



# Sammā Ditṭhi

A Treatise On Right Understanding

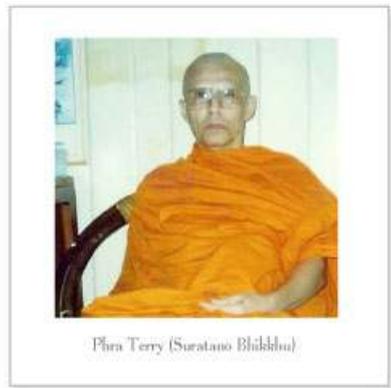
T. Magness  
(The Venerable Suratano Bhikkhu)

*Cover Picture:*

*Lord Buddha Gotama in Meditation*

*Illustrated by Archarn Gazehm Suwongza*

## About the Author



Phra Terry was born Terence Barnett Magness on May 1929 in Penang, then British Malaya into an English Catholic family. He attended school at St. Xavier's Institute and, the church nearby. The idyllic life as a youth came to an abrupt end with the Japanese invasion of Malaya and with it, his education as well.

By February or March of 1946 at about 16-17 years old, he and an elder sister fled Penang for Thailand seeking safety from Japanese bombardment. His parents had already been stationed in Southern Thailand as his father was employed by a British company there. One sister, however, chose to stay in Penang. This sister, who was a Catholic nun, subsequently became the Mother Superior there. She died some 30 years ago.

His parents were tragically killed by Japanese bombs like so many others. The sister, who fled with him, was interned in a camp in Thailand, but managed to survive the war, and married a Thai of royal lineage. His brother-in-law owned an interior decoration business when peace arrived, and Phra Terry worked for him until he became a monk. Both his sister and brother-in-law were lost in a tragic car accident in 1971, a year after Phra Terry was ordained.

With his formal education ended precipitously, Phra Terry taught himself the 3Rs, if you will. He delved into humanities and the arts and, indeed, all matters metaphysical, esoteric, social and scientific and so forth that could occupy an enquiring mind. He spent his time at bookshops and libraries exploring the philosophies and thinking of the ancients. He had a voracious appetite for religion, philosophy, history, literature and cultures of the Romans, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, and the Europeans and others.

Apart from his apparent love of books and knowledge; he led a pretty normal life of a young man, sometimes going to the movies and partaking of fine foods, music and such like with friends. However, one group of his friends – 3 of them were of a different bent, they were interested in meditation and the Dhamma. One of these friends, Archarn Charoen Phanrat, an engineer by profession introduced him to Wat Paknam in 1958, along with the other two who were architects.

This small group of friends would go to Wat Paknam by bus and learn meditation there on a regular basis from a Mae Chi (an 8-preceptor, upasika), Archarn Kalayawadee. She was an outstanding student of the great sage Luang Phor Mongkol Thepmuni and she taught Phra Terry meditation. She

subsequently founded the Mongkol-Dham Group, Bangkok with her husband Archarn Charoen (since deceased in 1992). Phra Terry and their other friends were foundations members as well.

Phra Terry learnt and practised the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation for 12 years before he was ordained as a monk at Wat Doi Suthep, Chiangmai. After his ordination he went to spend some months at Wat Djittabhawan, Pattaya in 1971. From May 1971, he went to Wat Paknam and remained there for some years before returning to Wat Doi Suthep. Phra Terry spent more than 20 years in Chiangmai and still lives there.

Phra Terry's writing career was prompted by the total lack of an English translation of Luang Phor's Teachings on the Vijjā Dhammakāya in the 1950s. His first book, "*The Dhammakāya – Metaphysical Implications*" was published in 1960 and it was later expanded and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*, in 1961. His second book, *The Life and Teachings of the Venerable Chao Khun Mongkol Thepmuni* was published later in the same year, 1960.

Then *Sammā Ditṭhi – A Treatise on Right Understanding* was published in 1962; another book, *Sammā Samādhi II (Right Concentration)* in 1963; and, *The Altitude & the Buddhist Experience*, in the early 1970s after he became a monk. A couple of these books were expanded, re-arranged and renamed in later editions. For instance, *The Vistas – Buddhist Insights into Immortality* (is the enlarged and renamed *Sammā Samādhi I*) and *Samatha Vipassanā: An Exposition of Attainments*, is the enlarged *Sammā Samādhi II*.

Phra Terry's books exhibit a rare quality of an in-depth personal understanding and knowledge of the Sublime Dhamma and an appreciation of ancient religion and philosophies. His explanations of how the law of kamma works in ancient as well as contemporary societies are instructive and enlightening. From his works, a reader can see that he knows the Vijjā Dhammakāya and the Method of Meditation, for he is a meditator himself.

As disciples of Luang Phor and Phra Terry, we have, with the aid of his books, come to understand a little of the Sublime Dhamma in its original condition and pristine purity and are profoundly grateful to them both.

The central message of the Buddha is communicated clearly by his works: that all earnest seekers who are upright, without guile and deceit and intelligent, would be able to achieve to the Ultimate Release. And, the unique Dhammakāya Method of Meditation is the means to cultivating the Noble-Eightfold Path in full scope and measure and to comprehending the Four Noble Truths in perfect clarity, without taint or distortion.

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*Philosophy should now perform its final service. It should seek the insight, dim though it be, to escape the wide wreckage of a race of beings sensitive to values beyond those of mere animal enjoyment.*

*A.N. Whitehead*



## PROLOGUE

Because the search for truth consists of something which transcends all the relativity of barriers and bounds, many must have felt what Tolstoi did in his earliest teens. As he has left on record:

*“I began to reflect on life in general and came up against religion, which did not coincide with my ideas, and of course I considered it a good thing to get rid of it... The religious beliefs taught me in childhood disappeared. . . I began to read philosophical works... I did not believe what had been taught me in childhood, but I believed in **something**. What it was I believed in I could not have said... Looking back on that time I now see clearly that my faith - my only real faith, that which apart from my animal instincts gave impulse to my life - was a belief in **perfecting myself**. But in what this perfecting consisted and what its object was I could not have said. . . I should be the unhappiest of men if I could not find a purpose for my life, a purpose both general and useful. . . So now my whole life will be an active and constant striving towards that single aim.”*

Although the urge to perfection is almost instinctive in the earnest man it is, as Tolstoi observes, seldom that the *object* of perfection is clear. This is expressed again in point by Goethe:

*“All men of good breeding feel, as their culture increases, that they are called upon to play a twofold role in the world, one real and the other ideal, and in this feeling is to be sought the foundation of everything noble. What the real role that has been given us is, and in what it consists, we clearly discern. On the other hand, it is very rarely that we succeed in reaching clarity concerning the second role. However much a man searches heaven and earth, the present and the future, for his higher destiny, he remains the victim of a perennial vacillation, of an external influence which perpetually troubles him.”*

Goethe, however, goes on to muddle the matter by adding that thus troubled a man ‘*once and for all makes up his mind to declare that right is that which accords with him.*’ Goethe, in fact, leading a pampered life of ease, can scarcely serve as an example for our times, which are times of shipwreck, when man finds himself on his own, alone. As Ortega Y Gasset observes:

*“In the hour of danger, life throws off all inessentials, all excrescences, all its adipose tissue and tries to strip itself, to reduce itself to pure nerve... Life is in itself and forever shipwreck... The great disadvantage is that man believes himself safe, loses the feeling of shipwreck, and his culture proceeds to burden itself with parasitic and lymphatic matter. Some discontinuity must therefore intervene, in order that man may renew his feeling of peril, the substance of his life... “*

A man often enough begins to take stock of himself only after all else has been lost. In times of peril, when values and all else seem to be crashing around his ears, the first instinct is to flee, to retreat. In ancient India, for instance, to the forest. Times, however, have changed, and the forest is neither convenient nor necessary. Because, after all, the forest is *within*, and no external jungle holds the riddle or the clue.

The strife for perfection, or the search for a higher destiny, is inextricably dependent upon whether first a meaning to existence exists at all. Now when does such meaning begin to dawn? Obviously only after something vital and ultimate to life has been plumbed. When once this has been plumbed,

then all immediate deprivations and mishaps cannot appear as fatal as they would appear to the man who has still left it unplumbed, but may rather be accepted in the aspect of a challenge, a trial and a test. That is, they can be *endured*, for in this case the end justifies and alleviates the means. To quote Ortega once again:

*“Life means the inexorable necessity of realising the design for an existence which each one of us is. This design in which the I consists, is not an idea or plan ideated by the person involved, and freely chosen. It is anterior to (in the sense of independent form) all the ideas which his intellect forms, to all the decisions of his will. Our will is free to **realise or not to realise** this vital design which we ultimately are, but it cannot correct it, change it, abbreviate it, or substitute anything for it. We are indelibly that single programmatic personage who must be realised. The outside world or our own character makes that realisation easier or more difficult. Life is essentially a drama, because it is a desperate struggle - with things and even with our character - to succeed in being in fact that which we are in design.”*

Now the realisation that mere externals or immediate character, which is so persistently and involuntarily grasped by the normal consciousness as a support, have nothing to do with *essence* is surely a realisation of initial import. The very act of identification with environmental externals and immediate personality diverts attention and apprehension from the basic question. For if it is granted that any such thing as essence exists at all; then it cannot merely emerge or exist in a monotonous and futile friction of externalities, but is at core a matter rather of internality.

It is true, however, that the rise of consciousness is dependent on the friction of externalities, of subject and object, and that man is neither pure mind nor pure body, but, an interaction and reaction of the two, being reciprocally based. Nevertheless, a stage may be reached wherein the psyche totally absorbed with itself may exist independently of physicality. This is possible because the psyche is potentially all things, is possible of withdrawing from matter or dominating it, as the case may be, so as to make it conform.

What is implied here by *essence*, therefore, is not individual personality, of body and mind in their frictional mutuality, which changes from second to second as occasion suggests, but the *ultimate result* of such frictional mutuality. That is to say, happiness, for instance, may be classed as an essence. Although happiness may depend on frictional mutuality for its arising in consciousness, nevertheless it is in itself something which can be disassociated from its supports and exist as a thing in itself, not merely as a latent potentiality but as an entelechy. Happiness may arise through a haphazard conjunction of occasions, but it is not the occasions in themselves which remain, once they have served their purpose, being only the means. It is something in the individual himself which responds to the occasion, and therefore it must be that the quality of happiness is already pre-existent in him, as a latent potentiality at this stage, but an immediate actuality once it has come to consciousness. It may then continue absorbed in its own essence, purged of all the particular random supports which stimulated its rise. Happiness, then, is an essence which is perpetually available, the only prerequisite site to its actualisation being a subject imbued with consciousness.

Concentrated-absorption (jñāna) is an aspect of happiness which does not depend for its recollective immediacy on external supports, and may continue absorbed internally in this element for an indefinite period, withdrawn from the five sense-door field of contacts, expediting only the mind-door. This form of happiness, championed by the ancient adepts, is more stable and secure because it does not rely on the ephemeral stimulation of external peripheral contacts. Constant friction with environmental concerns wearies consciousness to surfeit, and therefore cannot be relied on to provide true and lasting happiness, the goal of all good.

It may be contended, however, that man's happiness must depend on the enjoyment he receives from the sphere of his external contact with the world. Although this is valid in a certain sense, the multitude of impressions which register in consciousness through friction with the environment do not tend to stabilize experience. That is, in their crude consistency this jumble of impressions is too chaotic and unrefined to be termed experience. Only after they have been condensed and refined do they emerge as experience and as *light*. Thus, a man may have toured the world a dozen times but he is not therefore classed as being more experienced than the man who stays at home. As old Lao Tzu observes:

*"Without moving a step out of doors the whole world may be known. Without gazing out of the window the way of heaven may be seen. The further one travels the less one may know."*

The implication, therefore, is that a method, a basic refining principle, must be evoked and activate in consciousness if there is to be a distillation of all that is essential to experience. In the crucible of which consciousness all impressions may be reviewed and refined, so as only *essence* may be left. And how? According to Lao Tzu:

*"Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to settle it will later clarify. Thus it is that without moving you shall know, without looking you shall see, without doing you shall achieve."*

This scarcely implies that a man cease to act, but rather that the *mind*, which aggravates the body to diffusive futility, be controlled and put to a stop. As Plato observes, wisdom itself is a kind of *purge*. To the wise, even merit won becomes a burden, and old Lao Tzu suggests that it not be hoarded to self, for only then can it ever be secure. If this is true, what then remains? Tolstoi may conclude for us here, it having been instilled in him when five years old, (by an elder brother) in unforgettable terms:

*"The Ant-Brotherhood was revealed to us but not the chief secret - the way whereby all suffering would cease. This secret he said he had written on a green stick buried at the edge of a certain ravine, at which spot (since my body must be buried somewhere) I have asked to be buried in memory of Nikolenka... As I then believed that there existed a little green stick whereon was written the message which would destroy all evil in men and give them universal welfare, even so I now (at seventy) believe that such truth exists and will be revealed to men and will give them all that is promised."*

And, lastly, but not least, Buddha:

*"As of old, O Bhikkhus, so now proclaim I only this. Suffering, and the ceasing of suffering."*

# INTRODUCTION

*“If we look upon man as a subject for study only (whether from the theological, the historical, the ethical, the philosophical, or any other point of view), we come upon a general law of necessity to which he, like everything else in existence, is subject. Yet if we look upon him also as something representing our own consciousness, we feel that we are free. This consciousness of ourselves is a source of self-realisation quite apart from and independent of reason. True, it is through reason that man can **survey** himself, but it is only through consciousness that he **knows** himself. Without consciousness of self, both the power of observation and the application of the reasoning faculty would be unthinkable. In order to understand, observe, and remember, man must first of all become conscious of himself as a living being. He becomes conscious of his vitality primarily through his desires, i.e. through his will. When he becomes aware of his will as constituting the essence of life he is bound to recognise it as free... (But) every man learns from reflection and experience that he, like any other phenomenon observable, is subject to given laws. Accordingly, he submits himself to their working, and makes no attempt to resist any such law when once he has become aware of its existence. Yet reflection and experience also teach him that full experience of the freedom which he recognises to lie within him is impossible, and that every act of his depends upon his particular organism, his character, and the motives which inspire that character. At the same time he never wholly accepts the deductions of reflection and experience... However often reflection and experience may show a man that, given the same conditions and character, he will always at a given juncture do precisely what he did before, he will nonetheless feel assured, when for perhaps the thousandth time he engages in action, which has hitherto always ended in the same way, that he can act as he pleases... The reason why life would be intolerable to him is that all the aspirations of man, all his incitements to live, are so many aspirations towards an increase of freedom.”*

This fragment from Tolstói, however, does not fully consider that even if man were blessed with complete freedom, he would not know what to make of it. And this would be so because the problem is not really one of freedom but rather the nature of consciousness.

The human level of consciousness has for so long been attached to its external and internal supports, its feelings and concepts, that it is simply incapable of appreciating freedom, bare and simple, when presented therewith. And why? Because the human aggregates of consciousness would not be content merely to experience such freedom but would at once be at pains to *utilise* it.

If consciousness were really *free*, then there would be no need for utility in the matter, for a freed mind has no needs. In short, that consciousness which is incessantly unstabilised by random feelings and concepts is never in a position to realise what freedom really is. For freedom is not a matter of utility but of equanimity.

Now when we come to this matter of consciousness, we find that it functions for the most part automatically and without volitional unity. A fact which represents only one aspect of the terrible and deep-rooted amorphousness in which all existence is plunged. Until this function of consciousness can reduce itself to an integrated unity (culminated only in the concentrated-absorption of *jhāna*), it will never cease to present itself as hopelessly antagonistic to equilibrium, the sport of every petty wind that blows and every random incident that upsprings.

It is in view of this amorphousness at the very root of all existence that the problem of identity becomes riddled with perplexity. *Who*, and from *whence* came I? In respect of which proposition fallacies exist in abundance. Professor Whitehead, for one, refers to man's habit of establishing his identity by the concept of 'soul' rather than the body:

*"In conceiving our personal identity we are apt to emphasize rather the soul than the body. The one individual is that co-ordinated stream of personal experiences, which is my thread of life or your thread of life. It is the succession of self-realisation, each occasion with its direct memory of the past and with its anticipation of the future... Yet when we examine this notion of the soul, it discloses itself as even vaguer than our definition of the body. First, the continuity of the soul - in so far as concerns consciousness - has to leap gaps in time. We sleep or we are stunned. And yet it is the same person who recovers consciousness. We trust to memory, and we ground our trust on the continuity of the body. Thus nature in general and the body in particular provide the stuff for the personal endurance of the soul."*

Whatever may be said for or against the application of the term 'soul' it is nevertheless reasonable to concede that personal identity is really a succession of occasions, a conglomeration of concomitants, gravitating in a specific field of form. A man is presented as establishing his identity by two main factors, body and memory. If so, then it is only logical to assume that if identity is ever to be preserved at all it must establish and re-establish itself from moment to moment by a continuous reference to antecedent phenomena. Namely, body and memory. Otherwise it may be faced with the spectacle of loss of identity altogether, as is borne out by the phenomenon of amnesia wherein, through some accident or shock, memory suspends its function. True, to other people it still remains the same person, because they recognise his body. But if there were no *body* to recognise?

Now if this stream of occasions, or concomitants of consciousness, juggles about in a body, then the traditional concept of soul cannot stand up to the test of immortality, for not only cannot its origins be traced back but its very continuity and endurance are in jeopardy, resting merely on the precarious factors of memory and body, which are ephemeral to say the least. It would be fair, therefore, to conclude with Whitehead that:

*"The soul is nothing else than the succession of my occasions of experience extending from birth to the present moment."*

That is, it is not something which is originally endowed with a self-sufficient identity, but is rather the offshoot and product of environmental factors, which are also by their very nature characterised by impermanence and impersonality.

Regarding environmental factors, it has become the province of contemporary philosophy to demonstrate the insubstantiality of matter and to substitute something more flexible in its place. Such a view is consolidated through the rise of atomic physics, which asserts the dynamism of matter. That is, when viewed internally all physicality, no matter how gross or static it presents itself to be, really possesses its own structure of motion, of effervescence, of incessant activity, of fields of force. Tables and chairs, and all the furniture of mind, have their nuclei and structure of process, as space-time continuums, incessantly objectified in nuclei which succeed, transmitted and transformed.

These nuclei obviously possess little separate identity, but so 'grim' is the struggle to preserve some semblance of solidity and shape that, to all external appearances, the name and form by which they manifest seems sufficiently distinct and durable to deceive the superficial eye. This is the total assumption to which the habitualised sense-doors of experience have reduced all things. But since the sense-doors are no longer something on which to be relied, these grounds of assumption have been

summarily displaced and something more dynamic advanced. Whitehead with his philosophy of process is a case in point:

*"I hold that these unities of existence, these occasions of experience, are the really real things which in their collective unity compose the evolving universe, ever plunging into the creative advance... Process for its intelligibility involves the notion of a creative activity belonging to the very essence of each occasion. It is the process of eliciting into actual being factors in the universe which antecedently to that process exist only in the mode of unrealised potentialities. The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual, and the fact of such transformation includes the immediacy of self-enjoyment."*

The outcome of reducing all things to a series of occasions of experience and events in space-time, of necessity dissolves the arbitrary and rigid concept of permanent identity as such. The mere fact that a man is alive signifies that some form of power activates him as a distinct unit, a self-evolving organism, a separate field-of-force, of latent potentiality. But just because a man is in the nature of such a field, it does not necessarily follow that he is in any transcendental sense eternal, ultimate, or unique. It is due largely to the heritage of habit that, while accepting the objective reality of the universe without and the subjective reality within, man fails to recognise how arbitrary the distinction is and that insofar as identity is concerned the determining factors are so slender as to be almost negligible, a friction of ever-effervescent elements incessantly uniting and disuniting in an ever-shifting field.

Although from a relative viewpoint it may be agreed with Whitehead that 'occasions of experience are the really real things', it would be stretching a point to specify that they are 'real' in any ultimate sense, for they are fluctuating factors devoid of any static base. When any occasion of experience is to the fore of consciousness it would be inexact to assume that individual continuity and durability is assured. It would be appropriate rather to affirm that individual continuity and durability are imponderable and indeterminate, resting on such amorphous bases as the random juxtaposition of a conglomeration of psycho-physical contacts.

Now what is generally recognised as individuality is rather in the nature of a fluctuating field beset by associate and disassociate nuclei of consciousness devoid of specific durability. The spheres of sensory apperception activate in dual psycho-physical reciprocity, within the limits of the organism's field, gravitating to base. Thus Whitehead details a point when self-creation is affirmed as a transformation of the potential into the actual, a creative activity belonging to the very essence of each occasion, the process of eliciting into actual being factors in the universe which antecedently to that process exist only in the mode of unrealised potentialities. Buddha's observation, millenniums earlier, asserts the same:

*"If the eye be intact, but if external forms do not fall within its field and therefore no contact incurs, no consciousness thereof ensues. Or if the eye be intact and external forms fall within its field, but no contact incurs, then no consciousness too registers. But if the eye be intact and external forms falling within its field register contact, then consciousness thereof ensues. Thus it is said, the coming-to-be of consciousness arises by way of conditions, without which there would be no coming-to-be. And through whatsoever conditions consciousness comes to be (whether through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind) after these (eye-consciousness, etc.) it is called."*

If immediate consciousness is the modified resultant of environmental contact, registering (or not registering) as data impinges into its field of frequency, then each nucleus of cognition in itself

possesses no static base but is incessantly objectifying and being objectified in turn by other nuclei which arise and culminate, as the life-continuum perpetuates along its ceaseless way.

The amorphousness of identity cannot be too often stressed. We have already referred to Hume elsewhere (*Introduction to Sammā Samādhi II*) and his claim that men are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual movement and flux. That is, at any particular moment consciousness is supported merely by the mode or percept which is to the immediate fore. Which coincides with the Buddha's observation that, when any *mode* of self is going on it is not reckoned as another, it is only reckoned by the name of the particular personality which prevails.

