibilities.<sup>42</sup> As he sees that his family and society are benefiting from his hard earning, and that he is enabling them to live in comfort, his joy increases. With his wealth, he entertains friends, supports relatives, receives guests, performs religious and social activities, and pays taxes to the government.<sup>43</sup> As he uses his wealth properly while meeting the needs of him, his family and his community, he experiences happiness.<sup>44</sup>

It is obvious that hospitality generates friends. As the Buddhist texts have it, “Being generous one binds friends”.<sup>45</sup> Friends here means good friends. “The good friend gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, and endures what is hard to endure”.<sup>46</sup> Defining good friendship, a text states: “Here in whatever village or town a family man dwells, he associates with householders or their sons, whether young or old, who are of mature virtue, accomplished in faith, virtue, generosity and wisdom; he converses with them and engages in discussions with them. He emulates them in regard to their accomplishment in faith, virtue, generosity and wisdom. This is called good friendship.”<sup>47</sup> The family man endowed with confidence, virtue, generosity and wisdom, is able to act with the confidence of the confident, with the virtue of the virtuous, with the generosity of the generous and with the wisdom of the wise.<sup>48</sup> The family man’s hospitality could bring immediate benefits at times of his heedlessness. It is said in a text that when the family man is heedless, his friends volunteer to extend their protection to his family, relatives and other friends.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> A.III.45 (5.41).

<sup>43</sup> A.III.45–46 (5.41); A.II.67–68 (4.61).

<sup>44</sup> A.III.46 (5.41).

<sup>45</sup> Sn. v. 187.

<sup>46</sup> A.I.286 (3.135).

<sup>47</sup> A.IV.282 (8.54).

<sup>48</sup> A.IV.282.

<sup>49</sup> D.III.190.

As the above discussion points out, the practice of hospitality is highly valued and encouraged in the Buddhist teachings. If there were no practice of hospitality in the families, it is hard to imagine the survival of a Buddhist monastic community in early India. The monastic members were always guests for the householders. Furthermore, it is due to hospitality, a social life was there in the early Indian life. As it could be seen, the Buddhist hospitality is grounded on the Buddhist theories of the efficacy of intentional actions, selflessness, compassion, and inter-connection as advocated in the teaching of Dependent Co-arising.

### **Practice of Hospitality in Sri Lanka**

Living in a rich culture enriched by the Buddhist values, the villagers of Sri Lanka exemplify how the Buddhist theory of hospitality could be put into practice.

### **Kinship Terms**

One unique aspect of the Sri Lankan hospitality is the use of kinship terms for addressing their guests. This use of the kinship terms makes the “outsider” automatically an “insider”. The guest, finding him or her being addressed by the host with a kinship term, feels comfortable. The kinship term used reflects the gender and the age of the visitor, and the age of the host: a male guest could be an “elder brother” (*ayyā*), “younger brother” (*mallī*), “son” (*putā*), “uncle” (*māmā*), or “grandfather” (*sīyā*), and a female guest could be an “elder sister” (*akkā*), “younger sister” (*naṃgī*), “daughter” (*duva*), “aunt” (*nāndā*), or “grandmother” (*ācci*).

The attributed kinship makes the guest feels connected to the host. Subsequently the guest too finds him or her addressing the host and the family members with appropriate kinship terms. For example, if the host is a young woman and the guest is a very old man, the host will address the guest with the term “grandfather” and the guest is bound to address the young lady with the kinship term “daughter”. Sometimes, the seniors address the young

females with the word “son” (*putā*), showing more affection and care towards her.

The philosophy behind the use of the kinship terms lies in Buddhism and it fulfils two Buddhist ideas. One is the use of endearing words (*peyya-vajja*). The kinship terms are the dearest and the closest words to people. The other idea could be a cosmic one. Buddhism views that in this vastness of the cycle of births and deaths it is difficult to find someone who has not been one’s mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter or any other close relative in one of the previous births. Even though in this life, we could be unrelated, when viewed from the cosmic perspective, we are related and relatives.

A word of address that is outside the kinship terminology is “gentleman” (*mahattayā*) or “gentlewoman” (*nonamahattayā*). This word quickly marks the visitor as one who is being respected in the wider society or the profession and that the host also recognizes it and wants to respect the guest with much hospitality. If a university professor, for example, visits a family house, the family members quickly address him with “*mahattayā*”. The professor is free to use any appropriate addressing term, either a kinship term or just the name of the host. Here too the exercise of a Buddhist principle, that the wise are to be treated well with respect and hospitality, is to be gleaned.

Another aspect of the village hospitality is the recognition of special guests. The close or distant associates of the family or the community are invited to family or village events and treated them with proper hospitality due for special guests. A good example would be a wedding ceremony where the close relatives as well as distant associates are formally invited to attend the wedding by offering them a bunch of traditional beetle leaves. Upon their arrival, they are treated with much hospitality.



## Welcoming Guests

Smiling is a cross-cultural language that is understood by everyone; it is a powerful communication tool that transcends the language barriers. It is to be observed that in the practice of hospitality, the smile works well in the Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. Smiling face of the host showcases his or her pleasure to receive the guest. The host welcomes the guest by coming out of the house and going towards him or her (*pera-gaman*) with a warm smile, and sometimes with the folded palms accompanied with the expression “long life to you! (*āyu-bo-van*). The spontaneous smile of the host is the external expression of his or her genuine pleasure and cordiality.