Personality has to be recognised for what it is. That any given field of consciousness consists of perceptions succeeding each other with inconceivable rapidity and flux. If the individual field consists of percepts it does not imply that these percepts (of personality) are ever simultaneously to the fore. An exponent (Professor A.E. Taylor) of Plato, thus observes:

*“Knowing is commonly said to be the ‘having’ of knowledge. But we might improve on this statement by distinguishing ‘possession’ and ‘having’. A man may ‘possess’ or ‘own’ a cloak without ‘actually having it on’. So possibly a man may ‘possess’ knowledge without ‘having’ it. In fact, we may distinguish ‘possessing’ from ‘having in use’. A man who has caught and caged a multitude of wild birds ‘possesses’ them all, but may not actually have anyone of them in hand, though he can ‘put his hand’ on one when he wants it. Let us then introduce a new simile. The mind is like an aviary: when we are babies the aviary is empty: each new piece of knowledge we acquire is like a wild bird caught and caged. But actual knowing is like putting our hand on the bird we want and taking it out of the cage. Now a man may put his hand on the wrong bird instead of the one he wants, since the captured birds are alive and can fly about in the cage. So we may ‘possess’ a certain knowledge, and yet when we want to use it, we may not be able to capture it, we may capture the **wrong** piece of knowledge, and this will be the case of the man who makes a false judgement.”*

This fits the case of percepts, which are ‘alive’ with ‘personality’ as birds in a cage. However, what is not taken into account here is that when we are babies what is empty is not the aviary (life-continuum) but merely the brain. We have already referred elsewhere to the fact that although percepts in the receptacle of consciousness shift and skip, the area of percepts in perceptive immediacy of apprehension from moment to moment, or from life to life, comprise only a minor portion of the whole life-continuum content. This is due to the fact that there are other devious areas or levels of experience than that with which the immediate psyche is normally engaged, and beyond the capacity of the normal psyche to plumb. This is so because in this immediate frame of reference and form, the attention of the average psyche is constantly preoccupied in an incessant engagement with the impingement of fresh data rebounding from the external world. With the mind's attention thus preoccupied, whatever antecedent areas of experience there may have been, pass from perceptive immediacy and become submerged. They are not lost, but they are, as it were, exiled, and through lack of function become negativised and emasculate.

However, although these antecedent areas, or levels, of experience are smothered and submerged for the most part, they often erupt into perceptive immediacy through some external echo or suggestive contact (Plato's mimesis). This alone is food enough for thought. As Whitehead observes:

*“I doubt if we get very far by the intellect alone. I doubt if **intellect** carries us very far. I have spoken of direct insights. The longer I live the more I am impressed by the enormous, the unparalleled genius of one philosopher, and that is Plato.”*

Although perhaps of those in the West who had his intuitions least smothered and submerged, Plato was certainly the most evocative and eloquent in his expression thereof, the fact remains that what they lacked in ancient Greece was a system or exact method whereby these antecedent areas could be unearthed at will. As a consequence of which lack, philosophy has suffered an untoward curtailment of its scope. Plato himself upheld that he taught nothing new, for there was nothing *new* to teach. As Joubert, the French critic, has summed up:

*“Plato shows us nothing, but he brings brightness with him. He puts light into our eyes, and fills us with a clearness by which all objects afterwards become illuminated. He teaches us nothing, but he prepares us, fashions us, and makes us ready to know all. Somehow or other, the habit of reading him augments in us the capacity for discovering and entertaining whatever fine truths may afterwards present themselves. Like mountain air it sharpens our organs, and gives us an appetite for wholesome food. Plato loses himself in the Void, but one sees the play of his wings, one hears their rustle. It is good to breathe his air, but not to live upon him.”*

This is a just assessment of the father of Western philosophy. That is, it is unhealthy to live on speculations unless they can be verified in fact. Something to which Plato himself would be the first to accede.

Now when we come to Buddha, we have to recognise that his denial of the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādanakkhandha) as endowed with permanency was a necessary emphasis, to stress that particular fallacy to which man from time immemorial has repeatedly subscribed. That is, of putting the hand on the ‘wrong bird’, and having captured it (upādāna) identifying it as ‘*I am this, this is mine, this is my self.*’

The impressions aggregated in this immediate existence are so much a product of the environment that it is suggested that even identification with the body is more exact, for the body at least preserves a more or less consistent form and feature than the peripheral mind, which never for two consecutive moments prevails as the same.

It has almost become a platitude that the nature of things impinging upon the sense-organs offers only a limited scope for apprehension, since all things perpetuate along their particular continuum. If the human senses apprehend anything it is because they happen to synchronize sufficiently well with that particular object of sense. It has become obvious how limited human sensitivity is, the inferior of most animals in this respect. Human audition, for instance, intercepts sound only up to 20,000 cycles, much less than a dog or bat - a dog apprehending up to 40,000 cycles, and a bat up to 60,000. As for electric current illuminating the filament of a bulb at only a few score cycles, it is perceived to manifest as a constant iridescent continuity, though it is in reality an intermittent process sufficiently quick to evade the eye. And so forth.

In view of this relativity of apprehension and the limitation with which it is beset, it is only with due emphasis that we find the ancients of the East developing and advancing a system of apprehension which has, peculiarly enough, the symptoms of a retreat within. It so happened that this technique of delving into the subjective psychic machine opened the way to a fresh horizon. Impartial investigation of this obscure subject has revealed that the insight and perspective derived by this method of approach is not only intense but profound, revealing depths unplumbed before. The stumbling upon this technique of involuted penetration prepared the way for the consequent discovery into essence and not-essence.

In its attempts to probe into the mysteries of the mind, Western psychoanalysis has come up with the evidence that consciousness is complemented and compensated by another layer or level. Namely,

the so-called 'unconscious'. It would be a relatively simple affair, however, if the cognitive elements in a psychic field could be reduced conveniently to only this. Experience in the Eastern method reveals a deeper complexity, a composite plurality of structures effervescent in an indeterminate field. Jung, for one, observes that only a complete self-revelation by introspective methods will achieve the requisite end:

*"We must get at the Eastern values from within and not from without, seeking them in ourselves, in the unconscious. We shall then discover how great is our fear of the unconscious and how formidable our resistances. Because of these resistances we doubt the very thing that seems so obvious to the East. Namely, **the self-liberating power of the introverted mind.**"*

Jung's concept of the introverted mind and the 'unconscious', however, is an equivocal matter, and it would be unrewarding, to say the least, to draw parallels and exploit comparisons. In Buddhism, to be specific, development of the extra-sensory faculties are never regarded as ends in themselves but only as means to an end. An end which is not fantasies and dreams, but an ineffable expansion into *being*.

It is not merely fantasies and dreams, however, which lack coherence and focus. The normal waking consciousness of man is likewise beset. The psyche (functioning in cyclic instants of apprehension, abeyance, and extinction from moment to moment) is by its very nature extremely susceptible to random elements which jolt it out of coherency and focus from second to second. For the psyche to be coherent implies that it must always be deliberately and purposively conscious of what it is doing, thinking, speaking, and even dreaming. In short, it must possess presence of mind. This, of course, is quite possible. But it involves great strain, and the man cannot be found who can keep this up indefinitely for any protracted period at a stretch.

There is the attainment of *jhāna* (concentrated-absorption), however, by which presence of mind can be preserved to an intense degree. But this calls for great psychic development, witnessed in those adepts who remain in motionless *jhāna* for hours and days on end. It is because *jhāna* endows the mind with coherency and focus that it is of great value and worth practice, for if there is anything most desirable it is surely the attainment of mind-control.

The effort to gain control is, of course, an ancient one. As Plato's exponent, Professor Taylor, renders it:

*"Any account we give of the mechanism of vision, or any other function, is a mere statement about the subsidiary or instrumental cause. The **true** cause, in every case, is to be sought in the good, or end, a function subserves. Thus the real end for which we have been given eyes, is that the spectacle of the heavenly motions may lead us to note the uniformity and regularity of days, nights, months, and years, and that reflection on this uniformity may lead us to science and philosophy, and so make the revolutions of the 'circles in the head' themselves regular and uniform. And the same is true of hearing - whose real purpose is not that we may learn to tune the strings of a lyre, but that we may learn to make our own thinking and living a spiritual melody."*

If this were the ideal, the world would be a comparatively simple place in which to exist. Unfortunately, this strain of thought does not find much favour today. The ancient urge for simplicity has become obscured by ever-increasing complexities and perplexities, and there seems little tendency for a return to ancient ways of thought. Life has become no longer simple, that is obvious. Therefore, life is a problem. But then life never at any time in history was ever simple as it may have seemed to be. Yet the fundamentals are in themselves simple. It is only when man begins to think and acquire

an opinion that the complexity and perplexity begins.

It seems to be the mark of the happy and integrated man, therefore, that after having immersed himself in life to the full, and traversed the storm-stressed oceans of opinion, to remain at heart and in essence, simple.

Finally, regarding the matter of rebirth, upon which the whole process of the struggle to greater and ever greater perfection revolves, it would seem that we have to be apologetic, especially concerning rebirth which does not exempt the possibility of animal incarnation. Even those who are prepared to accept rebirth tentatively, shrink from the crude statement that men may become animals, and animals men, except only in an allegorical sense - considering that even in this very life the fact is only too plain, and that mere human shape and form has never been a serious obstacle to animality and its manifestation right here and now, not to mention the next. But, then, as Plato observes:

*“Only those who perceive the absolute, eternal, and immutable, may be said to **know**, and not to have **opinion** only.”*



*“Thus steadied, perfectly purified and translucent, free from blemish, purged of taint, made supple and pliable, fit for wielding, established and immovable, I bent down my mind to the recalling of my former existences ..... divers births... evolutions and involutions of aeons... conditions of births... and experiences in such... the rise and fall of being and their characteristics in the different worlds with the eye divine.....”*

M.N. i. 247-8



# Chapter 1 : Of Evolution and Involution

*“Now, O Bhikkhus, there comes a condition when at some time or other, after the lapse of a long interval, this world **involves**..... As this world is involving, creatures for the most part come to be involved as Radiant Ones (a plane of super-celestials or Brahmas). There they become made of mind, enjoyers of rapture, self-lucid, faring through the sky, abiding in glory, enduring for a long life-span..... Now, O Bhikkhus, there comes a condition when at some time or other, after the lapse of a long interval, this world **evolves**. . . .”*

The processes in nature are observed to be cyclic in their function. In the microcosmic scale of the atom, electrons wheel around nuclei in cyclic impetus. In the macrocosmic scale, the cyclic process is likewise made manifest whereby nebulae are observed to wheel around nuclei which expanding spread off spiral-wise into the evolution and development of solar fields, with all manner of variegated satellites, gravitated by the overall centrifugal-centripetal force.

In the organic field, the circulation of the life-flow partakes of a cyclic process. Food once imbibed is digested in the crucible of a centrifugal-centripetal force and absorbed to form fresh cellular development, issuing in a healthy perpetuation of individual life.

If it is true that a cyclic impetus is what impels activity in the microcosmic and macrocosmic scale, in organic and inorganic phenomenae, it is also worthy of note that in the psychic sphere a similar recurrent principle appears. The brain of the new-born babe is devoid of psychic content, acquiring specific content through environmental contact along the process of the five sense-spheres. The brain, in this peripheral instance, serves as the collective gravitational centre whereby data is registered and absorbed.

This would imply that each phenomenal manifestation in nature has its ‘field of evolution’ wherewith it develops and culminates. But when culmination is attained, it is observed that a complementary process asserts itself, involutory in scope. A solar orb, for instance, begins as a moderate sun, expands into a red giant, and contracts into a white dwarf, whence it disintegrates under its own velocity to form (through collision) new stars in space.

## Evolution of Personality

Insofar as the psychic aspect of involution is concerned, the evolution of personality externalised along the five sense-sphere field condenses itself as knowledge and experience, sifting the dross and preserving the grain. If there were no sense-sphere field at all no environmental contact would arise, without which no psychic development would fructify, the mind floating in its own vacuum. When the organism through decay is no longer able to shoulder the psyche, however, it disintegrates and dies.

These two processes, of extension and condensation are, of course, reciprocally based. This duality of character, which is the signature of the evolutionary-involuntary axle, endows process as a function of development with implicit significance. Otherwise there would be, on the one hand, the amorphous inanity of a random dispersal, and the aridity of a stunted ineffectuality, on the other hand.

It is a broad view, indeed, which recognises that life is something which hinges on reciprocity and does not exist in isolation, though circumscribed by cyclic limits. That is, whenever evolutionary expansion as a unity has outerved its purpose, it involves. This tends to support the assertion that the universe does possess aspects of method and significance. Awareness of process prevents to a large extent the mind from frittering away into amorphous futility and repetitious inanity. For the process of evolution and involution admits of the force of will, which when directed to ideal objectives may become by that very drive gravitated and actualised within a specific field of personality. Without this possibility life is exposed to the random peril of meaninglessness. The evolutionary-involutionary process endows existence with some ultimacy of meaning, although in its initial stages this meaning may not be palpably transparent.

If there is such a thing as conservation, whether of energy, of knowledge, or of mind, then it is not to overstep the bounds of rationality to hazard that unification in a specific field of identity once achieved may carry itself forth even after the organism's decay and death. Namely, the phenomenon of metempsychosis, or transmutative continuity.

If this is possible, however, it must involve an extensive period of evolution and travail, a perspective of aeons, before the transmutating mind can attain to such a pitch of perfection that its mundane base is transcended and a transition of lineage made to some aspect of supramundane equilibrium. That is, once mundane 'cellular' limits have been reached, a complementary process of involution would assert itself, ensuing in a gradual extrication from mundane residues.

Insofar as this supramundane aspect is concerned, however, it is not something easily acceptable, because its effects pass from immediate view and are lost to human sight. Nevertheless, if individual effort and experience is not to fritter away into amorphous futility, the mental door to this possibility may usher in fresh fact as long as it is left open wide.

In humanity's quest for ultimacy, if ultimacy exists, it is only an initial curiosity which demands that the universe in which forms and phenomenae arise be first understood. In this respect, Whitehead's rendering of Plato's theory of the Receptacle is significant, wherein it is advanced that the universe is made up of 'actualities' and that it is these 'actualities' which *qualify* the Receptacle. In itself the Receptacle participates in no forms:

*"It receives its forms by reason of its inclusion of actualities, and in a way not to be abstracted from these actualities.... In addition to the notions of the welter of events and of the forms which they illustrate, we require a third term, personal unity. It is a perplexed and obscure concept. We must conceive it as the Receptacle, the foster-mother, as I might say, of the becoming of our occasions of experience. This personal identity is the thing which receives all occasions of the man's existence. It is there as a material matrix for all transitions of life, and is changed and variously figured by the things that enter it, so that it differs in its character at different times. Since it receives all manner of experiences into its own unity, it must itself be bare of all forms. We shall not be far wrong if we describe it as invisible, formless, and all-receptive. It is a locus which persists, and provides an emplacement for all the occasions of experience. That which happens in it is conditioned by the compulsion of its own past, and by the persuasion of its immanent ideals. It is dangerous to neglect Plato's intuitions. He carefully varies his phrases in referring to it, and implies that what he says is to be taken in its most abstract sense. The Receptacle imposes a common relationship on all that happens, but does not impose what that relationship shall be. . . . I have directed attention to Plato's doctrine of the Receptacle because at the present moment, physical science is nearer to it than at any period since Plato's death. The space-time of modern mathematical physics, conceived in abstraction*

*from the particular mathematical formulae which apply to the happenings in it, is almost exactly Plato's Receptacle. It is to be noted that mathematical physicists are extremely uncertain as to what these formulae are exactly, nor do they believe that any such formulae can be derived from the mere notion of space-time. Thus, as Plato declares, space-time in itself is bare of all forms."*

Now it is of interest to note that in Buddhism it is asserted that the world of forms comes to be through the collective kamma (actualities) of all the creatures therein, actuated through the perpetuating principle of a split-process of personality called *anattā* (dealt with in a later chapter), impelled by desire. It may be cause for question, however, how desire creates its own forms. But this is best explained in terms of desire being a force in itself, of energy, and that it is this energy which drives the universe of temporal fact on to its self-completion. Each mental impulse and each physical reaction drives on the psycho-physical unit which is personality to the amorphous limits of an individual destiny. It is to be observed that in nature phenomenae fluctuate and dissipate in, amorphous plurality, an amorphous plurality in which individual identity is preserved only insofar as equilibrium is attained, degenerating otherwise into the nightmare of split-personality.

Insofar as this aspect of origination of forms is concerned, it may be sufficient for the present to express it in terms of energy and drive. As Whitehead observes:

*"The sole conclusion with which we are concerned is that energy has recognisable paths through time and space. Energy passes from particular occasion to particular occasion. At each point there is a flux, with a quantitative flow and a definite direction."*

It is the unique task of man to bend circumstance to his will and endow life with a definite direction and purpose. A direction and purpose which, if pushed to its legitimate conclusion, passes beyond the jurisdiction of terrestrial fact. The ancient terms Dhamma, Tao, Form of the Good, are universal terms representative of that which is not merely abstract and ideal but also immediate and concrete. They are abstract and ideal in that they represent a collective potentiality which may be aspired to. Whereas they are immediate and concrete in that they impermeate life as essential values, which once gravitated into a specific field of personality are actualised.

We have observed that contemporary ideas of space are of something amorphous and 'elastic', and that the old scientific method of assessing reality with its restriction to mere physical immediacy, is no longer in vogue. It is to be noted that the visible universe does not exist in arid spatiality but that it is impregnated with invisible 'fields of force' which exercise a compelling pull upon adjacent phenomenae. It is obvious, therefore, that a force need not be *visible* to be a force.

Which unfolds a whole vista of possibilities. In the perspective of which it is only logical to deduce that psycho-physical evolution and the processes of nature may carry themselves to obscure lengths and to ever increasing degrees of refinement, whereby phenomenae may coexist fused in ascending scale without encroaching on each other's specific domains. That is why it is a broad view which leaves it open to consideration that the universe may contain 'astral' counterparts to that which is normally exposed to the five sense-sphere field.

Now it is asserted with complete confidence by those who have attained to an intense pitch of extra-sensory perception that the world is endowed with other planes, coexisting in refinement of scale. In its crude aspect, each system (which contains a solar orb) of the threefold-world (Ti-Loka) partakes of a certain proportion of the five basic elements, reckoned in their extension as follows:

- (1) The earth element (pathavi dhātu) to the extent of 240,000 yojanas.
- (2) The water element (apo dhātu) to the extent of 480,000 yojanas.

- (3) The fire element (tejo dhātu) to the extent of 960,000 yojanas.
- (4) The wind element (vāyo dhātu) to the extent 1,920,000 yojanas.
- (5) The cognitive element (viññāna dhātu) to the extent of 3,840,000 yojanas.

As for the space element (ākāsa dhātu) no limit is given to its extension, each out-lying system impermeated therein. As each system comprises only a minute quantity of the total combination of world-systems, it is termed Okasa Loka. That is, a world created by occasion.

Complementary to these basic elements, there are the five aggregates (pañcupādānakkhandha) which go to form the individual entity, and which arise from a different source, in delicacy of refinement surpassing the basic elements a thousandfold.

### Centrifugal-centripetal force

The aggregates of psycho-physical personality, which in their collectivity comprise each system, arise through the impulsion of a cyclic centrifugal-centripetal force centred in the aggregates themselves, proportionate to the elements in size. Seven cyclic centrifugal-centripetal forces activate and refine the elements. The first centrifugal-centripetal force distils the crude elements and integrates only the refined issue. Which issue is taken up and distilled again by the second centrifugal-centripetal force. The process of which continues until the last and seventh centrifugal-centripetal force refines it to a final pitch. Whence the centrifugal-centripetal force active in the centre of the threefold world-system gravitates and integrates it. Its integration in this field-of-force establishes it as a fit vehicle for generation, and the collective field-of-force is termed the Ocean of Impulsion.

Now when the fivefold personality-aggregate (pañcupādānakkhandha) is propelled to rebirth, it is fused by this centrifugal-centripetal force active in the world-system. Whence it enters the prospective father's diaphragm, where another centrifugal-centripetal force is active. Thence it is gravitated into the centre of the prospective mother's diaphragm, where also a centrifugal-centripetal force is active. Once established in position it impregnates the cellular foetus, to develop and evolve under the impulsion of the centrifugal-centripetal force till it issues forth into the world of physicality as a complete organism in its own right.

As we have observed earlier, the processes of nature are susceptible to ever-increasing degrees of refinement. No where does this apply with special emphasis than in the field, of psycho-physical personality and form, whereby the development and intensification of form and mind may be refined in ever-increasing scale until it attains to a unique pitch. Thus, for instance, the so called 'ghost' form is produced and intensified from the crude human form as base. The 'ghost' form in turn serves as the base for the production of the celestial form, the celestial form serves as the base for the Brahma form and the Brahma form in turn serves as the base for the Arūpa-Brahma form. Whence it reaches its mundane limit, and, if intensified further, passes into a transition-of-lineage whereby it becomes supramundane. This is the attainment of the Dhammakāya aggregate.

It is to be understood, therefore, that astral planes and forms are reflections, in ever-increasing degrees of refinement, stemming from the physical base, being resultant actualities, each immediate derivation serving as base for further refinement in turn. This is only in harmony with the functions of process, whereby one actuality is objectified in another actuality, and one occasion in another occasion, carried to extreme states of refinement in direct process or to lengths of extreme crudity in reverse.

Now it is often advanced, however, that the Buddhist attitude is one not concerned with a progressing civilization. To the discerning mind, however, it is obvious that the Buddhist attitude is one of

perspective, of universal process. If life is viewed merely as a physical procession from one age to another, without any psychic implications of transmutative transcendency, then civilization of such a sort may be viewed as something not worthy of serious regard. An attitude which is clarified by the Hegelian terminology:

*“When we contemplate the Past - that is, History - the first thing we see is nothing but ruins.”*

But to conclude that the Buddhist attitude, derived from a broad perspective, recommends non-involvement in the things of this world is extreme. The process to psychic perfection is one which is very much involved in the passage of temporal fact, inextricably so. We see the founder of the present Buddhist era portrayed as building the perfections (pāramīs) from aeon to aeon, in the process of fitting himself for the task of rounding up the truth with comprehensive efficiency. This is made possible only through impermeation in temporal fact, without which there would be no psychic increase, and it is just this psychic increase with which Buddhism is basically concerned, not specifically physical, economic, or social progress as such.

It is to be observed that all men's efforts and thoughts are a constant drive in the direction of an increase in freedom and happiness. This drive derives its power from its psychical base, its impulsion towards an envisaged objective. To realise this objective, psycho-physical reciprocity is called into play and the objective is eventually realised only insofar as balance is preserved. Whensoever too preponderate a weight is placed on the extroverted titillation of physicality, or too heavy a stress laid on the introverted stringency of psychicality, the balance is upset and disequilibrium is the result.

Both attitudes, of extroversion and introversion, suffer from preponderance and stress, because in reality they prosper only with each other's support. Too exaggerated an emphasis either way leads to extremes, something which is to be deplored. Removed from its especial context and perspective and applied to universal issues, both attitudes pay the penalty of an excessive limitation. The extroverted attitude characteristically asserts that life is what it is and therefore to be made the most of despite all shortcomings and setbacks. The characteristic introverted approach to life is that it is beset with suffering in some form or shape and therefore something to be shunned.

Although these two extreme attitudes seem to clash, they really stem from the same root, with ends basically the same. Namely, happiness. The extroverted attitude, which is characteristic in the West, is already well known. The Buddhistic attitude, to be specific, needs to be explained, for it is only too often presented in an inadequate manner, divorced from the vast context and totality of its perspective, so that it inevitably becomes labelled with a pessimistic negativity. But, as earlier alluded to, how can this be so when the founder himself is portrayed as having built the perfections for aeons, to finally culminate in the realisation of a transcendent goal? The chief disparity between the two attitudes, therefore, must lie in the fact that one views individual evolvement as an aeonic process, whereas the other views it as merely beginning and ending with only one brief life, and that therefore the greatest possible happiness must be extracted therefrom while that one life lasts.

It is in view of this lack of a vaster perspective, which takes in all the sensory world and the extra-sensory world besides, that little justice is done to the Buddhist attitude other than an interpretation which consigns it to an amorphous negativity. It is due to this lack of a vaster perspective other than the mere mundane that philosophy begins in enthusiasm and hope and ends in eventual futility and despair, burdened with a sense of its own verbosity. This vision of a vaster perspective, however, depends upon taking first an introverted stand within 'the self'. This is expressed in part by the Spanish philosopher, Ortega Y Gasset:

*“Few people at this hour enjoy that tranquillity which permits one to choose the truth, to*

*abstract oneself in reflection. Almost all the world is in tumult, is beside itself, and when man is beside himself he loses his most essential attribute - the possibility of meditating or withdrawing into himself, to come to terms with himself and define what it is that he believes and what it is that he does not believe... Nowhere do we better observe that the possibility of meditation is in truth the essential attribute of man than at the zoo, before the cages of our cousins the monkeys... In either case it is the objects and events in its surroundings which govern the animal's life, which pull it and push it about like a marionette. It does not rule its own life, it does not live from itself, but is always alert to what is going on **outside** it - to what is **other** than itself... Of course, these two things, man's power of withdrawing himself from the world and his power of taking his stand within himself are not gifts conferred upon man. I must emphasize this for those of you who are concerned with philosophy: they are not gifts conferred upon man. **Nothing that is substantive has been conferred upon man.** He has to do it all for himself... There are, then, three different moments which are repeated cyclically throughout the course of human history, in forms each time more complex and rich: (1) Man feels himself lost, shipwrecked, (2) man by an energetic effort retires into himself to form ideas about things and his possible dominance over them, (3) man again submerges himself in the world, to act in it according to a preconceived plan."*

Although this is applicable in terms of universal process, it is not in the nature of Western philosophy to penetrate beyond the normal span of one human life, and therefore the above visionary outlook is one of a limited field and does not take into consideration the continuity of such a process as an aeonic individual strife, culminating in transcendent ends.

Life, viewed from the true Buddhist stand, is not something to be *escaped* but to be *transmuted*. And this implies that an *ideal* must be present to mind, wherein all things fall into proper proportion and perspective.

All life, however, is necessarily limited. That is, it is difficult to visualize an infinite progression. Cyclically things arise and culminate, whence a new cycle begins. But continuous cyclic activity, when applied to individual attainment, is mere repetition once culmination is reached. This implies that, if life is not to degenerate into mere meaningless repetition, it must draw the line somewhere. Which line is its culmination and finality.

## **Psycho-physical evolution**

Insofar as individual psycho-physical evolution is concerned, it is the individual himself who prescribes his own limits, dependent upon his initiating will or resolve (*adhiṭṭhāna*). Once this potential nucleus of resolve, like a seed, is sown in a specific field of identity, and is taken up by the drive of the subconscious life-continuum process (*bhavanga sota*), it evolves in cyclic momentum and velocity until its prescribed limit is eventually reached.

The positive function of the psycho-physical unit, in this instance, attains its limit with the fruition of the perfections (*pāramīs*), which is the capacity to preserve equilibrium in the face of every environmental wind that blows, a state termed the highest bliss (*nibbānam paramam sukham*) in that its bliss is unalloyed.

The time span involved before such bliss can be attained is vast, due to the collective potential necessary to be actualised. The perfections of experience (*pāramīs*), accumulated from repeated impermeation in the passage of temporal fact, involve an aeonic extent because evolutionary-

involutionary integration is not something which can be accomplished without first a vast psycho-physical intensification. Basically, it is the fashioning of character, a process which it is impossible to round off by merely one existence, since character is always a quality to be refined to the highest degree.

The attainment of individual integration differs in periodic extent, in proportion to the basic disposition and versatility of the initial life-continuum, which is inextricably involved in the amorphous plurality of the anattā (see chapter on Anattā) process. Some achieve ultimate integration after long periods, and others less. This is so because the process towards fulfilment of any definitive goal or ideal depends upon the initial nucleus, which is nothing more than the collective potential of experience, swinging the individual unit into orbit and self-completion. If the initial mass is not weighty enough, the momentum initiated would be insufficient to drive the process of extensional integration to its self-completion. Which self-completion derives its greatness through impermeation in the passage of temporal fact. As it is said:

*“Now, O Bhikkhus, there comes a condition when at some time or other, after the lapse of a long interval, this world **involves**... As this world is involving, creatures for the most part come to be involved as Radiant Ones (Brahmas). There they become made of mind, enjoyers of rapture, self-lucid, faring through the sky, abiding in glory, enduring for a long lifespan. Now, O Bhikkhus, there comes a condition when at some time or other, after the lapse of a long interval, this world **evolves**...”*

Involution and evolution follow each other, cycle after cycle, and no definitive conclusion to the process exists except in an individual capacity. Creatures evolve and involve, and re-evolve, until final integration is achieved and transcendence attained, which is beyond evolutionary status, being supramundane.

Since the majority of creatures, however, never attain final integration and supramundane transcendence, they evolve on into the next aeon. The first of these, after passing from the higher Radiant Brahma states, is reborn in a lower Brahma state, where feeling ill at ease he desires that other creatures arise and keep him company. When such creatures (from the Radiant states) through exhaustion of their life-span join him, he thinks they arise at his express wish. Whereby he begins to get ideas that he is the creator and father of them all.

These Brahmas, through exhaustion of merit, are eventually reborn in the evolving world, where practising jhāna they are able to recollect their past abodes, and also the first Brahma therein. Whence the idea arises that these abodes are eternal and the first Brahma therein the Overlord. Believing thus, they long for nothing more than to return thereto. A Buddha, however, recollecting further back aeon into aeon, knows:

*“These speculative tenets, held in this way, stressed in this way, leading to such and such a future state. Of this he has knowledge, and more than this. And possessing this knowledge he lays no stress thereon. He lays no stress, because he really knows how things arise and how they pass away, with all their sweetness, their peril and their pain. And having found the way to release, has passed beyond.”*

It is to be observed that the life-process is an external-internal contexture of reciprocity. Psycho-physical evolution without a complementary, involutionary process cannot be imagined, and vice versa. What is vital to the process is the possibility of consequent transcendence over the crudities of matter. This possibility is realised by the gravitation of perfect qualities of consciousness into a specific field of personality. This, of course, implies a *vortex*. For even as a nebula in space is a vortical force, even so the individual psychic field turns upon a core, which as such is the centre of its outlying

field.

The psycho-physical evolutionary process is an accumulation of core, and involves as experience and knowledge. Once this core of experience has been attained, psychic expansion into spatio-temporal limits becomes a matter of ease. That is, consciousness having freed itself from the shackles of physicality, may expand or contract its 'field' at will. However, the *limits of expansion* of any given field-of-consciousness are only in proportion to the core of experience itself. The limits of any field of personality are prescribed by the measure of its experience, no more and no less, which is by involuted process integrated at core. Other than which all else is beyond range.

It is thus that antecedent births and lives may be recalled in retrospect only to the extent of the collective experience accumulated at core, in the specific field-of-consciousness which recollects. It is impressed in the field as antecedent aggregates, and for recollective purposes attention has to be focussed down into the particular area of impressions to be recollected. Thus we observe Buddha in retrospect:

*"I bent **down** my mind to the recalling of my former existences. . . divers births... evolutions and involutions of aeons..."*

Now due to the fact that other creatures, too, are able to recollect back to certain limited periods, in proportion to the extent of their collective experience-field, erroneous views regarding the universe arise, such as the idea of an Overlord. And it is these erroneous views which are only too often made to pass for the genuine thing. As it is said:

*"Suppose, O Bhikkhus, a man in need of sound timber, in quest of sound timber, going about in search of sound timber, should come upon a mighty tree, upstanding, all sound timber, and pass it by, but should cut away the outer wood and bark and take that along with him, thinking it to be sound timber. Then a discerning man might say thus: this fellow surely cannot tell the difference between sound timber and outer wood and bark, branch wood and twigs. Now such a way of dealing with sound timber will never serve his need... Not the gain, honour, good name, moral rules, or the profits of knowledge and insight are the essentials of the holy life. The **sure heart's release**, O Bhikkhus, that is the meaning, that is the essence, that is the goal of living the holy life."*

If this is recognised, then the goal of all effort is realised. In this light, strife and harmony merge. For as the whole universe of consciousness drives towards greater and ever greater perfection by evolutionary means, the process culminates either in involutory ends of psychic harmony and equilibrium, or else the aeonic struggle would all have been in vain. But this challenge of process only a great and fundamental experience can justify. To borrow Whitehead's terminology:

*"I hazard the prophecy that that religion will conquer which can render to popular understanding some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact."*

## Chapter 2 : Of Universal Mutability (Anicca)

*"You would like to possess, O Bhikkhus, something that is permanent, stable, eternal, not liable to change, that would stand fast like unto the eternal. But can you see any such possession? Neither do I."*

That nothing endures is a fundamental truth realised to a greater or lesser degree, as the case may be, by almost all. What is of concern here, however, is the psychological aspect of the phenomenon. That is, that which is called consciousness, psyche, or mind, arises and perishes from second to second, and knows no other stability of process.

Now if it is consciousness which, in the last analysis, is to be identified as the potential which gives life to the body, then it is strange that this very consciousness (arising and perishing from second to second) should be able to exist at all. However, it is the velocity of movement, or vibration, which determines the perpetuation of any thing, and nothing can be perpetuated as a unit save under the impulsion of this process. It is because consciousness *moves* (arises and perishes) that the mind is capable of attaining to ends it initiates and sets itself, through the very propulsive force of objectification.

The psychic and cellular mass called man activates to the beats of a parallel process, under the impulsion of which the psycho-physical unit may be said to live and die a million times a day and continue to so exist. If it is true that life and death complement each other in this fashion from moment to moment, then it is only logical to assume that when the body is finally abandoned this permutative potential of momentum continues to objectify itself, with or without a fresh bodily form.

### Arising and Perishing

Though nothing endures, things are by the very permutative force of momentum objectified in occasions to come. All things arise and perish, but a fresh cycle begins, the process of which is endless. Thus, although it may be said that nothing endures as it is, it nevertheless *persists* insofar as it continues to *become*.

Timidity of death, however, is instinctive, and must always be a factor to be reckoned with because of its amorphousness. But this perspective of process, ramificated throughout nature, should do much to lessen anxiety on this score. For as Tolstoi observes:

*"Men fear the death of the body because the thought of that event causes them to realise their need of a true life, which they feel they do not possess. . . . Knowing that we have received and developed our lives from a past we do not see, we should feel no fear of a future we also do not see."*

It is only reasonable to conclude, therefore, that life and death do not exist in isolation but are the manifestation of a complementary and reciprocal process, of propulsive objectification, extending to extreme limits of evolutionary-involutionary refinement.

Since that which determines perpetuation of the life-continuum is primarily consciousness, and since consciousness arises and perishes by its very nature from moment to moment, it is of little

consequence if in the velocity of its momentum a man is unable to apprehend the process in perceptive immediacy. To apprehend it thus a split-objectification has to be made, something which is beyond the power of the normal vision to achieve.

It cannot be too often repeated that since the activity of consciousness is a process of the highest velocity imaginable, past, present, and future are inextricably bound up and involved in its manifestation, and that if we are to understand why things happen as they do insofar as human initiative is concerned, then a rather penetrating analysis into psychical processes must be made. It is both immediate and yet antecedent, even as it is by momentum fused with succedents. As Whitehead observes:

*“Literature preserves the wisdom of the human race, but in this way it enfeebles the emphasis of first-hand intuition. In considering our direct observation of past, or future, we should confine ourselves to time-spans of the order of magnitude of a second, or even of fractions of a second. If we keep ourselves to this short-range intuition, assuredly the future is not nothing. It lives actively in its antecedent world. Each moment of experience confesses itself to be a transition between two worlds, the immediate past and the immediate future. This is the persistent delivery of common sense. Also this immediate future is immanent in the present with some degree of structural definition. The difficulty lies in the explanation of this immanence in terms of the subject-object structure of experience. In the present, the future occasions, as individual realities with their measure of absolute completeness, are non-existent. Thus the future must be immanent in the present in some different sense to the objective immortality of the individual occasions of the past. In the present there are no individual occasions belonging to the future. The present contains the utmost verge of such realised individuality. The whole doctrine of the future is to be understood in terms of the account of the process of self-completion of each individual actual occasion.”*

Whitehead also realises quite well that the process of becoming in the psyche must be counterpoised by a process of perishing:

*“‘Perishing’ is the assumption of a role in a transcendent future. The not-being of occasions is their ‘objective immortality’. A pure physical prehension is how an occasion in its immediacy of being absorbs another occasion which has passed into the objective immortality of its not-being. It is how the past lives in the present. It is causation. It is memory. It is perception of derivation. It is emotional conformation to a given situation, an emotional continuity of past with present. It is a basic element from which springs the self-creation of each temporal occasion. Thus, perishing is the initiation of becoming. How the past perishes is how the future becomes. . . .”*

And, again:

*“Consider our derivation from our immediate past of a quarter of a second ago. We are continuous with it, we are the same as it, prolonging its effective tone, enjoying its data. And yet we are modifying it, deflecting it, changing its purposes, altering its tone, reconditioning its data with new elements. We reduce this past to a perspective, and yet retain it as the basis of our present moment of realisation. We are different from it, and yet we retain our individual identity with it. This is the mystery of personal identity, the mystery of the immanence of the past in the present, the mystery of transience. . . . Our powers of analysis, and of expression, flicker with our consciousness. It is not true that there is a definite area of human consciousness, within which there is clear discrimination*

*and beyond which mere darkness. Nor is it true that elements of experience are important in proportion to their clarity in consciousness... The prominent facts (such as a clap of thunder or a spasm of pain) are the superficial facts. They vary because they are superficial, and they enter into conscious discrimination because they vary. There are other elements in our experience, on the fringe of consciousness, and yet massively qualifying our experience. In regard to these other facts, it is our consciousness that flickers, and not the facts themselves. They are always securely there, barely disconnected, and yet inescapable."*

## **Mind-process (citta vithi)**

Let us see the Buddhistic analysis of the mind-process (citta vithi). The five sense-door activity of the normal waking consciousness, for matters of analysis, is divided into 17 mind-instants:

- (1) Life-continuum subconsciousness in its aspect of latent passivity (atita bhavanga).
- (2) Life-continuum subconsciousness in its aspect of vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana).
- (3) Life-continuum subconsciousness in its aspect of arrested passivity (bhavanga upaccheda).
- (4) Five sense-door advertizing (pañca dvāravajjana).
- (5) Five sense-door consciousness in receptivity (pañca viññāna).
- (6) Psycho-physical sense-contact (sampaticchana).
- (7) Psycho-physical discrimination (santirana).
- (8) Psycho-physical recognition and decision (votthapana).
- (9) – (15) Functional-volitional activity asserting itself (javana). Only these mind-instants are strictly deliberate as to activate and accumulate fresh kammic potential. All the previous instants are merely automatic and instinctual, being ethically so to speak neutral, the resultants (vipāka) of past experience, and of the mind-process.
- (16) – (17) Registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa), wherein data is impressed into the subconscious life-continuum circuit.

The cycle then rounds itself off with subconsciousness (bhavanga), whereon a fresh cycle begins. All of which moves with such a velocity as to jostle into momentary significance and out.

All sense-door activity in the sphere of environmental contact activates under the compulsion of this cyclic momentum, which is chiefly automatic. Impressions are recorded in series and condensed, being absorbed into the collective subconscious life-continuum. Now if the data is, through lack of attention, unregistered (in the 16 - 17 instants), no kammic result ensues. As it is said:

*"If the eye be intact, but if the external forms do not fall within its field and therefore no contact ensues, then no consciousness thereof results. If the eye be intact and external forms fall within its field, but no contact is registered, then no consciousness thereof results. But if the eye be intact and external forms fall within its field, and contact registers, then consciousness thereof ensues. Thus it is said, the coming-to-be of consciousness arises by way of conditions, without which there would be no coming-to-be thereof. And through what conditions it comes to be (whether through the door of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or intellect) after these is it called (eye-consciousness, etc)."*

With regard to the mind-process which is disassociated from the five sense-door contact field, such as when preoccupied with some mental activity to the exclusion of all else, the following mind-instants

activate:

- (1) Life-continuum subconsciousness in its aspect of vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana).
- (2) Life-continuum subconsciousness in its aspect of arrested passivity (bhavanga upaccheda).
- (3) Mind-door adverting (mano-dvāravajjana).
- (4) - (10) Functional-volitional activity of the mind (javana).
- (11) - (12) Registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa).

Followed by subconsciousness (bhavanga), wherewith another cycle begins. Again, if the mind is not attentive the process does not proceed to the registering (11-12) stage. It is to be noted that the process does not go beyond 7 functional-volitional (javana) instants, and that the process always end in subconsciousness (bhavanga) before it can reinstate itself in a fresh cycle. However, there are exceptions when concentrated-absorption (jhāna) is in session. In jhāna the process is capable of being sustained in the fully conscious state without falling into bhavanga, for an indefinite period in proportion to the proficiency of the adept. In jhāna the mind is restrained from sinking into bhavanga because that aspect of subconsciousness (bhavanga) is not conducive to direction and purpose, and it is the implicit activity of jhāna to preserve conscious direction and purpose. This disposes of the fallacy that jhāna is a trance state, although for the inept an instant of jhāna is immediately followed by a sinking into subconsciousness.

With regard to the manner in which the mind functions when absorption process (appanāvithi) is expedited, the linkage is as follows:

- (1) Life-continuum subconsciousness in vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana).
- (2) Life-continuum subconsciousness in arrested passivity (bhavanga upaccheda).
- (3) Mind-door process (mano-dvāra vithi).
- (4) Initial impulsion (parikamma javana).
- (5) Access-concentration impulsion (upacāra javana).
- (6) Directed-process impulsion (anuloma javana).
- (7) Transition-of-lineage impulsion (Gotrabhū javana).
- (8) Concentrated-absorption impulsion (jhāna javana).

The formula above applies for the inexperienced practitioner. He has to repeat initial application (4) again and again before jhāna can be induced. When jhāna is reached it lasts only for an instant before consciousness sinks once more to the bhavanga level. For the adept, the initial application is superfluous and is disposed with. However, since jhāna cannot be preserved indefinitely, consciousness eventually sinks back to bhavanga.

It is, of course, to be understood that each instant of the process in all these differing lines of mind-process is characterised in turn by the factors of manifestation (uppāda), abeyance (thiti), and extinction (bhanga), before it is objectified in the next.

When the mind does not apprehend anything distinctly, data being too vague or remote to arouse any mental (javana) activity and response, the mind-process breaks off at the recognition-decision (voṭṭhapana) instant and proceeds no further, sinking into bhavanga immediately without registering. There is no registering of an impression if there is no mental activity, whether beneficial or adverse.

For the mind-process when death is imminent the functioning is as follows:

- (1)-(6) Life-continuum subconsciousness latent passivity (atita bhavanga)
- (7) Life-continuum subconsciousness in vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana)
- (8) Life-continuum subconsciousness in arrested passivity (bhavanga upaccheda)
- (9) Mind-door adverting (mano-dvārāvajjana)
- (10)-(14) Functional-volitional impulses (javana)
- (15)-(16) Registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa)
- (17) The instant of departure (cuti) and of consequent rebirth linking (patisandhi).

There are four types of rebirth manifestation: (1) oviparous (2) viviparous (3) moisture-derived (4) apparitional (oppapatika).