Some verbal expressions that accompany the good smile strengthen the warmth of the welcome. Among the expressions are “long life to you” (*āyu-bo-van*), “Oh, after a long time” (*appe goḍak kālekaṭa passe*), “Oh, it is a surprise, you remembered us” (*pudumayi apīva mataḥ vūṇā*), “Oh, today it will definitely rain” (*ada nam vahinava*), “Oh, we have been repeatedly thinking of you” (*api hitahitā hiṭṭiye*), “we thought it, when the crow was crying this morning” (*ada kapuṭa haṇḍalana koṭa api hituva*), “you must be very tired” (*goḍak mahansi āti*), “let us go inside” (*yaṃ ātulaṭa*), “take a seat” (*vāḍivenna*), “I will prepare something to drink” (*bonna monāhari hadannam*).

Throughout the stay the guest is entertained with smiles, jokes to laugh, happy expressions, and servings of tea and sweets or a main meal, depending on the time of the guest’s arrival. Though the host treats the guest with the best of his or her ability or even beyond, with special, mostly home-made, eats and drinks, yet the host shows his or her worries as he or she thinks that the food could be tasteless, and the curries prepared are few. So, the host expresses: “As I hurriedly prepared things, the food could be not so tasty”, “I prepared very few items (curries) for I could not find time to go to the market”. These expressions indicate the host’s intention that he or she wants to treat the guest more than the present circumstance allows. In this context, the guest who reads

the host's intent praises the host by expressing "food is very tasty, and the prepared curries are more than enough". Here we could see the practice of generosity, kindness, and appreciation.

The leaving guests are accompanied to a certain distance (*pasugaman yanava*), nowadays, up to the vehicle, showing more love and care towards the guest, with emotional expressions that mark the separation from the loved ones. The final expressions of the guest include: [translated literally to show the nuances] "we come [back again] having gone" (*api gihin ennam*). The expressions of the host include: "[please] come [back again] having gone with care" (*paessamen gihin enna*). These two expressions of the guest and the host mirror that the guest leaves the house as an insider, being strongly connected to the host, and the host feels that the leaving guest is really his or her own family member. The other expressions of the host used at this departure moment include: "come again" (*āye enna*), "don't forget us" (*apava amataka karanna epā*), "in the near future, we will also come [there] to leave having come" (*langadīma apit āvit yanna ennam*), and "tell ... that we remembered [someone's name]" (*matak kalā kiyanta*), "give us a call having gone [there]" (*gihilla kol ekak denna*), "we prepared something trivial to take [with you] when [you] return" (*poḍi deyak hāduva yanakoṭa geniyanta*), and "if some lack or loss happened from us, please forgive us" (*apen aḍupāḍuvak unānam samāvenna one*).

Among the villagers, the gift is called "gifts and [home or area grown] products" (*tāgi-boga*). What the villagers exchange as gifts are mostly the grains, fruits and vegetables grown by the male giver or traditional sweets prepared by the female giver. The host who receives gifts and products from the guest also takes care not to send the guest empty-handed. The host also offers gifts and products to the guest to take with him or her. This exchange of gifts makes the hospitality more meaningful for it marks the Buddhist practice of giving and sharing one's hard earning.

## Conclusion

Both the hospitality theory of the Buddhist texts and its actual practice among the village communities in Sri Lanka exemplify that hospitality is a key social value that permits persons and groups having plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities to live together in harmonious interaction and proper accord. In this sense, Buddhism considers hospitality as a social value that connects people. This social value of hospitality is further heightened by categorizing it as a meritorious deed that brings happiness here and hereafter or even as a wholesome act that conditions one's higher spiritual attainments. The practice of hospitality is highly valued in both the lay and the monastic communities in the past as well as at present and is compared to the linchpin of a rolling chariot, a factor that connects people to each other and sustains the social institution. Furthermore, studies into hospitality as a cross-cultural category will assist the Buddhist Studies students, not only to find out a whole range of Buddhist social values that could be treated under Buddhist hospitality, but also to understand them better by seeing them in comparison with the wide range of social value systems that come under hospitality in other cultures and religions.

## Abbreviations

- A      Aṅguttaranikāya. Morris, Richard and Hardy, Edmund., eds. 1885-1910. Aṅguttaranikāya. 5 vols. London/Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- A-a    Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā. Walleser, M. and Kopp, H., eds. 1924-1957. Manorathapūraṇī Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā. London: Pali Text Society.
- D      Dīghanikāya. Rhys Davids, T.W. and Carpenter, J. E., eds. 1889-1910. Dīghanikāya. 3 vols. London: Pali Text Society.
- It      Itivuttaka. Windisch, E., ed. 1889. Itivuttaka. London: Pali Text Society.
- Ja      Jātaka. Fausboll, V., ed. 1877-1896. The Jātaka together with its commentary. 6 vols. London: Pali Text Society.

- M Majjhimanikāya. Trenckner, V. and Chalmers, R. 1887-1902. Majjhimanikāya. 3 vols. London: Pali Text Society.
- S Saṃyuttanikāya. Feer, L., ed. 1884-1898. Saṃyuttanikāya. 5 vols. London: Pali Text Society.
- Sn Suttanipāṭa. Anderson, D. and Smith, Helmer., eds. 1913/1997. Oxford: Pali Text Society.



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