## Re-birth Process

It is to be noted that the instants of the life-continuum subconsciousness in latent passivity (atita bhavanga), which in the normal waking state lasts only for an instant (and is thus imperceptible), near death lengthens to six instants. What is more, the five sense-doors and their accompanying functions do not activate, only the mind-door being in function. Also the volitional impulses (javana) are reduced to five (instead of the normal seven), and therefore since they do not reach to seven lack sufficient strength to activate fresh kammic potential, wherefore no registration (tadārammaṇa) takes place.

In deep slumber, fifteen of the mind-instants are absorbed in life-continuum subconsciousness of latent passivity (atita bhavanga) and two instants in the subconsciousness of vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana). The slumber is not arrested and therefore neither of the sense-doors activate. All that activates is a brief passive vibration (bhavanga calana) before it sinks back to the latent passive state.

All mind-processes (citta vithi) have their modes of behaviour and do not manifest except within the scope of restricted bases, which are twenty five in number, and can be classified under ten categories, as follows:

- (1) Rebirth-linking consciousness (patisandhi) has only one base, and manifests between the departing (cuti) consciousness and the life-continuum subconscious state (bhavanga).
- (2) The life-continuum subconscious state (bhavanga) has six bases: (1) It manifests between the rebirth-linking instant (patisandhi) and the adverting (avajjana) state, (2) between the adverting state and the registering instant (tadārammaṇa), (3) between the adverting state and the volitional impulses (javana), (4) between the adverting state and the decision (voṭṭhapana) state, (5) between the volitional impulses (javana) and the departing (cuti) instant, (6) between the registering (tadārammaṇa) consciousness and the departing (cuti) state.
- (3) The adverting (avajjana) instant has two bases: (1) It manifests between the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga) and the five sense-consciousnesses (pañca viññāna) state, (2) between the life-continuum subconsciousness and the volitional impulses (javana).

- (4) The five sense-consciousnesses (pañca viññāna) has only one base: It manifests between the adverting (avajjana) state and the contact (sampaticchana) state.
- (5) The contact (sampaticchana) state manifests only between the five sense-consciousnesses instant and the discrimination (santirana) state.
- (6) The discrimination (santirana) instant manifests only between the contact (sampaticchana) instant and the decision (voṭṭhapana) state.
- (7) The decision (voṭṭhapana) instant manifests between the discriminating (santirana) instant and the volitional impulses (javana). Or it manifests between the discriminating (santirana) instant and the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga).
- (8) The volitional impulses (javana) have six bases: (1) manifesting between the decision (voṭṭhapana) instant and the registering (tadārammaṇa) state, (2) between the decision (voṭṭhapana) and the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga), (3) between the decision (voṭṭhapana) and the departing (cuti) consciousness, (4) between the adverting (avajjana) instant and the registering (tadārammaṇa), state (5) between the adverting (avajjana) and the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga), (6) between the adverting (avajjana) and the departing (cuti) consciousness.
- (9) The registering (tadārammaṇa) instant has two bases: (1) It manifests between the volitional impulses (javana) and the life-continuum subconsciousness, (2) between the volitional impulses (javana) and the departing (cuti) consciousness.
- (10) The departing (cuti) instant has three bases: (1) It manifests between the volitional impulses (javana) and the rebirth-linking (patisandhi) state (only for those who die in jhāna), (2) between the registering instant (tadārammaṇa) and the rebirth-linking (patisandhi) state, (3) between the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga) and the rebirth-linking state (for those who die in sleep or loss of mind control).

In complete cessation of perception and feeling (sañña vedayita nirodha samāpatti), generally referred to as the ninth attainment of jhāna, there is no conscious activity or concomitants of consciousness (cetasikas) present. This cessation attainment, therefore, disposes of the need for conscious processes and renders all the above functions superfluous. This attainment, however, is the province of the emancipated one (Arahatta) and its normal cycle lasts seven days, after which a return to the normal functioning of the mind-process is made. Or a return to the normal processes may be made at any time, in accordance with an antecedent wish (adhiṭṭhāna) made by the adept before entering into such a state.

For one who aims at the attainment of one of the Path (Magga) states of release or a Fruition (Phala) state, the process is similar to the one given for deep absorption (appanā vithi). After consciousness has arisen from the life-continuum subconscious aspects and the mind-door is in receptivity, consciousness is applied (parikamma javana) until access-concentration (upacāra javana) appears. Which is then directed (anuloma javana) to the supramundane level, transiting from mundane to supramundane status (Gotrabhū javana). Thence it passes to Path attainment as the seventh instant, with Fruition attainment as the eighth, ninth, and tenth instants. Whence it is rounded off by a descent into subconscious aspect (bhavanga).

It is followed by bhavanga because of inexperience. That is to say, when the highest mundane (lokiya)

consciousness has been overwhelmed by the transition to supramundane (lokuttara) status and the advent of the Path and Fruition instants, the event being so rare as not to be experienced before, sinks consciousness unprepared back to the subconscious (bhavanga) state. However, through the very force of the momentum, the bhavanga state is immediately cut short again by the intermediate states of vibrating passivity (bhavanga calana) and the passive arrestation (bhavanga upaccheda). Whence it is revived to mind-door process once more (manodvāra vithi), so as to renew and re-experience the supramundane aspect of consciousness.

Once consciousness has become firmly established in this supramundane aspect of consciousness and Fruition attainment (Phala samāpatti) instigated, there is no numbering (normally seven) the volitional impulse-instants (Phala javana) of the Fruition consciousness process, as long as the Noble One is absorbed therein.

The velocity by which consciousness is propelled from moment to moment is something to be investigated because it may then be noted to what extent a state of mind is resultant (vipāka), functional (kiriya), volitional (javana), beneficial (kusala), or adverse (akusala).

In relation to formations (rūpadhamma), consciousness is sixteen times faster. That is, it passes through seventeen phases before formations pass once. As both consciousness and formations are characterised by the three cyclic instants of manifestation, abeyance, and extinction, consciousness apprehends formations only in their state of abeyance before they disappear into the next cycle. The synchronization between the two is so neat that the ratio of 17 -1 sustains the illusion of solidity and shape with regard to the external world. It is only in jhāna, wherein the volitional (javana) process becomes prolonged and indefinite, without falling into bhavanga, that the 17-1 ratio is transcended and phenomenae witnessed as otherwise than what they appear to the sense-doors to be.

## Spheres of Consciousness

The relative prominence of any one impression in consciousness depends upon the force of its impact, its emotional associations, and its dynamic content. Some impressions only elicit a superficial response, whereas the reverse is true of any deep-rooted or significant contact. Under the influence of a particular strong emotion all other lesser contacts fail to register, and it is the potential of this emotional support (ārammana) which plays a great part in determining the futurity of occasions to come. When not to the fore of immediate apprehension, impressions sink to the life-continuum subconscious level and circulate freely in incoherence there. Any slight sense or mind-door contact may revivify them into functional immediacy, and it is the incessant pace of this process which characterises the hectic reciprocity (aññamañña) of the psychic phenomenon, shifting and skipping from one impression to the next, by its own momentum subjectifying-objectifying its collective potential of percepts.

We have elsewhere (*Introduction to Sammā Samādhi II*) already dealt at length upon the ephemeral nature of consciousness, characterised by the three cyclic states of manifestation, abeyance, and extinction. This cyclic flow of the psyche would seem to render the *simultaneous* function of different frequencies of consciousness untenable. However, it is to be understood that the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga sota) is a veritable store-house of potential frequencies other than the level normally expedited by the human brain.

These resultant (vipāka) levels of consciousness originate from previous abodes (vihāra) of the psyche. They are termed resultant levels because their immediate status is submerged (in this case by the human organism) and has become negative. The function of these resultant levels of consciousness

are threefold: to serve as the base for rebirth-linking (patisandhi), to be submerged in the subconscious aspect of the life-continuum (bhavanga), and to depart (cuti) on the dissolution of the organism. Because of this it is said:

*“When any mode of ‘self’ is going on it is not reckoned as another. It is only reckoned by the name of the particular personality (or level) which **prevails**.”*

In the average human it is of course the human personality which prevails, whatever other levels there may be being submerged in the life-continuum base (bhavanga). These levels, other than the human personality, exist at all because of the grasping (upādāna) nature of consciousness. Having arisen through contact with extra-mundane states and spheres, they register (tadārammaṇa) and leave a residuum of that particular state or sphere, which at rebirth is absorbed into the bhavanga base. It is these residuums which in their collectivity are termed *sankhāras*, the fourth group (khandha) of the five factors of human personality. It is to be understood that the *sankhāras* do not merely pertain to the present-life aggregates, but also include this collective antecedent potential submerged, level upon level, in the bhavanga base.

However, it should also be understood that levels (or spheres) of consciousness can be revitalized and revived from the bhavanga base and brought to functional immediacy (kiriya) once the method of so doing is known. That is, by the attainment of jhāna and its supernormal powers. Commencing with the application of access-concentration (upacāra javana) the process is directed (anuloma javana) to the revivification of any submerged level in the bhavanga base. Having thus changed lineage (Gotrabhū javana) the resultant level (vipāka) of consciousness is impermeated and absorbed (whether it be the celestial level, Brahma level, or Arūpa-Brahma level). Then it is in what is called jhāna javana, which may last as long as one is adept therein.

It is thus that a resultant (vipāka) level of consciousness is possible of being revived to functional immediacy (kiriya) for the duration that jhāna prevails. This is achieved as usual by the connecting process of consciousness (ñāṇa sampayutta) involving 3-4 mind-impulses (javana) before the transition is completely made.

What is more, proficiency in jhāna endows the adept with psychic power (abhiñña), which may be expedited to reproduce and multiply a whole series of counterpart ‘selves’ by a transmutative process (manomayiddhi). This facility enables consciousness to activate at various levels simultaneously, as is borne out by the miracles performed by Buddha on different occasions in his career.

It is of importance to understand the potentialities and scope of the developed psyche, for it broadens the whole outlook. Due to failure of understanding the potential versatility and diversity of consciousness, man has from time immemorial circumscribed himself to the human level and identified the aggregates thereof as his one and only immortal self. It is deceptive, however, to claim identity with the mode of personality which at a particular moment prevails. The realisation should rather be that, although the life-continuum subconsciousness (bhavanga) is a central storehouse of potentialities where all residuums gravitate, each level of consciousness (among the 89-121 potential states there are) possesses distinct characteristics as to affiliations and refinement, and that all states *prevail* only insofar as consciousness impregnates them in functional immediacy (kiriya), and cannot otherwise be identified as a *persistent* (one and only) immortal self.

To appreciate the diversity of all the aspects of consciousness, it is essential to understand the process by which consciousness comes to be at all. As already alluded to, fresh levels of consciousness arise out of contact (phassa) with other environmental spheres or associate states. Due to this reproductive-adhesive quality of consciousness, an indelible residuum is created which is absorbed (tadārammaṇa) into the life-continuum base. Although they are thus absorbed, however, they do not lose their

potential sensitivity, and each unit or nucleus of consciousness due to its very adhesive nature adheres to its own area of sensitivity. Desire (tanha) provides the impelling force, whereas attachment (upādāna) provides the imbedding impress, which nuclei of consciousness when gravitated into a specific field (pañcupādānakkhandha) becomes crowned with the idea of a permanent and enduring self, unified and unique.

It is important to recognise that the emergence of any fresh unit of consciousness (or personality) is dependent on each of the five groups of grasping personality antecedent to it and that each group is in itself 'adhesive' by nature. Form (rūpa) is an adhesive factor, and so is feeling (vedanā), perception (sañña), memory (sankhāras), and consciousness (viññāṇa) itself. The conflicting quantity of impulses which overwhelm consciousness from moment to moment defines clearly enough that there is really more to life after all than meets the eye.

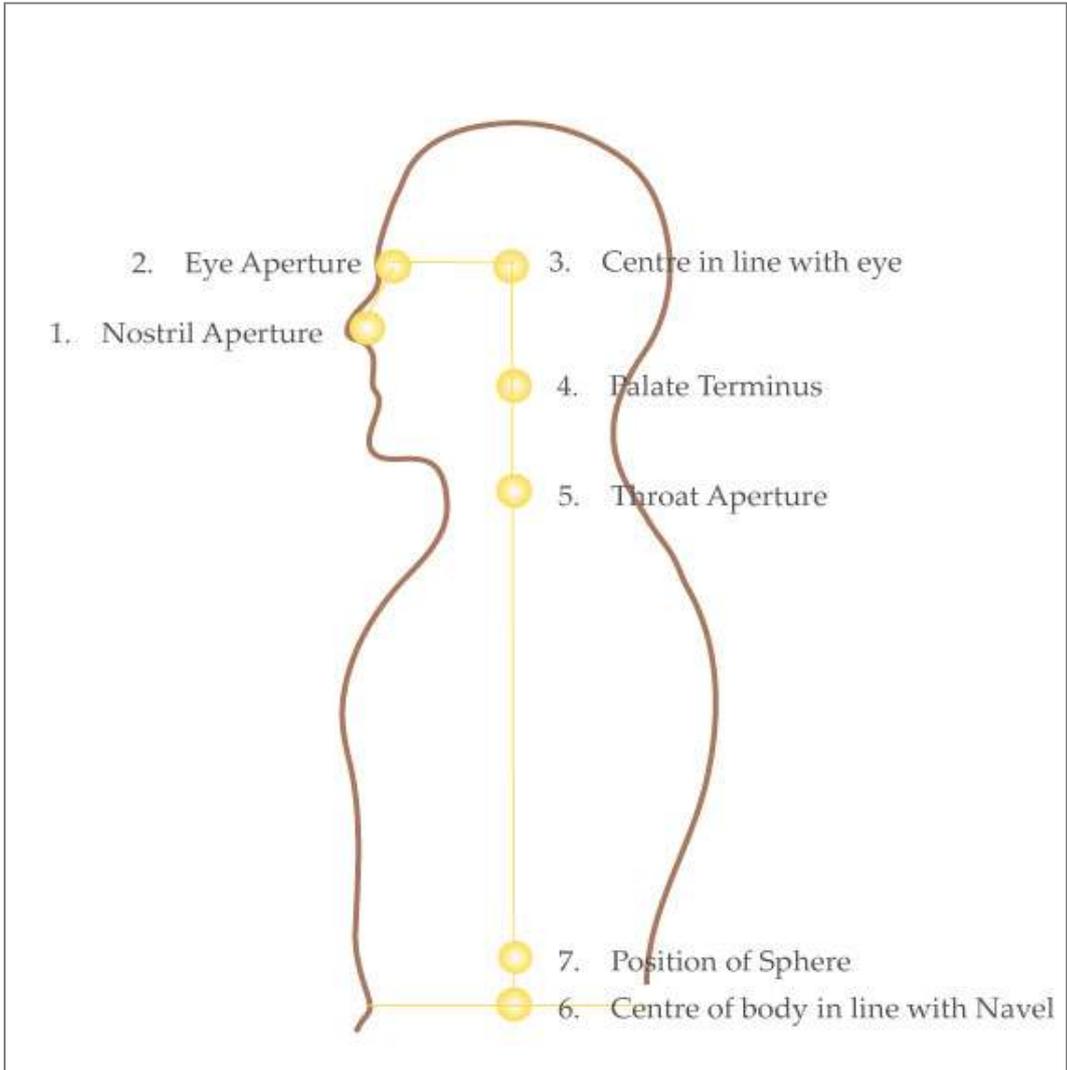
If it is perceived (through the process of involuted-concentration called Samatha-Vipassanā) that each successive manifestation of individual existence contains within it the potentiality of gravitating and aggregating fresh elements and levels of consciousness through environmental psycho physical contact, each of which possesses its own affiliations, which, again, super-imposing one another, create fresh personalities, it will be appreciated then why these separative personalities are fitly classified into five factors or groups (khandhas), all of them flexible in the extreme. Namely, form, feeling, perception, memory, and consciousness.

The origination of any separative level or aggregate of personality is acquired by an already existent unit of personality as base. With this already existent unit of personality as base, the immediate environment (rūpa) is contacted, registering as feeling (vedanā), which is perceived (sañña), which is referred to antecedent experience (sankhāras), consequently issuing into full awareness (viññāṇa) regarding the matter contacted. Due to this process, a further reproduction of personality comes to be.

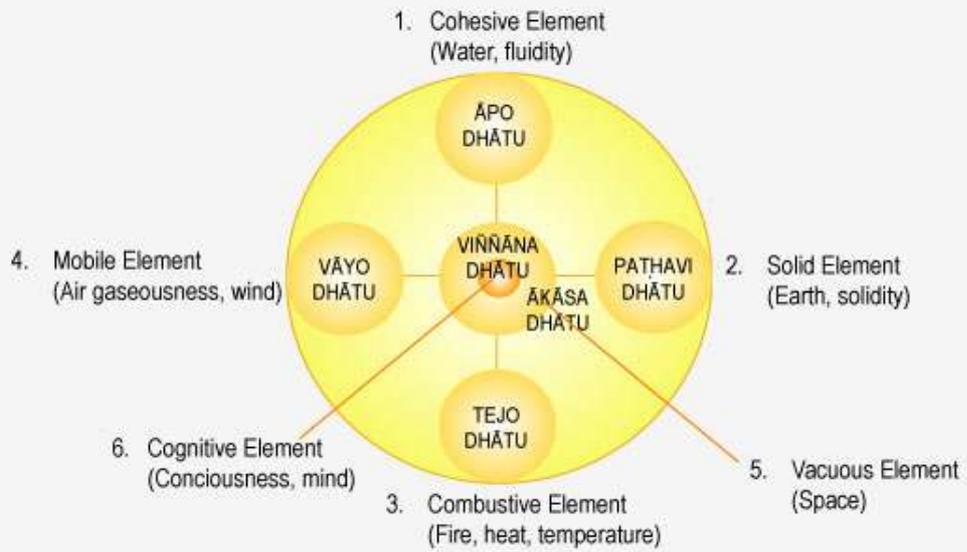
What the implications exactly are can be seen in the subsequent chapter on Anattā. The doctrine of impersonality, or amorphous plurality. For the present it is necessary to discuss more fully the matter of the life-continuum subconscious base (bhavanga citta).

The life-continuum subconsciousness is the resultant (vipāka) negative aspect of mind, in contradistinction from the positive functional-volitional aspect called javana citta. The life-continuum subconsciousness is the basic ground of all mind manifestation, flowing on without a pause. Its characteristic is one of delusion and of incoherence (moha), and as such is therefore not something on which to be relied. Only in the emancipated one (Arahatta) does this bhavanga citta attain to clarity and translucence so as to afford complete rest and peace without upset.

It is important to understand that this bhavanga citta, or bhavanga sota (subconscious stream), is not situated in the brain receptacle, which is the domain of the peripheral mind, but has its existence at diaphragm core, in line with the navel (see diagram). It is to this seat that consciousness sinks when sleep descends, and were it not for this descent no sleep could possibly ensue. This centre is also termed the heart-basis (hadaya vatthu), the base from which the 'heart' originates. It is not the specific physical organ which goes by that name which is implied here, but the faculties of perception, memory, thought, and knowledge. Or, in other words, the four intangible (nāma) aggregates of mundane personality, excluding form.



THE SPHERE AT THE CENTRE OF THE BODY  
IN RELATION TO THE ELEMENTS



## The 7th Position

It is here, at diaphragm pit, that the subconscious aspect of the psyche is negativised into resultant (vipāka) status, until such time as occasion aggravates their rebound and remanifestation into functional immediacy (kiriya). When consciousness has sunk into its collective subconscious aspect, it neither sees, remembers, thinks, or knows itself. To see, remember, think or know itself, consciousness has first to retreat a step and objectify itself before recognition can be made. It is similar to the manner in which one steps back a pace to view oneself in the mirror, for nothing is perceived with one's face pressed thereto. Thus, in deep slumber there is no dream. If dreams arise it signifies that consciousness has eased itself up an inch (to two finger-breadths above the navel) and, without expediting the five physical sense-door apparatus, drifts on in the dream state, or form, with its own sphere of environmental contacts.

This is due to the fact that a certain area of the subconscious aggregate has through random contact uplifted itself from the life-continuum base, and jostled into functional immediacy. As already alluded to, there exist in resultant (vipāka) aspect various levels of personality submerged in the bhavanga base. They may be revived to functional immediacy by random or by deliberate (jhāna) contact. Thus those who have once been celestial creatures (devas) still preserve the residuum of that personality in the bhavanga base, and may revive it to functional immediacy by the random contact of dreams, or by direct jhānic methods. And this applies for the other forms of Brahma and Arūpa-Brahma status.

To achieve this revivification into functional immediacy by jhānic methods, and not haphazardly as in dreams, involves the direct volitional technique of sinking the peripheral faculties down to the collective life-continuum substrate. Having achieved this, it then has to raise that portion of the substrate required for inspection to two finger-breadths above the bhavanga base. That is, it has first to detach and split itself into two aggregates, of subject and object, expediting one group to apprehend the other group. The subject is then able to investigate the objective aggregate in recollective clarity. It is in this fashion that antecedent existences are recalled:

*“Thus steadied (by deep jhāna), perfectly purified and translucent... I bent **down** my mind to the recalling of my former existences, divers births, evolutions and involutions of aeons... the rise and fall of beings and their characteristics in the different worlds with the eye divine.”*

It is necessary to stress that the five sense-door activity (pañcadvāravithi) of the normal waking consciousness is at this moment not in function, only the jhāna javana (appanā vithi) being in session. That the bhavanga citta is of fundamental importance, as being the rebirth potential and base for future perception, memory, thought, and knowledge, is something to be investigated to be appreciated. It is the storehouse of all that pertains to a specific field of individuality, and the collective psyche cannot be reduced to a mere peripheral accumulation of brain-impressions and concepts of one immediate life, when deep below lies a veritable psychic mine of past experience (sankhāras) waiting to be plumbed.

The juxtaposition of this past experience is so vast and confused that it necessitates jhānic direction (anuloma) before any one area of experience may be singled out to perceive immediacy. At death's door, consciousness singles out some kammic impression (nimitta) and, being fixated thereon, departs (cuti) absorbed in that status, to be relinked (patisandhi) in a beneficial or adverse destiny, as the case may be. It is what at a particular moment predominates (adhipati paccaya) that determines the immediate destiny.

However, due to the fact that integration of impressions in the average continuum are never complete (because of the incoherency of split impulses and conflicting attachments) the continuum at death's door (strung together throughout life by the physical organism) aggravates by-products or offshoots of personality, which split off into separative identities, encumbered by their own grasping (upādāna) existence henceforth. This facility of the psyche to reproduce and split itself off into other specific fields of personality is a phenomenon peculiar to universal manifestation and parallels origination in the lower forms of unicellular life such as the amoebae. But this aspect of the psyche shall be dealt with more fully in the chapter on Anattā.

It has been observed that the psychic process, beset as it is with impermanence (anicca), is always under the impulsion of a momentum which is to a great part automatic and not under immediate conscious control. This assumption of automatism, however, is one fraught with danger, for it may be asserted that since the impulsion is automatic, then nothing can be done about it, and that a man perpetrates evil because he is compelled by psychic momentum to do so, in accordance with his antecedent kammic heritage.

This assertion, however, does not bear analysis because although a man has a tendency to activate according to his psychic groove under given circumstances, he nevertheless can make the effort to check it. Thus, if a man has a tendency to kill himself in this life (due to an antecedent kammic force initiated in a previous life) he nevertheless is able to exhaust the momentum of this kammic potential by an effort of will, rather than to leave it to exhaust itself through a procession of successive lives.

It may be questioned how resultant (vipāka) tendencies may be controlled? As each effect depends upon the weight of the causal potential for its manifestation, and since the potential, like all psychic processes, is cyclic in nature, it has to be checked according to the cyclic impetus of the process. In the light of the 17 cyclic mind-instants, as given above, it may be checked (pahāna) at the eighth or decision (votṭhapana) instant, and the volitional impulses (javana) restrained from functioning by a strong beneficial or neutral impulse so that no further reproductive-registration (tadārammaṇa) in the subconscious ensues. After repeated application at this checking point, eventual effective control of the impulse may be gained, instead of leaving destiny to the mercy of every adverse (akusala) cyclic process that upsprings.

It may be concluded, therefore, that although all life is by its very nature beset with impermanence and peril, the impermanence itself does not preclude the possibility of continuity and a persistent futurity. Also, this possibility of continuity is preserved in the memory of experience distributed at various levels in the organism, and not confined merely to the peripheral level of the brain. For *deep* memory, it is the life-continuum substrate which contains the material for long-range insight into aggregates. Also, that the psyche can memorize data so coherently implies that a technique of process activates, and that data once registered in a certain order or series is preserved thus, so that when the mind so desires, it may through (inverse technique) rewind it in detail. Which is borne out by those with fabulous memories, something not bestowed by any external agency but by internal technique and constant exercise.

## Chapter 3 : Of Universal Suffering (Dukkha)

*“As of old, O bhikkhus, so now proclaim I only this. Suffering, and the ceasing of suffering.”*

The assertion that suffering besets life in all its ramifications is something fundamental to the world-view to which any philosophy worthy of the name would subscribe. The whole creation is beset with vulnerability. If this is a platitude, it is nevertheless a platitude which is difficult to erase, considering that all are in chains, and each link bears its own particular strain. As it is said:

*“Wandering afar, solitary, bodiless, lying in a cave is the mind. Those who subdue it, from bondage are forever freed.”*

If it is true that suffering besets life in all its ramifications, this fact has however to be viewed in its proper perspective, and not distorted into some pessimistic nihilism of despair. For when insight into things *as they really are* is attained, the realisation should also accompany it that the spectacle (of suffering) though shattering is nevertheless something which is neither defeatist nor fatalistic, since suffering even if universal in scope is not eternal as such. As it is said:

*“The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes. Everything exists: that, Kaccayana, is one extreme. Everything does not exist: that, Kaccayana, is the other extreme. Transcending these extremes, Kaccayana, the Tathāgata expounds dhamma **by way of cause.**”*

Things arise, and things perish. It is this arising and this perishing which in its fundamental amorphousness and ephemerality constitutes what is called suffering. The nuclei of birth, decreptitude, disease, and death pervade life wherever life is to be found, often though invisible to normal sight, dormant like seeds deep in the soil, waiting for only favourable conditions to emerge.

Suffering itself can be endured if it issues in some beneficial end. But it is not worth the enduring if it is merely to issue in a perpetuation of amorphous plurality, with neither ultimate aim nor purpose. That life should be at the mercy of this *unnecessary* suffering at all is the factor which is to be deplored. It is this perpetual state of being a *victim* which characterises life *as it is* that wisdom recommends it as something to be viewed with distaste. For although it may be man's conceit to conceive himself as the master of his fate, he in reality remains what he has always been, the plaything of impulse and sport of every random contact which upsprings.

The arising of suffering is, of course, inextricably rooted in that of ignorance (avijjā). This is because although perversity may impel a man to indulge in activities which he knows will have deleterious repercussions, nevertheless no sane man desires suffering merely for suffering's sake. It is thus that ignorance is said to be at the root of all ill, for no sane man works against his own benefit. Ignorance here is tantamount to delusion (moha). And this is a general malady, a collective one. As Tolstoi observes:

*“People bound together by a delusion form, as it were, a collective cohesive mass. The cohesion of that mass is the world's evil. All the reasonable activity of humanity is directed towards the destruction of this cohesion... (But) the cohesion of the particles (which form the mass) is not destroyed until the inner force passes from the mass to the particles and obliges them to separate from it. The strength of that cohesion of people lies in a falsehood,*

*a fraud. The force freeing each particle of the human cohesive mass is truth. Man can hand on the truth only by deeds of truth. Only deeds of truth bringing light into man's consciousness, destroying the cohesion of deception and separate men one after another from the mass bound together by the cohesion of deception."*

Delusion, however, is only the negative aspect. Greed (lobha) supplies the impelling force, the acquisitive instinct, to which spatio-temporal life is subject, never to be assuaged the more it acquires. Accompanying greed, the ceaseless struggle for personal aggrandizement, anger and hate (dosa) comes to play a major part.

These three nuclei, representing the positive and negative ingredients which comprise personality, serve as the base for the perpetuation of amorphous plurality which characterises life wherever life is found. And its appearance proceeds along certain dependent links (paticca samuppāda).

Proceeding from ignorance (avijjā) as base the aggregates (sankhāras) of impressions appear. With the aggregates of impressions as base rebirth-consciousness (viññāṇa) appears. With rebirth-consciousness as base the intangibles-tangibles (nāma-rūpa) appear. When this appears, then the sense-bases (salāyatana) appear, contact (phassa) appears, feeling (vedanā) appears, desire (tanha) appears, grasping attachment (upādāna) appears, becoming (bhava) appears, birth (jāti) appears, old age and death (jāra-marana) appears.

Ignorance is, of course, no *first* cause but merely the negative strata wherein life takes its rise. Anything endowed with consciousness, a consciousness unaware of the true nature of things and how they arise, is an ideal base for the gravitation of deceptive impressions into its field. These deceptive impressions, imbued as they are with the cognitive element, and possessing little if any self-control exist in a jumble of ill-sorts, with no direct volition over their immediate destiny. As in the amoebic phenomenon, the intangible (nāma) aggregates are perpetuated by the impulsion of an amorphous momentum, beset with a tendency to split off into separative fields of existence the moment opportunity offers. This psychic form of parthenogenesis, through the very nature of its impulsions, adheres for only an indeterminate duration to a particular form (rūpa) before it is again re-split.

This form of psychic parthenogenesis goes on for a long time. This is only to be expected, because whensoever the cognitive element (viññāṇa dhātu) becomes embodied in a formative field such as the body, the tendency is always to establish immediate identity through the sense-bases (salāyatana) and by its environmental contact (phassa). Environmental contact sets the base for the arising of feeling, the feeling of a persistent personality. Feeling (vedanā) assailed by desire for life (tanha) and its titillations serves as the base for the emotions of grasping attachment (upādāna). Once this form of possessive personality is established through environmental friction, its bundle of impulsions inevitably propel it in the direction whereby it may retaste its accretions to surfeit. This persistent state of potential becoming (bhava) rounds itself off in repetitious birth (jāti), which by its very nature is attended by decrepitude and death (jāra-marana).

Although this continuity of the psycho-physical process may be grasped intellectually, it nevertheless belongs to that class of truths which Buddha himself categorized as 'profound, even in its appearance profound'. And this implies that the process is not merely the delineation of a specific personality's rebirth career, but the veiled fact of how a certain aggregate of impressions (sankhāras) begins, through environmental contact (phassa), to develop anew and re-split into the psychic amoebae of other completely separate sets of personality-grasping fields (upādānakkhandha), without any immediate knowledge of their origin or parentage.

This, however, shall be dealt with in more detail in the chapter on Anattā which follows. For the present it is necessary to deal more explicitly on the factors which serve as modes for the

manifestation of life in a world where even ephemerality arises by way of conditionality. Of which conditions (paccaya) there are 24 modes:

(1) root cause (hetu paccaya), (2) psychic support (ārammana paccaya), (3) predominance (adhipati paccaya), (4) contiguity (anantara paccaya), (5) immediate contiguity (samanantara paccaya), (6) co-nascence (sahajāta paccaya), (7) reciprocity (aññamañña paccaya), (8) characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya), (9) decisive dependence (upanissaya paccaya), (10) antecedence (purejāta paccaya), (11) consequence (paccajāta paccaya), (12) frequency (āsevana paccaya), (13) volition (kamma paccaya), (14) resultancy (vipāka paccaya), (15) nutriment (āhāra paccaya), (16) controlling faculty (indriya paccaya), (17) concentrated-absorption (jhāna paccaya), (18) path (magga paccaya), (19) association (sampayutta paccaya), (20) disassociation (vippayutta paccaya), (21) presence (atthi paccaya), (22) absence (natthi paccaya), (23) disappearance-abeyance (vigata paccaya), (24) appearance-continuance (avigata paccaya).

The mutable causes which combine to make anything manifest in spatio-temporal fact, even for a fraction of a second, surpass all count. Within the broad framework of these modes, however, all things have their momentary play. Thus, to be more explicit:

**(1) root cause (hetu paccaya):** It is the ethical root cause, ninefold in scope, which is here implied. Namely, greed (lobha), hate (dosa), and delusion (moha), which are adverse as conditions (akusala paccaya). These are offset by their opposites. Namely, non-greed (alobha), non-hate (adosa), and non-delusion (amoha), which are beneficial as conditions (kusala paccaya). Beyond these are the neutral (avyakata) conditions. Namely, neither greed nor non-greed, neither hate nor non-hate, neither delusion nor non-delusion.

**(2) psychic support (ārammana paccaya):** This is sixfold in scope. Namely, the psychic support of visibility (rūpārammana), of audition (saddārammana), of odours (gandhārammana), of flavours (rasārammana), of tangibles (phoṭṭhabbārammana), and of intangibles (dhammārammana). These psychic supports are always accompanied by the concomitants (cetasikas) of contact (phassa), feeling (vedanā), perception (sañña), volition (cetana), concentration (ekaggatā), vitality (jvitindriya), and attention (manasikāra). They are the bases which determine the arising of all the 89 states of consciousness (whether mundane or supramundane, present, past, and future) and the 52 concomitants of consciousness which accompany them. Of these psychic supports 52 are sensual (kāma ārammana), 6 of great-extent (mahāggata ārammana) involving the formless concentrated-absorptions of the infinity of consciousness and neither perception nor non-perception, 21 of neuter base (paññatti ārammana) involving the concentrated-absorptions of form and the formlessness of the infinity of space and voidness, 8 of supramundane status derived from emancipation of mind (nibbāna ārammana), 20 of general derivation (sabba ārammana) excepting the supramundane, 5 of general derivation excepting only the emancipated path and fruition (arahatta magga-phala), 6 of general derivation and all-inclusive peculiar only to the Arahatta: 4 great functional-association consciousnesses (mahākiriya ñānasampayuttacitta), 1 supernormal functional consciousness (abhiñña citta), and 1 mind-door emancipated consciousness (manodvārārika citta).

**(3) predominance (adhipati paccaya):** Predominance is a mode of conditionality. In view of the fact that all things are composed of numerous forces generally existent in a state of latency, that factor which predominates at any given moment takes precedence over the rest, relegating all other factors to the background.

**(4) Contiguity (anantara paccaya):** Any factor which is conditioned by contiguity exerts its orb of potentiality in active force as occasion permits, and determines its perpetuity.

**(5) immediate contiguity (samanantara paccaya):** Any factor in immediate contiguity possesses the

potentiality of direct influence, and as such is more decisive than the preceding mode of conditionality, its potentiality being in the orb of successive immediacy.

**(6) co-nascence (sahajāta paccaya):** That which exists or manifests simultaneously serves as a mode for connection and interconditionality.

**(7) reciprocity (aññamañña paccaya):** That which possesses the potential to activate another and be activated in turn thereby partakes of the mode of this conditionality of reciprocity.

**(8) characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya):** That which depends upon some characteristic for support manifests under the mode of this conditionality.

**(9) decisive dependence (upanissaya paccaya):** That which plays a decisive part in the characteristic of any given subject is a condition for manifestation. In its psychological aspect, it is the characteristic habit of mind integrated in a specific field. The function of such character is to perfume, to support, to regulate, and to decide. Without such characteristic decisive dependence the mind remains the sport of every random mutable cause that upsprings. In function, therefore, this mode of conditionality has great significance as being a major factor which decides.

**(10) antecedence (purejāta paccaya):** That which is antecedent necessarily plays an essential part in the temporality of any particular manifestation through conditionality.

**(11) consequence (paccajāta paccaya):** That which follows serves as the conditional sequence for all activity and process.

**(12) frequency (āsevana paccaya):** The frequency of any given factor possesses great potentiality in the determination of manifestation through conditionality.

**(13) volition (kamma paccaya):** That causality which any living thing activates of its own accord, and which is either black, white, black-white, or neither black nor white. The last named applies to that kamma which is not induced and therefore tends to non-issue. Kammic volitions have their effect (vipāka) in this present life (ditṭhadhamma vedaniya kamma), or are experienced in the next (upajjāti vedaniya kamma), or continue so as to manifest in successive births as opportunity affords (aparāpara vedaniya kamma), or are neutralized (ahosi kamma), or determine the kind of birth (janaka kamma), or support other kammic factors (upatthambhana kamma), or oppress and weaken other kamma (uppilika kamma), or injure and substitute for other kamma (ūpaghāta kamma), or have great immediate penalty (ānantarika kamma), or are repetitious and habitual (bahula kamma), or manifest at death's door (asanna kamma), or are unconscious and unintentional. Kamma is as potent as the will (cetana) behind its instigation. There are four aspects which determine its potency, whether for good or ill: (1) premeditated intent (burapha cetana), (2) immediate intention resulting in the act (muñcana cetana), (3) immediate satisfaction after the act (apara cetana), (4) satisfaction at a recollective remove (aparāpara cetana). When all these aspects are complete, the effect for good or ill is strong, as the case may be. If only the first is present and no action follows to support it, only an impress in consciousness is made.

**(14) resultancy (vipāka paccaya):** That which is the fruition of volitions performed, and as such may be black, white, black-white, or neither black nor white.

**(15) nutriment (āhāra paccaya):** There are four forms of nutriment which serve as modes of conditionality : material food (kabalinkārāhara), contact (phassāhāra), volition (manosañcetanahāra), consciousness (viññānahāra).

**(16) controlling faculty (indriya paccaya):** There are twenty-two potential controlling faculties, serving as bases for conditionality. The controlling faculties of vision (cakkhindriya), of audition (sotindriya), of olfaction (ghānindriya), of gustation (jivhindriya), of tactile sensation (kāyindriya), of mentation (manindriya), of femininity (itthindriya), of masculinity (purisindriya), of vitality (jivitindriya), of pleasure (sukhindriya), of pain (dukkhindriya), of happiness (somanassindriya), of grief (domanassindriya), of equanimity (upekkhindriya), of faith (saddhindriya), of energy (viriyindriya), of mindfulness (satindriya), of concentration (samādhindriya), of wisdom (paññindriya), of aspiration to the supramundane (anaññāta-ñassāmitindriya), of comprehension of the supramundane (aññindriya), of attainment of the supramundane (aññātā-vindriya). Their function is to direct, to dominate, to perpetuate, and to achieve. Based on the conditionality of these potential controlling faculties, all things subjective come to rise, whether through desire, through application, or through kamma. Thus, because of the dynamism of the potential faculties of vision etc., there arise in rebirth the spheres (āyatana) of eye etc., respectively. That which remains only in the mode of unrealised potentialities becomes thus an actual physicalized fact, perpetuating its function therethrough.

**(17) concentrated-absorption (jhāna paccaya):** a factor extremely potent in the determination of psychological conditionality. There are nine such absorptions: of buoyancy and ease accompanied by thought, of bliss, of equanimity, of one-pointedness, of spatial infinity, of conscious infinity, of voidness, of an intermediate state which is neither perceptive nor non-perceptive, and of the cessation of perception and feeling.

**(18) path (magga paccaya):** the factor which determines the possibility of attainment leading to release.

**(19) association (sampayutta paccaya):** the mode of conditionality which connects.

**(20) disassociation (vippayutta paccaya):** the mode of conditionality which disconnects.

**(21) presence (atthi paccaya):** the factor which exerts influence due to its being potentially present.

**(22) absence (natthi paccaya):** the factor which also serves as a mode of conditionality by very nature of its potential absence.

**(23) disappearance-abeyance (vigata paccaya):** the mode of conditionality which is characterised by disappearance and poised in abeyance thus.

**(24) appearance-continuance (avigata paccaya):** the mode of conditionality which is characterised by appearance and continuing as such.

When, therefore, it is said that even in this very body, six feet in length, with its sense-impressions, thoughts, and ideas, is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation thereof, the implicit fact is that since all things arise through conditionality, by occasion, and by way of cause, there is nothing in the phenomenal world which subsists as a thing in itself, but that its consistency is forever in flux, and that since mind is more potent than matter it can dominate it and, working its way out of it, be released therefrom.

The support for the manifestation of the five aggregates of grasping personality (pañcupādānakkhandha), comprising form (rūpa), feeling (vedanā), perception (sañña), impressions (sankhāras), and consciousness (viññāṇa), are a composite product of volitions (kamma), consciousness (citta), temperature (utu), and nutriment (āhāra). Activated by desire (tanha) and attachment (upādāna) they become a formidable compost for good or ill.

The five aggregates are the personification in a specific field of three of the four absolutes (paramattha). Form (rūpadhamma) is the third absolute, feeling-perception-impressions comprise the second absolute (cetasika), and consciousness is the first of the absolutes (citta). The last absolute is that of release (Nibbāna).

Why are they termed absolute? Because beyond them there is nothing. They are absolute in the sense that they are to be found wherever life is found. They are not viewed as absolutes from the individual point, but in universality as cosmological ultimates. It is from the fusion of these absolutes (excepting Nibbāna) that the idea of personality and identity originates its rise.

## Consciousness (Citta)

Consciousness is that element (viññāṇa dhātu), which by its very nature is pure awareness. Since, however, pure awareness never exists by itself but is always yoked to awareness of *something*, even if the something be nothing more than spatiality, consciousness is something which is to be analysed according to the whole gamut of its possibilities.

There are eighty-nine (89) states of consciousness. Eighty-one (81) are mundane (lokiya), and eight (8) supramundane (lokuttara). If expanded into detail (by multiplying them by the five rūpajhānas) the eight supramundane states number forty (40). Thus, totalling 121 states of consciousness in all.

The states may be summarised thus: 21 beneficial (kusala), 12 adverse (akusala), 36 resultant (vipāka), and 20 functional (kiriya).

They may be subdivided again into mundane and supramundane:

**Mundane:** (1) 8 initial states based on happiness and equanimity, whether self-induced or otherwise induced. (2) 3 functional states based on happiness and equanimity. (3) 12 states based on greed, hate, and delusion. (4) 23 resultant states based on form-mind consciousness. (5) 9 initial jhānas, or concentrated-absorptions. (6) 9 resultant jhānas.

**Supramundane:** (1) 4 initial attainments (Stream-enterer Path, etc.). (2) 4 resultant attainments (Stream-enterer Fruition, etc.). (3) 8 functional states based on happiness and equanimity, whether self-induced or otherwise induced. (4) 9 functional jhānas.

Consciousness may be classified again under 7 categories of elements (dhātu): (1) 2 eye-consciousness elements (cakkhu viññāṇa dhātu). (2) 2 ear-consciousness elements (sota viññāṇa dhātu). (3) 2 nose-consciousness elements (ghāna viññāṇa dhātu). (4) 2 tongue-consciousness elements (jivha viññāṇa dhātu). (5) 2 tactile-consciousness elements (kāya viññāṇa dhātu). (6) 1 five-sense door element (pañcadvāravajjana-manodhātu), 2 contact-receptacle elements (sampaticchana-manodhātu). (7) 76 mind-consciousness elements (mano-viññāṇa dhātu).

Or it may be classified according to planes of existence (bhūmi):

**Sensual Plane (Kāmacārā):** 54 states of consciousness. Comprising 8 states of greed (lobha), 2 states of hate (dosa), 2 states of delusion (moha), 7 states of adverse resultancy (akusala vipāka), 8 states of beneficial resultancy (kusala vipāka), 3 states of functionality (kiriya), 8 states of great benefit (mahā kusala), 8 states of great resultancy (mahā vipāka), and 8 states of great functionality (mahā kiriya).

**Form (Brahma) Plane (Rūpavacārā):** 15 states of consciousness. Comprising 5 states of benefit, 5 states of resultancy, and 5 states of functionality.

**Formless (Arūpa-Brahma) Plane (Arūpavacāra):** 12 states of consciousness. Comprising 4 states of benefit, 4 states of resultancy, and 4 states of functionality.

**Supramundane (Lokuttara) Plane:** 8 states of consciousness. Comprising 4 states of benefit, and 4 states of resultancy. Or, if classified according to jhānic attainments, 20 beneficial and 20 resultant.

The supramundane states of consciousness are the ultimate aim of all effort, and are induced by discipline of mind, by treading the right path, which in its concentrated form is absorption in jhāna. With these supramundane states of consciousness as base, the Noble One even in this life renders all hindrances and unwholesome states extinct and passes beyond. That is to say, Nibbāna.

## Concomitants of Consciousness (Cetasikas)

The concomitants of consciousness accompany consciousness and characterise its essence. They are fifty-two in number, and they are classified as neutral, as adverse, and as beneficial.

**Neutral concomitants are thirteen (13) :** (1) contact (phassa), (2) feeling (vedanā), (3) perception (sañña), (4) volition (cetana), (5) concentration (ekaggatā), (6) vitality (jivitindriya), (7) attention (manasikāra), (8) application (vitakkha), (9) sustained application (vicāra), (10) bliss (piti), (11) resolution (adhimokkha), (12) energy (viriya), (13) zeal (chanda).

**Adverse concomitants are fourteen (14) in number:** (1) greed (lobha), (2) hate (dosa), (3) delusion (moha), (4) consciencelessness (ahirika), (5) shamelessness (anottappa), (6) conceit (māna), (7) biasedness (ditṭhi), (8) envy (issā), (9) avarice (maccariya), (10) worry (kukkucca), (11) sloth (thina), (12) torpor (middha), (13) agitation (uddhacca), (14) doubt (vicikicchā).

**Beneficial concomitants are twenty-five (25) in number:** (1) faith (saddha), (2) mindfulness (sati), (3) modesty (ottappa), (4) non-greed (alobha), (5) non-hate (adosa), (6) non-delusion (amoha), (7) impartiality (tatramajjhataṭṭā), (8) tranquillity of formations (kāya passaddhi), (9) tranquillity of consciousness (citta passadhi), (10) adaptability of formations (kāya mudutā), (11) adaptability of consciousness (citta mudutā), (12) buoyancy of formations (kāya lahutā), (13) buoyancy of consciousness (citta lahutā), (14) pliancy of formations (kāya kammaññutā), (15) pliancy of consciousness (citta kammaññutā), (16) proficiency of formations (kāya paguññatā), (17) proficiency of consciousness (citta paguññatā), (18) rectitude of formations (kāya ujukatā), (19) rectitude of consciousness (citta ujukatā), (20) right speech (sammā vaca), (21) right conduct (sammā kammanta), (22) right livelihood (sammā ajiva), (23) compassion (karuna), (24) sympathetic joy (muditā), (25) wisdom (pañña).

## Formations (Rūpa)

There are twenty-eight (28) categories of formations apprehensible, whether underived or derived.

**Underived:** The four (4) primaries of earth, water, fire, and air.

**Derived:** The sensitivities of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, perceptibles, sounds, odours, flavours, femininity, masculinity, vitality, heart-base, bodily intimation, verbal intimation, spatiality, buoyancy of formations, pliancy of formations, adaptability of formations, growth of formations, continuity of formations, ageing of formations, impermanence of formations, and nutriment.

Spatiality is included as a derived category because the space which is apprehended by the senses is a compounded element and derived. Only that space which is characteristic of Nibbāna may be termed uncompounded and underived.

Regarding how the five aggregates of rebirth-personality take relinking (patisandhi) in the human womb, it is important to note that no rebirth fusion is possible if the aggregates do not gravitate and sink to the pit of the mother's diaphragm (in line with the navel), for this is the point of contact between parent and embryo, which originates at this seat, impermeating the ovum.

At this initial stage, the formation is termed kalala-rūpa, and is as minute as a speck of oil suspended at a needle's point. After seven days it develops into what is called the ambudda-rūpa. After fourteen days it develops into the pesi-rūpa, after twenty-one days into the ghāna-rūpa. After twenty-eight days have elapsed it develops into the pasākha-rūpa, which implies that five offshoots sprout out to form the four limbs and head. After the thirty-fifth day the optical faculties (cakkhu dasaka kalāpa) emerge, to be followed after the forty-second day by the emergence of the auditory group (sota dasaka kalāpa), followed after the forty-ninth day by the nasal group (ghāna dasaka kalāpa), and finally after the fifty-sixth day by the gustatory group (jivha dasaka kalāpa), the process of which is completed by the sixty-third day. The embryo then developing in dimensions until its delivery.

This formation in its completeness is termed *kāya*. And it is so called to forestall identification therewith as a permanent self (atta). Forms are self-devoid. But although self-devoid they recur wherever life is found. Therefore, although ephemeral they are in a certain sense absolute. Ephemeral (sammuti) as units, but absolute (paramattha) as universal *modes*. To borrow Whitehead's terminology regarding colour:

*"They haunt time like a spirit. They come and they go, but where they come they are the same. They neither survive nor do they live. They appear when they are wanted."*

They haunt time like a spirit because they are part of a process, lacking definite or permanent base. They come and go because, like wind, they arise and subside, having no constant abode. When they come they are the same because they are common to type, possessing the same appearance and shape. They neither survive nor live because nothing that is compounded (whether by matter or mind) survives or lives in the sense of to endure... They appear when they are wanted because desire is their motif, and when thus desired thus they appear.

Form, therefore, is termed the third absolute is abandoned but form retained. As an absolute, 'self' is abandoned but form retained.

The assertion, therefore, that even in this body is the world and the origin of the world possesses vast significance, involving in terms of conditionality, profound possibilities. Since, however, suffering is not the be-all of existence, in the aftermath of enlightenment, the spectacle of origins in all its complexity, though shattering, nevertheless brings with it a new perspective and the prospect that, for the earnest man at least, the certainty of a way to emancipation exists and the attainment of eventual release assured. Namely:

*"Even in this body. . . the cessation of the world; and the way thereto."*

However, the cessation and the way thereto must be reserved for a later chapter, involving right concentration.

## Chapter 4 : Of Amorphous Plurality (Anattā)

*“Form, O Bhikkhus, is self-devoid. Feeling. . . perception. . . aggregates... consciousness is self-devoid.”*

This doctrine without being really understood is accepted in perplexity by the faithful and no further pursued. In a certain sense this is wise, because if pursued to its logical conclusion it would deteriorate into the concept of annihilation. A conclusion which would be a delusion, considering that there is causality (kamma), whereby whatsoever a man sows that he also reaps. On the other hand, if it is insisted that personality endures from existence to existence, it would be tantamount to asserting the principle of permanence. A conclusion which again would be a delusion, in view of the fact that nothing in the world, not to mention personality, ever for long endures:

*“The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes... Transcending these extremes (eternalism and annihilationism), the Tathāgata **expounds** dhamma (factors of existence) by way of cause.”*

What cause?

*“Bhikkhus, if you are asked by non-believers about the dhamma, you shall answer them as follows: The root of dhamma is will. All dhamma arises whensoever attention is focussed thereon. All dhamma appears through sense-contact. All dhamma combine aided by perception. All dhamma culminate in the jhānas. All dhamma are by attentiveness controlled. All dhamma are by wisdom overcome. All dhamma have release as goal. All dhamma are in deathlessness submerged. All dhamma ends in Nibbāna.”*

That the doctrine of anattā goes deep it is obvious, beset as it is with amorphous complexity, and inextricably involved in the twelve links of Dependent Origination (paticca samuppāda). That this process of dependent origination is not easy to comprehend is borne out by the admonition to Ananda:

*“Profound, Ananda, is this origination by way of conditions, even in its appearance profound.”*

The causal process goes thus:

*“With ignorance (avijjā) as a condition aggregates (sankhāras) accrue.”*

What does this imply? Not that ignorance is a causal imperative, but merely that it is a latent condition of negativity, and that because of not knowing the processes by which life is perpetuated and the way to its control, aggregates of impulsion arise, and multiply, even as bubbles in a stream. The aggregates are not ‘dead’ matter but are in themselves instinct with life, as impressions and as fungus of growth. They give off their own peculiar radar-like sensitivity, which is nothing less than consciousness:

*“With aggregates as a condition consciousness (viññāṇam) accrues.”*

Consciousness here is not only impregnated with ignorance but all the aimlessness and uncontrolledness of life. It is propelled on not by direct volition but merely by haphazard conditions

which arise from moment to moment. Nevertheless, it is caught up by the centrifugal-centripetal force active in the world-sphere and is propelled to birth in some form or shape:

*“With consciousness as a condition name-form (nāma-rūpa) accrues.”*

Whensoever the aggregates of consciousness are caught up into a womb, they impregnate the cellular foetus and serve as the base for the arising of part intangible data (nāma) and part tangible substance (rūpa). From which the prospective organism evolves.

*“With name and form as a condition the six sense spheres (salāyatana) accrue.”*

Here it is the mind that is the sixth sense sphere complementing the other five, for as the embryo develops, the five sense organs and mind-element (mano-dhātu) evolves correspondingly. However, it is not the identical aggregate of consciousness which descended into the womb, but is the fresh arising of another level altogether. The original aggregate of consciousness has in the meanwhile sunk to subconscious status. This is so because resultant (vipāka) consciousness of a past existence has only three functions (kicca), namely: to proceed (cuti), to relink (patisandhi), and to sink to subconsciousness (bhavanga). Thus, when consciousness proceeds to rebirth in the womb and relinks there, the only thing left for it to do is to sink to subconscious state, having completed its functional cycle. It is submerged by the fresh level of mind-element which forms, which is the level that from henceforth comes to the fore.

*“With the sense spheres as a condition sense-contact (phassa) accrues.”*

As environmental data impinges upon the sense-door field, impressions register and are absorbed. These impressions create their own fresh levels of consciousness, even as they accrue. That is why it is said that although consciousness is a condition for the arising of name and form, name and form too is a condition for the arising of consciousness. This is so because what is implied is that fresh levels of consciousness arise through environmental contact made by the newly born name and form sense-door field. The rebirth consciousness and its fresh offshoots are not the same, even as the past can never be identical with the present. And why? Because:

*“With sense-contact as a condition feeling (vedanā) accrues.”*

These feelings (whether they be tangible, gross or subtle, painful, pleasant, or indifferent) are fresh feelings and not the same as those experienced by the consciousness-aggregate in a previous life. They, therefore, originating from environmental contact serve as the base for fresh levels of consciousness and memory, attached to another stratum of aggregates other than the previous life aggregate. However, it is to be understood that all these processes of dependent origination are not just a one-way flow but a traffic of reciprocity and duality, of ever interactive and composite nature and blend. There is never a total split between functions as long as the organism holds together. When the organism dies, however, a split does take place, as will be seen later.

*“With feeling as a condition desire (tanha) accrues.”*

Feeling begets the impulse to re-experience feeling, especially when the feeling is pleasant. This desire to repeat sensations of bliss initiates the outgoing propulsive force which drives the subject on to its futurity. Up to this point (beginning with ignorance as a condition) the causal process is merely negative. With desire the positive aspect comes to the fore. All the preceding conditions are preliminary in scope, as it were; for it is actually desire (or will) which is at the root of the process, in that its function is outgoing and positive.

*“With desire as a condition attachment (upādāna) accrues.”*

Attached to what it wants the flow of consciousness gravitates accordingly and the direction of its futurity is thus determined. Insofar as consciousness is concerned, that to which it is attached that it eventually becomes.

*“With attachment as a condition becoming (bhava) accrues.”*

What is “attachive”, in this context, is of course the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha). Namely, form, feeling, perception, sensorial aggregates, and consciousness. These are by their very origins and nature an interactive and intricate force. Form is “attachive” in itself, and so is feeling, perception, the aggregates of impressions, and consciousness, and they interact so as to form personality, which is forever in a state of becoming. Which serves as the potential for birth.

*“With becoming as a condition birth (jati) accrues.”*

The very propulsive potential of becoming begets the conditions for a fresh arising in a womb, which eventually runs its course ending with decay and death.

*“With birth as a condition decay and death (jāra-marana) accrues.”*

Followed by the whole host of ills which flesh is heir to.

We have used the term ‘as a condition’ throughout, because each, stage alluded to above is a flux, one flux in a whole series of fluxes, which are too numerous to enumerate, and have to be considered in conjunction with all the other twenty-four modes of conditionality, already dealt with in the chapter on suffering (page 34). Also, it cannot be too often repeated that all these links do not rigidly and arbitrarily follow each other as a one-way flow, but are reciprocally based in an ever-interactive process.

Thus, for instance, as each feeling arises, consciousness arises, and is, automatically absorbed in the strata of sensorial aggregates (sankhāras). These aggregates, in turn being a living flow, fructify perpetually, giving off their radar-like sensitivity called consciousness, which doubles back and forth and is always perfumed with ignorance of its origin, unable to realise that life is nothing but a process of self-creation, of doubling back and forth from one moment to the next. The arising of strata of aggregates is due to the process of ‘perfuming’ initiated by the rebirth entity descending into the womb, which even as it perfumes the fresh aggregates which arise is perfumed in turn.

We note the profundity of the process stressed. And why is it profound?

Because it concerns the capacity of the cognitive element (viññāṇa dhātu) to multiply by contact (phassa). Even as biological science observes that one cell multiplies into two, through environmental contact, even so in the psychical sphere the process develops on corresponding lines. Thus is it said:

*“Consciousness arises by way of occasion, and without occasion there can be no arising thereof.”*

The occasion, of course, hinges on environmental contact, which gives rise to feeling, to desire, to attachment, and to becoming. Environmental contact it is which adds strata upon strata of experience and impressions, resulting in a plurality of levels of consciousness, superimposing each other, in relative assertiveness and dominancy. This process of self-creation never becomes assimilated deep

enough so as to activate as a functional unity but as an amorphous plurality. That to which consciousness most clings for the moment dominates, and the personality which, at any moment prevails is nothing more than that to which consciousness most clings.

Now it is normally understood that it is the force of will which activates and directs consciousness on its everyday course. However, observation shows that it is not will as such which dominates the psyche but rather the momentum of propensity. The will is, in the normal individual, largely inoperative, not the dictate of an overlord called "self" but actually the impulsion of resultant forces and antecedent determinates. The life-process flows on of itself and is only partially determined by subjective will. As Spinoza observes:

*"Men deceive themselves when they regard themselves as free, and this view merely results from the fact that they are aware of their actions but do not know the causes which determine them. There is in the mind no absolute or free will, but the mind is determined to will, this or that by a cause which in turn is determined by another and this again by another, and so on without end. Every man comes into the world without knowledge of the causes of things, but with the instinct to seek his own benefit and full awareness of this. From this it follows that men consider themselves free, since they are aware of their own wills and instincts and do not even dream of the causes which determine them to desire and to will, because they are ignorant of them."*

Since desire, plays a dominant part in the determination of the life process, and since it is recognised that desire is not to be depended on but shifts and drifts from one thing to the next, it is obvious that the conclusion to be drawn is that the life process, as pertaining to any given individual, is rather in the nature of an ever incessant process of split-selves and identities. For with desire arises grasping attachment, and to what the mind is attached to that it is impelled. Becoming itself is never single but a disunity, being diversified among a host of sense and psychic supports. Consciousness, the life-process, is through and through imbued by this fundamental tendency to separate, of parthenogenesis, to go off at a tangent, to fluctuate between an incompatibility of tensions strung together in a particular field, the splitting of identity into psychic amoebae.

It is to be understood that the human psyche with its seat in the organism is restrained by the organism from splitting off into incoherence by a continual reference and reorientation process. As Whitehead observes:

*"We trust to memory, and we ground our trust on the continuity of the body. Thus nature in general and the body in particular provide the stuff for the personal endurance of the 'soul'."*

The life-process is prevented from splitting off into psychic amoebae by the centrifugal-centripetal force gravitated in the organism. However, it should be understood that with the approach of death the centrifugal-centripetal force loses ground rapidly, and with the consequent arrival of the death-moment is no longer able to gravitate the life-process to a singular identity, but splits off into amorphous plurality, according to the repressed desires instinct in the diverse strata of consciousness of the given subject.

When a man dies, the main stream of consciousness, or life-continuum process (bhavanga sota), though it continues to activate as a stream, has offshoots. That is, under the force of the grasping impulsions which accumulated from antecedent environmental contact (but constrained by the centrifugal-centripetal gravitational force in the organism) the main stream is split off into sub-streams, each instinct with a separate life-continuum process of its own henceforth (not unlike the divided amoebae). Thus what is perpetuated is not static identical singularity but rather amorphous

plurality. Each separate life-continuum process is then propelled to its own kammic destiny, sometimes taking rebirth immediately. Once separated thus, it would scarcely be to the point to say that one such life-continuum has any identification with another. The logical conclusion to this is that a man may meet one of his former life-continuum fragments incarnate and never so much as recognise the connection. This is what is implicit in Buddha's admonition to Ananda: *'Profound, Ananda, is this origination by way of cause, even in its appearance profound.'* And one of the factors which demonstrates why the population multiplies but not the reverse. Thus also is it said that insofar as the individual is concerned he can be said to endure from existence to existence only to the extent that his pāramīs (perfect qualities of consciousness) are preserved intact. As it is said:

*"When any mode of self is going on it is not reckoned as another. It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails."*

This is why we witness Buddha rejecting the absurdity of the doctrine that the five aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha) are in any way worthy of being identified as the self, when in fact it is merely something which arises by way of occasion, by desire rooted in ignorance. The way to release, therefore, is a unification, integration, and purging of all rebirth factors, so as to eliminate any further reproduction of the amorphous plurality which perpetuates existence in the world spheres, without end.

Strangely enough, the truth of anattā was glimpsed to a certain extent by the Kahunas (native doctors) of the Polynesian islands, of which Tahiti is one. It is generally understood that human personality is something unique, in composition singular. But even the natives of Polynesia knew that individuality is not something activated by identical singularity but by amorphous plurality. Contemporary psychology, too, has groped in this direction, but, unfortunately, it is constrained by the technique it employs, which fails to penetrate beyond the spheres of the living psyche as disembodied from the organism, and thus refusing to proceed to extra-sensory limits and to all manner of rebirth ramifications. As Jung observes:

*"Psychoanalysts even claim to have probed back to memories of intra-uterine origin. Here Western reason reaches its limit, unfortunately. I say 'unfortunately', because one rather wishes that Freudian psychoanalysis could have happily pursued these so-called intra-uterine experiences still further back... As it was, the psychoanalysts never got beyond purely conjectural traces of intra-uterine experiences, and even the famous 'birth trauma' has remained such an obvious truism that it can no longer explain anything... That is to say, anyone who penetrates into the unconscious with purely biological assumptions will become stuck in the instinctual sphere and be unable to advance beyond it, for he will be pulled back again and again into physical existence. It is therefore not possible for Freudian theory to reach anything except an essentially negative valuation of the unconscious. At the same time, it must be admitted that this view of the psyche is typically Western, only it is expressed more blatantly, more plainly, and more ruthlessly than others would have dared to express it, though at bottom they think no differently. As to what 'mind' means in this connection, we can only cherish the hope that it will carry conviction. But, as even Max Scheler noted with regret, the power of this 'mind' is, to say the least, doubtful."*

Even in ordinary waking life it must dawn upon the intelligent man that he does not consist of one personality but of personalities, each at odds. However, it takes great depth of perception to recognise that at death what was once 'himself' splits off into 'selves', no longer adhering together under the impulsion of a centrifugal-centripetal force or common centre, each leading henceforth a separate existence of its own, usually as disembodied ghosts. These disembodied ghosts, each in its own time, takes rebirth in a womb, to serve as the base for a future split of personalities at death. It would seem

that this is the only way by which creatures may develop and evolve (after repeated birth and rebirth) from the lower forms of consciousness to the highly developed and integrated consciousness of ultimate perfection, ending in release.

The process of anattā justifies the varying degrees and levels of intelligence which manifest in the world at large, each disconnected life-continuum possessing its own peculiar set of sense-derived memories, desires, tastes, and spheres of environmental contact. Although the permanent persistence of a particular entity is not in keeping with the doctrine of anattā, there is a main stream or life-continuum which continues, as distinct from its by-products or offshoot streams. This main stream integrates at death and is set free from the sub-streams. It is this main stream which carries with it the potential of antecedent lives, its kammic liabilities and assets. The offshoots, however, have no recollection of past lives except the immediate one removed, being the product thereof. These offshoots are obsessed with their immediate mundane associations and thought-forms, and hover about their former abodes or haunt the graveyards, the main entity usually having long left such parts. These disassociate spirits may go on for a long time in this manner of life, even for thousands of years, absorbed in their version of attachment, before rebirth ensues. It is spirits such as these which are the most glib liars whensoever they are contacted through a medium. If these ghosts often manifest to the naked eye it is because of their proximity to the physical plane, still partaking of the crude elements which go to compose their consistency, and attaining to degrees of visibility as favourable circumstances provide.

When the organism is still in function these separative personalities exist in the subconscious substrate (bhavanga), restrained by the centrifugal-centripetal force therein. In dreams or reveries, however, it is possible for these subconscious states to arise and, taking momentary form and shape, to project themselves outside their habitual state. And the manner in which these disassociate personalities arise is through the registering (tadārammaṇa) of impressions in the subconscious continuum, being their residue.

This is what is implied when it is said that some have but recently experienced the mystery of consciousness while others have done so aeons ago. However, each offshoot of personality when reborn considers itself to be unique, god-given and eternal, when as a matter of fact it is but a recent product of environmental friction and contact. This offshoot personality will, when it finally is reborn, partake of certain qualities of character common to its parent root, developing along those lines. If the main stream was of an intelligent type, this offshoot too will partake of such qualities. If energetic, the offshoot will be likewise. The offshoot of a Plato, for instance, would be of a philosophic turn of mind, due to the factors of characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya). And so forth. Whether favourable or unfavourable, it is the parent root which determines how the future offshoot develops, with certain characteristics ingrained in it from the beginning, being 'perfumed' thereby. That is why it is said that there is no eternal self, but that consciousness arises by way of occasion (through the process of the dual-reciprocal sense-sphere field, after which each arising consciousness is called) and without occasion there would be no arising of consciousness, and that all things depend for their arising on initial environmental conditions, without which nothing would upspring.

These offshoots of personality are termed *Pathama viññāṇa*, or *ceta-bhuta* (first-born), the first consciousness, before which they never existed, and that is why whensoever rebirth recollection is instigated recollection can only go as far back as this.

In the amoebic sphere of parthenogenesis, each offshoot is imbued with a separative existence henceforth. In the psychic sphere, the process develops along corresponding lines, and each offshoot stream of consciousness can no longer be regarded as identical with the original base from which it sprung. That is why it is beside the point to say that it either existed previously or does not exist

henceforth. It cannot be too often stressed that all things spring from causal occasions, and without these nothing would ever come to be, and that whatsoever these causal occasions are, after them are the things called.

The life-process, as pictured thus, possesses the capacity for infinite reproduction and to ever increasing degrees of refinement. Consequently, there are classifications of crude and refined forms, and they are susceptible to serial pluralisation, *ad infinitum*, by direct and inverse process. This is the fundamental chain-reaction basis from which life springs, in reciprocal style.

The cognitive element (*viññāṇa dhātu*) which fashions the collective psyche is not prescribed in its limit, but is a field of latent potentiality whose nuclei of cognition may be reproduced according to the subject's capacity. This is witnessed in the supernormal (*manomayiddhi-abhiñña*) function of miraculous multiplication (*pāṭihāriya*) by the adept in *jhāna*, whereby one (form) is instigated to become many, and many to become one.

It is a fact of analytic research that the cells in any given living organism multiply by self-replication, reproducing themselves in chain-like sequence. The replication goes on *ad infinitum*, and each fresh cell although it had a previous base nevertheless is not confused therewith but possesses a separative potentiality of its own. It seems that this is how life generates itself in specific fields of gravitational organisms, each cell in turn serving as the nucleic base or 'template' for future reproduction into amorphous plurality (*anattā*).

If this is true for the organistic aspect, it is also pertinent for the psychic, since nature has a tendency to activate from basic principles which, although seemingly simple in base, nevertheless on investigation reveal themselves to be extremely amorphous and profound, as the developed combinations and infinite complexities of life bear witness.

Each individual stems from a diversity of backgrounds, which experience when absorbed and gravitated in a specific field of personality becomes instinct with a chain-reactive force. So even as a cell in an organism splits and multiplies, absorbing surrounding nutriment so as to augment in size and re-split again, even so in the psychic field the nuclei of consciousness split and multiply, absorbing psycho-physical environmental data so as to augment in experience and re-split again, *ad infinitum*. And as in the organism a cell, or group of cells, may be cut off and isolated, and artificially cultivated, so as to acquire a distinct existence of its own, even so a nucleus, or nuclei, of consciousness may be isolated from its parent centre and cultivated on its own so as to acquire a separative field-existence of its own.

This discovery is a radical one, and prepares the way for the realisation that the cognitive element in nature is a chain-reactive process without static identity, each antecedent nucleus of cognition serving as the base, or 'template' for future reproduction. Even as each molecule in the organism possesses its own structure and composition (of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, etc), no two groups of molecules possessing the same ratio of composition, even so consciousness possesses its own structure and composition, no two groups thereof possessing the same ratio.

The ordinary waking five sense-door consciousness is characterised by 17-instant cycle, 10 of which are resultant-functional and 7 volitional. Whereas isolated mind-door activity is characterised only by a 12-instant cycle. Again, death's-door consciousness is characterised by only 5 volitional instants, whereas the consciousness of deep slumber is devoid of volitional instants at all, characterised only by the negative flow of the resultant life-continuum. Also, even as in the physical sphere no two organisms are *exactly* alike, even so due to the chain-reactive background from which it stems, a continuum of consciousness retreats in perspective and perpetuates in futurity, into all manner of combinations and recombinations of an intense and unlimited experience complexity.

All of which emphasises the psycho-physical reciprocity of the functional process, and that no rigid line divides one from the next, but that even as the complete organism is a reflection of the individual cells which go to compose it, even so consciousness impermeated in the organism is a reflection of the individual nuclei of past-present occasions of experience.

The process by which life is perpetuated, splitting from one centre of orientation and gravity to the next, shifting to infinity, is symbolic of the ignorance, desire, and passion, which ceaselessly activates existence in general, splitting forever into fresh formations and horizons of futurity. And this is so because each nucleus of experience is in itself a possessive force. Being alive and a feeling force it is propelled by its own kammic potential and momentum into ever fresh fields of reference and form.

Thus, this origin of that most amorphous of quantities, not-self (anattā) or impersonality, comes to be. And why is it so called? It is so called because its very origins are in question, an amorphous and ephemeral thing, lost in the endless maze and tracery of space-time. Splitting thus into infinity, these nuclei of cognition, each endowed with separative 'personality', form and reform in diverse fields, in complete ignorance of their origins. If this most profound of truths (Buddha: profound is this arising by way of cause, even in its appearance profound) is realised in its ramifications, then Buddha's injunction to Potthapāda may also be understood:

*"When any mode of 'self' is going on it is not reckoned as another. It is only reckoned by the name of that particular personality which prevails."*

And in this vast ocean of becoming, what 'personality' can ever be said to for a moment, not to mention a lifetime, prevail?

With its parallel in the amoebic phenomenon, offshoots of the life continuum substrate develop in amorphous plurality, which is a universal process. As each offshoot is no longer identical with its parent, even so it would be delusive to claim that this process of psychic parthenogenesis, so characteristic of consciousness, endows life with an enduring personality or soul. However, as already alluded to, even if there is no further connection between the parent-field and its offshoots, the offshoots nevertheless partake of characteristics peculiar to their common origin, having become *perfumed* thereby.

Now if it is true that the personality-process instigates a split at death, then how is a life-purpose preserved? What happens, for instance, to an earnest resolve (adhiṭṭhāna) for ultimate integration and release, made in a remote past?

There is no difficulty. It is preserved in that portion of the continuum which served as the base for the resolve, indelibly impressed therein, until fruition is reached. As for the sub-streams which split off into separative disassociation, they know nothing of such a resolve, because they belong merely to the superficial strata of the psyche, being the by-product and surplus of this present life through environmental permutative contact (pañcadvārvajjana-manodhātu and sampaticchana-manodhātu). It is thus that in the Chain of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppāda) it is said that the aggregate of antecedent impressions (sankhāras) serves as the base for the arising of consciousness (viññāṇam). Which in the Pali goes: sankhāra-paccayā viññāṇam., viññāṇa-paccaya nāma-rūpam., etc.

If these sub-streams, however, happen to initiate a resolve for ultimate integration and release in the future, then they too have to process themselves thereto by accumulating a separate field of perfections of experience (pāramī), until culmination is reached. For each separative personality is responsible for its own destiny and not another field, and although all substrates differ in the origination and breadth of their potential, the opportunity to ultimate integration and final release (not something peculiar to a main continuum) is always there, open to all who have eyes to see, and

ears to hear.

It is in view of this phenomenon of amorphous plurality with which the universe is beset that suffering emerges and is perpetuated without end. And that is why ignorance is deplored as the root of all ill. Buddhism is regarded as nihilistic by the uninformed because the informed are so beset with their own identity and selfhood that they are unable to pierce beyond the veil of peripherality and witness things in their true perspective. A perspective which stretches endlessly into the past, and even more endlessly into the future. For one who has attained to such perspective, life is perceived as suffering indeed and not something to be grasped as an end in itself, but only as a means. The means, that is, to greater and ever greater integration, and release. If this were the goal and the attempt of all, then amorphous plurality will be transcended and, suffering cease. This is the goal, no more. Namely, suffering, and the ceasing of suffering.

We have observed (*Appendix II (Death & Rebirth), Sammā Samādhi II*) that in the interval when the process of death is culminating, the aggregates of perception, memory, thought, and knowledge pertaining to the dying person begin to gravitate to the seventh position, where they integrate and unify, sinking to the sixth position at the pit of the diaphragm (in line with the navel). It sinks there because that is where the collective life-continuum substrate has its negativised seat. It cannot be too often stressed that when a man thinks or acts, he is only employing a fraction of his whole collective experience, and that for the most part the major portion remains submerged in the subconscious base.

When death approaches, however, it becomes essential for recontact and reunification to ensue, so as to depart from the body in complete shape and, experience, leaving no residue behind. That is why from the seventh position the aggregates sink to the sixth position, to fuse and unify with the antecedent collective continuum there. After which it rises to the seventh point again. This is necessary, because when consciousness is at the sixth position (bhavanga) it is beyond immediate positive apprehension. It has to be lifted up a step before subjective apprehension becomes possible. Thus, the dying man may at this moment be able to recollect or witness his life in review, a partial glimpse of a collective view.

However, after this unification is made, the aggregates sink once again to the sixth position, and take off from there. This, again, is necessary, because the departing entity does not take off unless freed (together with its collective experience) completely from the organism. It is not freed at the seventh position, but only at the sixth. As it sinks thereto, it extricates itself, leaving the dead carcass behind.

There, however, is never a *total* integration and departure at this moment. Due to the activating stresses of attachment (upādāna) the original life-continuum leaves behind residues derived from environmental contact in the immediate life, and these derived residues (possessing their own grasping attributes of personality) henceforth wander on in a separate existence of their own (paralleled in the amoebic process, as already alluded to). These split-residues, or sub-streams, are to be regarded as surplus, and it is only at the departing (cuti) instant that this psychic parthenogenesis occurs.

Now, insofar as the recollection of antecedent (rebirth) experience is concerned, it is to be understood that it is the original life-continuum which preserves the record, being ingrained therein. The split-residues or sub-streams know nothing of former births or lives being only the by-product of this immediate one.

As for the recollection itself, it does not necessarily require jhānic methods to activate it to perceptive immediacy, for it may arise through accidental contact (as in Plato's doctrine of mimesis). Normally, however, accidental contact through the sense-door field is too superficial to affect the life-continuum substrate, so as to activate any submerged impression to recollective immediacy. Nevertheless,

whenever any significant contact is established (such as the meeting again of someone once dear) then that particular resultant (vipāka) impression of a remote past is shivered from its submerged (bhavanga) state and arises to recollective immediacy.

The aggregates of past experience (sankhāras) have their negative (vipāka) existence in the collective substrate at diaphragm-pit, and are capable of being sparked to repercussive activity in the brain by some especial vibrative chord evoked through the functioning process of the sense-door field. This clarifies to some extent the fact that without any apparent cause whatsoever a person on first acquaintance is either liked or disliked, according to the processes of previous rebirth association. However, these matters cannot be too generalized, since each has its own peculiarities, and what may be true for one instance may not apply for the next, each such case being dependent on a whole set of primary and subsidiary causes.

The process of anattā asserts the 'selflessness' of all things component (sabbe dhamma anattāti). Each stream of personality manifested in organic physicality serves as the base, through the five sense-consciousnesses (viññāṇa dhātu) of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, five sense-door element (pañcadvārāvajjanā-manodhātu) and contact-receptacle elements (sampaticchana-manodhātu), for offshoot streams, which in turn serve through rebirth contact (phassa) and attachiveness (upādāna) as the base for further offshoot streams. Even so does the life-process multiply in diversity, *ad infinitum*. Even so does the whole universe become peopled with separative continuums and identities, the process of which knows no definitive beginning and end, except one of relativity. Due to this is it said, that life is impermanent, is suffering, is not-self, and that whatever self arises, arises with the five aggregates as base, conditioned thus.

Thus, although many attain release, the universe of continuums does not diminish or abate, but on the contrary augments. The origin of life hinges on the precipitate power of attachive contact, reproducing the multiples of becoming in the world-spheres, without end. Which brings Plato to mind:

*"That anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another even for a moment, however trifling the cause and however slight and momentary the effect, has real existence. And I hold that the definition of being is simply power."*

Which, in the psychic sphere, is substantiated by the Buddhist definition:

*"All that we are is the result of what we have thought."*

If, then, an answer to the question of what can prevail is to be advanced, it will have to be one in which a state of equilibrium is the essential characteristic. This entails that each life-continuum is to integrate the debris of its aggregates, and by the very force of will and effort attain to self-control. This is initiated by the process of one-pointed (ekaggatā) concentrated-absorption (jhāna) and by cessation attainment (nirodha samāpatti). When cessation attainment is instigated, the exhaustion of all longings ensues, and eventual release as a unified unit. When attachive contact has thus been rendered null and void, all offshoots of personality peter out and finally cease.

But this will be dealt with at length in the chapter which follows.

## Chapter 5 : Of Cessation And The Way Thereto (Nirodha-Magga)

*“Even in this very body... The cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation thereof.”*

Now if there is an origination process by way of dependence on links (paticca samuppāda) and causes, it is also complemented by an inverted cessation (nirodha) process. If this were not so, then there would surely be no loophole out of the round of birth and death in the world-spheres, without end.

The way to cessation is, of course, well known. Namely, the Noble Eightfold Path otherwise condensed under the categories of morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā).

The function of morality is to purify, concentration to penetrate, and wisdom to liberate. In that they are a unity, links in a chain, they do not prosper without each other's support. Morality devoid of concentration conduces to delusion, concentration devoid of morality conduces to a dangerous inflation, and wisdom devoid of concentration conduces to deficiency of mind-control. As it is said:

*“Great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of concentration when it is encompassed by morality, great the fruit and advantage of wisdom when encompassed by concentration. The mind encompassed by wisdom is from the defilements released.”*

The term ‘cessation’ in this context may lead one to suppose that annihilation of the conscious-subject is the goal. It is to be observed, however, that the process, beginning with morality, culminates in wisdom and emancipation of mind. This, therefore, in, no way implies the *extinction* of a conscious-subject. As it is said:

*“All corruption shall be put away, and wholesome things brought to increase.”*

What corruption? The three root evils of delusion (moha), hate (dosa), and greed (lobha). What wholesome things? The Noble Path, called the best of Paths, in that unlike other paths it leads to emancipation of mind.

Cessation in this context, therefore, does not imply decrease but increase. And if this is difficult of comprehension, then it is the wisdom of the sage which claims that one possessing, nothing possesses all. The ‘increase’ of the sage, then, is that his is the priceless gem, ‘the sure heart's release’. As it is said:

*“Even as the ocean is absorbed with only one great taste, the taste of salt. Even so this discipline and doctrine which I teach is absorbed with only one great taste. The taste of release.”*

Although the Path begins with morality, the emphasis in the following chapter will be on concentration, since morality is already well known, whereas concentration remains an extremely complex and involved subject. In any case, morality, concentration, and wisdom are so inextricably involved that they emerge in relation whensoever either one is alluded to.

For the present, it may be mentioned that there are three kinds of defilements (kilesa): that kind which translates itself immediately into word or act (vitikkama kilesa), that which arises and then subsides (pariyutthāna kilesa), and that which is always latent (anusaya kilesa). Of these the last named is the most devious to erase, comprising seven unwholesome tendencies: sensuality (kāma rāga), attachment to becoming (bhava rāga), malice (patigha), biasedness (ditṭhi), conceit (māna), doubt (vicikicchā), and ignorance (avijjā). And these defilements are subdued (pahāna) by three methods: by substitution of opposites (tadanga pahāna), by tranquillisation techniques (vikkhambhana pahāna), and by insight (samucceda pahāna). In other words, by morality (sīla), by concentration (samādhi), and by wisdom (pañña).

## **Samādhi (Concentration)**

Concentration may be analysed into four categories:

- (1) the concentration issuing in the attainment of the jhānas (absorptions);
- (2) the concentration issuing in the attainment of ñāṇa dassana (extra-sensory perception);
- (3) the concentration issuing in the attainment of sati sampajañña (intent awareness); and
- (4) the concentration issuing in the attainment of vipassanā ñāṇa (penetrative insight).

### **(1) The jhānas (absorptions)**

The jhānas (absorptions) derived from concentrated tranquillity of body and mind are highly conducive to states of equanimity and bliss. In view of this, these concentrated-absorptions are only too susceptible of being grasped as ends in themselves, when in reality they are to be only regarded as a means to an end, and as such merit a primary and distinguished place.

### **(2) Ñāṇa dassana (extra-sensory perception)**

Ñāṇa dassana (extra-sensory perception) is that faculty of perceiving things astral. Devoid of this kind of supernormal vision the human horizon is inevitably constrained within the limitations of the five sense-organs, to say the least. However, the attainment of supernormal vision, too, is only too easily grasped as an end in itself, when in fact it is only a means.

### **(3) Sati sampajañña (intent awareness)**

Sati sampajañña (intent awareness) is that faculty of mindfulness, and awareness so necessary for keeping the mind in harness and under restrained control. Without this incessant control over formations, feelings, perceptions, and concepts, consciousness is only too gamely led astray from cyclic second to second, the victim of every incident that upsprings. However, mind-control in itself is insufficient as to be regarded as an end, for although it keeps a constant vigil over random effervescences it does not annihilate them at the source. At best, it serves as a preventative and defensive device.

### **(4) Vipassanā ñāṇa (penetrative insight)**

Vipassanā ñāṇa (penetrative insight) is that faculty which penetrates to the source. As long as this faculty is not attained, the mind is not in a position to comprehend or understand the scheme in which

all things in the visible and invisible universe have their relative span. Without this objective vision, consciousness is dominated by its own limited subjectivity and personal prejudice. It is, finally, only through this faculty that the unrealised potential becomes the actualised reality. That is, the ultimate integration of personality and its unrestricted release.

These four categories of concentration-attainments, however, may be resolved under the collective term of Samatha-Vipassanā (tranquillised-penetrative insight), and shall be dealt with as such.

## **Samatha-Vipassanā (Tranquillised-penetrative insight)**

### **Samatha:**

Samatha is that quality of tranquillisation so necessary as a factor in integral process, being of the essence. Its function, by tranquillising, is to disperse passion (rāga). In view of the fact that passion clouds the mind, and that the mind is by its very effervency frittered away from second to second, the only method of integration is by concentrating attention to a point (ekaggatā).

There are numerous methods of achieving this, and they need not be detailed here. The thing of prime importance is to fix the mind to centre, and to keep it there. Once the hectic effervency of the psyche is controlled to an integral point, it may be expanded later to embrace a vast field. It is to be noted that the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta begins with the Samatha factor:

*“Herein, O Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu having gone to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down with legs crossed, with body erect, and sets up mindfulness in front.”*

Now the mind cannot (without first having been trained to do so) fixate its attention upon any one thing for a protracted period, whether the ‘thing’ be body, feelings, thoughts, or objects of mind. To alleviate this difficulty, therefore, some form of tranquillity, involving either one of the forty subjects of Samatha kammaṭṭhāna, is recommended, according to individual congeniality. Only after the mind has become steadied, made lucent and firm, is it directed to the investigation of the body, feelings, thoughts, and objects of mind.

Although concentrated-absorption (jhāna) is a product of Samatha, it does not necessarily imply extra-sensory perception (ñāṇa dassana). There may be extra-sensory perception or there may not, since tranquillity is not concerned with perception but with tranquillity. If extra-sensory perception is to be cultivated, the potential faculties of vision (cakkhindriya) have to be developed by concentration on the *light* kasina. And this is so because, even as light illumines a dark room, even so in accordance with the principle of optics the darkness of the psyche within has first to be illumined by an internal light.

### **Vipassanā:**

Whereas the function of Samatha is to tranquillize, the function of Vipassanā is to disperse ignorance (avijjā) and to penetrate. Samatha and Vipassanā, although they may be practised in isolation, do not prosper without each other's support. For Samatha in no way disperses ignorance, nor is there Vipassanā without first tranquillity of body and mind. When combined and developed they result in the attainment of knowledge (vijja) and render the defilements (āsavas) extinct.

Vipassanā's scope includes ten insights, as follows:

- (1) Sammasana Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the factors of intangibility (nāma) and formations (rūpa) in their true perspective and nature.
- (2) Udayabbayânupassanā Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the arising and perishing of all tangibility and intangibility from one moment to the next.
- (3) Bhangânupassanā Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the dissolution of all phenomenae.
- (4) Bhayapatṭhāna Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into what are the dangers to be feared and shunned.
- (5) Ādinavânupassanā Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the misery inherent in all things, being rooted in grasping.
- (6) Nibbidânupassanā Ñāṇa: After perceptive insight into the above five factors, the consequent aversion arising therefrom, as a preparatory step leading to release.
- (7) Muñcitukamyata Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the yearning for release through the right path.
- (8) Patisankhânupassanā Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the discriminative contemplation whereby release may be obtained, though obstructed by the grasping aggregates.
- (9) Sankhārupekkhā Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the equanimity wherewith all formations are to be viewed, preparatory to the attainment of release.
- (10) Anuloma Ñāṇa: Perceptive insight into the adaptability of life, whereby release may be attained. That is, comprehension of the Four Noble Truths in all their ramifications, and the development of the Middle Path surpassing both (asceticism and sensuality) extremes.

The Discourse on Mindfulness continues:

*“Thus he lives contemplating form in form internally, or externally, or internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination factors in form, or dissolution factors, or both... Thus he contemplates form in form, feelings in feelings, thoughts in thoughts, and mental essences in mental essences.”*

Now to contemplate origination and dissolution factors, in Buddha's sense, scarcely implies a desultory reflection upon the decay and death of the body, but of the internal structure of the life-process itself, witnessed in full clarity of penetrative insight. As it is said:

*“As long, O Bhikkhus, as my vision pertaining to the Noble Truths, with triple insight and in twelvefold style, remained unclear, even so long, O Bhikkhus, in this world with its Maras, Brahmas, ascetics, gods, and men, highest insight and knowledge remained to be attained.”*

The ‘triple insight’ referred to being the perceptive insight of things as they are (Sacca Ñāṇa), the perceptive insight that it is something to be accomplished and known (Kicca Ñāṇa), and the perceptive insight that it has been accomplished and known (Kata Ñāṇa). Each Noble Truth (of the four there are) penetrated in this way makes for the ‘twelvefold style’.

It is obvious that the physical eye is not implied here, since it does not penetrate into the body, not to mention mental essences, but the eye of purified intensity pertaining to the Dhammakāya.

But what is this Dhammakāya? To understand the implications it is necessary to return to the ancient

advice:

*“Self is the refuge of self.”*

At a casual glance, this contradicts the doctrine of *anattā*. How can self be the refuge of self when there is no self? But the seeming contradiction is merely a superficial one, and appears as a contradiction at all due to its having been shifted out of context.

Life is beset with impersonality because the five aggregates of an individual field are facile and not self-controlled, an effervescence that splits and re-splits. Nevertheless, even a personality which splits is still a personality, and if properly controlled may even attain to heights of ultimacy. As it is said:

*“Be unto yourself a refuge, an isle, and not elsewhere. Let the dhamma be refuge, the isle, and not elsewhere... Thus shall the limit of darkness be reached, for those who are desirous to learn.”*

If there is going to be any sort of self at all, therefore, it is obviously this *dhamma* which will have to be established as such. And since equilibrium of consciousness is of the very essence, the way to mental poise is not to loosen the peripheral faculties incessantly upon externality, which is already confusion enough, but to establish them at some internally centralized point.

As it happens, this problem is already solved by nature (*dhamma*). For in the human debris of personality such an integrated point already exists. Namely, in the pit of the diaphragm. Seated at which point a nucleus (or sphere) of *dhamma* rests. Were it not for this nucleus, wherein all the four elements and consciousness fuse, the human organism would never have come to exist. This sphere of *dhamma* serves as the base for the manifestation of organic human personality as such, and is termed *Pathama Magga* (First Step).

Now as soon as the human form issues from the mother's womb, it begins the gradual process of sense-contact (*phassa*) with the environment, activating along the network of nerves. Which culminates in the attention being directed to the external form, thereby established and identified as the *self*.

As for the nucleus of *Pathama Magga* at diaphragm level, it passes from sight, because from birth onwards all men's activities are centred outside, not inside. When the peripheral faculties are withdrawn from external contact and centred within, the initial attempt is seldom crowned with success, considering that perception through protracted externality of contact has become crudified and gross. Initial attempts at introverted perception usually only result in a sensation of swimming and whirling in the dark.

What is more, once the nucleus of *Pathama Magga* is perceived it is too small and effervescent to fixate attention thereon for long. This is significant of the habitual hectic state of the peripheral mind. Initial attempts are always tangled up at this point, and the problem is always how to fix attention upon the nucleus of light and keep it there. As it is said:

*“There are three factors necessary, O Bhikkhus, for one intent on the attainment of the higher consciousness (adhicitta). Namely, the factors of concentration, of energy, and of equanimity. If, O Bhikkhus, only the factor of concentration is applied, then consciousness conduces to laxity. If only the factor of energy is applied, then consciousness conduces to agitation. If only the factor of equanimity is applied, then consciousness conduces to that state which is devoid of the potential necessary for the destruction of the defilements. But if, O Bhikkhus, concentration, energy, and equanimity, in proportion as the need for them*

*demands, is initiated, then consciousness becomes flexible, potent, and translucent, so as to instigate the destruction of that which is defiled. Thus only does it attain to the capacity of beholding in perceptive immediacy any state or circumstance at which it is aimed."*

Now once the peripheral faculties have been sunk and gravitated to the pit of the diaphragm (slightly above navel) and the sphere of Pathama Magga manifests translucent and bright, it is to be understood that in this sphere the aggregates (sankhāras) have their seat. It is a process of nature to aggregate in spheres, a repository self-contained. If the aggregates were not integrated and condensed thus, they would disintegrate and disperse, and memory as such would no longer exist, not to mention selfhood and personality.

Also, if penetrated into detail, in this sphere of Pathama Magga lie the aggregates of morality, concentration, and wisdom, such as pertain to the human personality, and such as have been accumulated from antecedent lives. It is not enough, however, that these aggregates (or spheres) of morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (pañña), are discovered, they have to be developed and purged. Therefore are they called accomplishments (sampadas). They are the steps to the fashioning of the integrated personality, which is a matter strenuously to be accomplished, and not something given and ready-made.

This is made plain by the exhortation:

*"We will not shrink back, but will struggle on. . . if there came to be a vortex of energy so that which is not yet won might be won by human strength, by human energy, by human striving."*

We note the emphasis on the human base, from which it all begins. For that is how dhamma arises. As given in the Anguttara Nikāya:

*"Bhikkhus, if you are asked by non believers about the dhamma, you shall answer them as follows: The root of dhamma is will. All dhamma arises whensoever attention is focussed thereon. All dhamma appears through sense contact. All dhamma combine aided by perception. All dhamma culminate in the jhānas. All dhamma are by attentiveness controlled. All dhamma are by wisdom overcome. All dhamma have release as goal. All dhamma are in deathlessness submerged. All dhamma ends in Nibbāna."*

It would seem that in Buddha's discourse to Potthapāda the teaching is one 'for the rejection of the getting of any self', and that this implies a doctrine and a technique of annihilation. It, however, does not need much insight to comprehend that what is implied is the extinction of the mundane aggregates (lokiya dhamma) as signified by the human, celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma forms. This becomes obvious at once when the lines which follow are perused: 'a way by which impure conditions can be put away and pure conditions brought to increase... and therein abide.'

What impure conditions? The root evils of delusion (moha), hate (dosa), and greed (lobha). What wholesome things? The Noble Path, called the best of paths, in that unlike all other paths it leads to emancipation of mind.

'Putting away' or cessation, in Buddha's sense, never implies decrease but increase. here is no annihilation of a conscious-subject, or such nonsense as 'dewdrop sinking into sea'. Each emancipated one has his own supramundane 'field' of radiant personality, the end-result of an aeonic accumulation of pāramī, the perfections of experience, which are by no means extinguished at death. As it is said:

*"Even here and now, in this present body (not to mention after death thereof) that essential*

*emancipated consciousness which is the Tathāgata's remains unplumbed. And although this is what I teach, there are those who accuse me falsely of proclaiming a doctrine which is annihilationalist... As of old, so now proclaim I only this: suffering and the ceasing of suffering."*

And, again, in the discourse to Nigrodha:

*"All corruption shall be put away and wholesome things brought to increase."*

And once this increase (namely, wisdom and insight) is attained (by supernormal concentration) 'to therein abide'.

Cessation, therefore, even if it is difficult of comprehension, is never the extinction of a conscious-subject. On the contrary, it is a gradual build-up of potential, by intensifying steps:

*"Great becomes the **fruit**, great the advantage of concentration it is encompassed by morality. Great the **fruit** and advantage of wisdom encompassed by concentration. The mind encompassed by wisdom is the defilements set free."*

The function of morality is to purify, of concentration to penetrate, of wisdom to liberate. In that they are a unity, they do not prosper without each other's support. For morality devoid of concentration conduces to delusion. Concentration devoid of morality conduces to a dangerous inflation. Whereas wisdom devoid of concentration conduces to deficiency of mind-control. Wherefore, when it is recommended to sink the peripheral faculties down into the aggregates (or spheres) of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *pañña*, at diaphragm-pit, the intention is to push (*bhāvanā*) the faculties to their logical and ultimate culmination. Namely, the attainment of the supramundane, the release-knowledge finality (*aññatavindriya*).

The twenty-two potential faculties (given on page 37), commencing into play in this with the potential faculty of vision (*cakkhindriya*), come into play in this smelting-cultivation (*bhāvanā*) process as controlling guides. They are expedited to transmute raw material into refined, a process which can reach its fullest pitch only at this most vital of centres in the diaphragm-pit, otherwise known as the 'heart-base' (*haddaya vatthu*). It is termed so in that the aggregates of perception, memory, thought, and knowledge emerge therefrom. Centred there the faculties are in what is called *ceto-samādhi*, 'heart-concentration'. It is only at this focal point that the mundane faculties are able to emerge and issue out (through transmutation process) in release-faculties (*ceto-vimutti*) that are supramundane.

Now when the faculties have penetrated the spheres of morality, concentration, and wisdom (significant of the Path) in successive style, the sphere of release (*vimutti*) appears. Release from what? Release from the aggregate of the crude human form (*manussa kāya hina*). It is release in the sense of *passing from*, transcending (for that moment) that particular level or stage of aggregates. Having being released therefrom in this style, it perceives its release (*vimutti ñāṇa dassana*).

Whereupon the next formation appears. In this instance, the refined human counterpart (*manussa kāya panita*). Otherwise known as the 'astral'.

To understand *what* this refined human counterpart is, it is necessary first to comprehend *how* it comes to exist at all. It comes to exist through the process of contact (*phassa*), of *impression*, and of *intensification*. As soon as a child is born, its very physicality serves as the base for psycho-formative reproduction. For the human organism is not merely a consistency of *dead* cells, it is infused with *activity*. It is this active potentiality which contains in it the germ of psycho-physical replication.

Now the 'field-of-form' in which all this psycho-physical activity is strung, inevitably partakes of the characteristic feature and form derived from the original base of crude materiality, being 'stamped', as it were, therewith, and sustaining the impress thereof. Each form, derived in this replicated style, serves as the base for further development in turn, each reed-like in its inverted sheath. The human organism from the moment of birth, in its ceaseless impressionistic psycho-physical interplay of reciprocity (aññamañña), thus serves as the base or 'template' for the intensification of continuous refinement in involuted style. Form (rūpa) is impressed with feeling (vedanā), and feeling with the sense of form, aggravated to immediate consciousness, (viññāṇa) by the supporting imagery of perception (sañña) and memory (sankhāras).

In the Abhidhamma, this refined human counterpart is not classified in its formal (kāya) but in its psychological aspect (citta) as a resultant (vipāka). It is to be noted, therefore, that this particular formation is to be regarded as psychic in content, although tinges of crudely derived materiality linger therein. It is classified in the sensual sphere of origination (kāmavacāra) and does not rise above that status, being fettered by the attachments peculiar to the sense-sphere of existence, its psychic-supports (ārammaṇa) determining its *status quo*.

Now the potential faculties pass from the crude human form and impermeate this refined human counterpart, thus experiencing activity therein. It is then instigated to penetrate in mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) the further development of the Path, as signified by the spheres of morality, concentration, and wisdom, issuing out in release (vimutti) from the refined human aggregate, and the perception thereof (vimutti ñāṇa dassana).

Whereupon the next stage, the crude celestial form, or aggregate, (dibba kāya hina) appears.

It cannot be too often repeated that each successive form or sphere is, through the intensification of 'smelting' (bhāvanā), a creative process, a replicative force, pushing to ever increasing degrees of refinement. Each successive form is established with a Path (signified by the spheres of morality, concentration, and wisdom), and since the celestial aggregate is a more refined product than the human, its Path too is consequently more refined. And so forth for all that follows.

This, then, is what is implied by the obscure utterance: "*Self is the refuge of self.*"

Namely, through contact (phassa) each antecedent form (self) serves as the 'template' for the production of a more refined one, which again serves as the base for the next. All of which are only subtle reproductions of the five basic aggregates of personality (pañcupādānakkhandha) which go to fashion existence in the mundane (lokiya) sphere.

The crude celestial form (dibba kāya hina) and its refined counterpart (dibba kāya panita) are products of the refined human form as base. They come to exist through the same intensification process of impressionistic smelting. Nature knows little limit in its potential capacity for refinement, which can be either instigated deliberately (as in the jhānic method alluded to here) or by the mere force of meritorious living. For it is to be understood that a meritorious life lived is not a mere desultory drifting to nothingness and dissolution but an activity which bears psychic fruit, brought about through the gradual accumulation and retention (taḍārammaṇa) of wholesome (kusala) impulses from psychic moment to moment.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment of the celestial aggregate is classified as beneficial (kusala), but like the refined human form does not rise above the level of sensual attachments peculiar to the sensual sphere (kāmavacāra).

The other forms which follow from the celestial aggregate as base, are the Brahma form (brahma kāya

hina) and its refined counterpart (brahma kāya panita).

Unlike the celestial aggregate, these Brahma forms do not arise merely through meritorious living as such, but have to be deliberately instigated (by jhānic concentration). Only those who practice jhāna (whether by concentration on any one of the kasinas, or on such states of mind as compassion etc.) attain this formal embodiment, which surpasses the sensual sphere.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment is classified in the form-sphere (rūpavacāra), due to its absorption in formal states and because materiality is still present. Its emotional and psychic supports (ārammana), however, are of jhānic content, based on equanimity or bliss, as the case may be.

From the refined Brahma form as base the Arūpa-Brahma form and its refined counterpart are produced, being proficient in the absorptions of formlessness (arūpajhāna), whether it be the experience of the infinity of space, the infinity of consciousness, voidness, or neither perception nor non-perception.

In the Abhidhamma, this embodiment is classified in the formless-sphere (arūpavacāra), because materiality is no longer present and because of the intangibility of its psychic supports. It would be misleading, however, to infer from this that the conscious-subject is formless as such. It is the support which is formless, the subject is endowed with form, composed of the cognitive element (viññāṇadhātu). It is to be noted that consciousness (viññāṇa) is one of the four forms of nutriment (āhāra) and in the Dependent Origination process (paticca samuppāda) it is consciousness (viññāṇam) which serves as the base for the arising of immateriality-materiality (nāma-rūpa). It (viññāṇa), therefore, is to be reckoned as a quantity with the capacity for formative manifestation, and is not formless as such.

With the attainment of the refined Arūpa Brahma form, mundane aggregates reach their limit.

It is also to be understood that some already possess a celestial or Brahma form at birth. This in no way implies that they are ready-made but simply that the human form which they impregnate at conception (patisandhi) receives their life-impulse once their exhaustion of meritorious potential in the upper planes has culminated. These celestials and Brahmas have no expedient but to be reborn, and once relinked by human birth are submerged in the new life which arises. These aggregates of personality, however, still continue to exist, sunk in the life-continuum substrate (bhavanga) at diaphragm-pit. They are to be understood as resultant levels (vipāka), whose function is only threefold: as departing consciousness (cuti), as relinking consciousness (patisandhi), and as life-continuum substrate (bhavanga).

It is a matter to be investigated, that experience is not confined to the human level of consciousness, but that there also exist in latency (Plato's theory of forms) other aggregates of experience accumulated in other spheres. The human level alone is inadequate to support the aspirant for release from mundane limits, because in the first place consciousness aspires for release only after it has had a surfeit thereof. As long as the hunger for mundane delights (as well as celestial bliss) remains, so long does the tendency to release fail to present itself. Only he who has had his fill of mundane things - at the all-inclusive levels of human, celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma attainment - is beset by an urge for higher things, and it would be useless to speak of such higher things to one who has not yet had his fill. That is why it is said that there are creatures who delight in becoming, and when they hear of putting a stop to becoming their minds do not respond.

In the search for selfhood (Buddha: *which is better, young men, to go in search of a woman or to go in search of your self?*) we have arrived at this point of the Arūpa-Brahma aggregate. But, like all the other aggregates earlier passed, it is merely a higher level of the mundane personality (upādānakkhandha)

and cannot be identified as the permanent refuge and isle of self, or in any way be established as such, because it too decays and dies. A man becomes a deva, a Brahma, or an Arūpa-Brahma deity only because he worked from the human level at base, at death being translated to the upper planes.

To be satisfied with the attainment of the Arūpa Brahma plane as something endowed with self-sufficiency would be unrewarding, to say the least, considering that the wheel of birth and death rolls on. The problem of discovering the root and base of all these offshoots of personality, labouring under the delusion of an *eternal* self, remains. Of which it is said:

“No opening can be discovered by which creatures, mazed in ignorance, fettered by a thirst for becoming, stray and wander.”

The ‘no opening’ referred to here is the *anattā* process of split-personification, leaving no trace of the split-origin (already discussed in the chapter on *anattā*), of the amorphous plurality which comes about through the dependent origination (*paticca samuppāda*) process.

This is why we witness Buddha preserving a noble silence on whether the self exists after death or does not exist after death. In one sense it does, in another sense it doesn't, the whole truth of it being inextricably bound up in the *anicca-anattā* process of split-personality.

However, when the Arūpa-Brahma aggregate is pushed on to dead-centre, and on into the spheres which signify the Path, a more refined form manifests itself, called the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū. It is so termed because of the transition-of-lineage from mundane to supramundane.

The Dhammakāya Gotrabhū is a refinement of the Arūpa-Brahma form as base. As we have already observed, all the antecedent forms issued forth under the transmutative agency of an intensification process, each antecedent form serving as the ‘template’ for the emergence of a succedent, in chain-reaction impress. At this juncture, the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū serves as the psychic link between the mundane (*lokiya*) and the supramundane (*lokuttara*) consciousness, and is otherwise termed ‘converted’. It is the ‘bridge’ whereon and whereby the mundane aggregates may be viewed in retrospect, and the promise of supramundane excellence viewed in prospect.

In its initial stages this Dhammakāya is not something to be regarded as final and complete, because it is by the same process of intensification susceptible to further degrees of refinement. The realisation of the four Noble Truths begins to dawn at this point, unfolding itself in perspective, with the consequent abandonment of wrong views and the defilements, in ever ascending scale, making for the *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmin*, *Anāgāmin*, and *Arahatta* aspects of consciousness, respectively.

It cannot be too often repeated that the production and emergence of all these forms and spheres is the result of an *intensification* process. Each form or sphere in its centre is *void*, and it is in this very voidness that the causal force of will is pushed. The void serves as the *passive* condition whereby things may arise. It is the force of direction and will, however, which actually instigates their rise. All phenomenae, whether through will or occasion, arise in the basic condition of voidness, and it is due to this hiatus of voidness (between one manifestation and the next) that Hume asserts that no causal connection can be perceived from the appearance of one thing to the next.

It is only in the nature of things that there always be a void serving as the basic condition. The void (Plato's Receptacle) is always necessary as a passive conditional matrix of emptiness (*natthi paccaya*) wherein the causal seed may be sown before any result (*vipāka paccaya*) may issue forth. It is in this passive matrix, or receptacle, that the determining force of *will* is put and pushed.

But will (*cetana*), or the controlling faculties (*indriya paccaya*), is not enough, it must possess some

antecedent 'material' on which to work, so that what is merely in the state of potentiality becomes actuality. In the case of these forms and spheres of ever increasing refinement, each antecedent form or sphere of the same nature serves as the material (*ahāra paccaya*) which is smelted down by will into the voidness at its centre, whereon a refined counterpart of it appears. Only in this light does the injunction 'self is the refuge of self' become clear. For an antecedent 'self' is harnessed as the base for the production and emergence of a more refined one, until all sense attachment to mundane residues is purged.

All the Dhammakāya forms are release (*vimutti*) forms, in contrast to the mundane forms which are only of temporary (*sammuti*) usage. Unless the release forms are attained, emancipation from the mundane sphere of things remains an impossibility, because the mundane forms are too crude to comprehend in their totality the Noble Truths, the characteristics of mutability, suffering, and impersonality, and the way to the transcending thereof.

Vipassanā (penetrative insight) good and proper, begins only when the Dhammakāya Gotrabhū (transition-of-lineage from mundane to supramundane) is attained. Samatha (*jhānic* tranquillity) carries consciousness up to Arūpa Brahma status and there reaches its limit. That is why the yogis of old were unable to penetrate the process of Dependent Origination (*paticca samuppāda*) by which personalities arise. Surpassing the domain of Samatha, Buddha arrived at Gotrabhū Ñāṇa (transition-of-lineage insight). With consciousness impregnated in the Dhammakāya form he took stock of all that which goes to compose the mundane. Before Buddha there was only Samatha. Vipassanā begins with the Buddha.

The Dhammakāya forms are called 'release' (*vimutti*) forms because they have become so refined that no attachment remains, and they become the vehicles of emancipation. They are expedited to review mundane aggregates, to observe the crudity therein, and to attain emancipation therefrom. This process (of a more refined form observing the crudity in a lesser form) is a necessary process, because it is not in the power of a crude form to comprehend the refinement in a higher form, or to jump immediately thereto. The process is not confined to an observation of the human aggregates of personality, but to the celestial, Brahma, and Arūpa-Brahma aggregates. And this is so, because if the observation is constrained merely to the human level of aggregates all that the mind will be emancipated from is the human aggregates, when as a matter of fact there are other subtler levels of a more insidious nature to be emancipated from.

The process by which this takes place is through an objectification technique. Consciousness is not only capable of objectifying itself, but is by its very nature a matter of divisibility. If this were not so, then it would never be able to observe 'itself'. At any moment of time, it is always a posterior aggregate of consciousness which observes an anterior one. One group of percepts is always observing another group. The word 'itself' is misleading because it is only one group of aggregates which is being observed and not the totality thereof. This is one reason why it is said that all phenomenae are characterised by a series of not-selves (*anattā*). To say, at any one time, that it is the same 'self' is not to be exact. To say, again, that it is a different 'self' is also not to be exact. There are states of awareness which arise and perceive other states. States arise and states vanish, aggregates appear and aggregates disappear. The psychic process is a series of lookings-back and lookings-front and lookings-around. This is its very nature, and it only becomes more refined the higher it proceeds in the attainment (*samāpatti*) scale.

Although it is already a process of nature for one moment of consciousness to reflect upon another, it is never carried to such lengths as in this gymnastic of penetrative-insight called Vipassanā. It is due to identification with a certain moment of consciousness that man (by that moment) becomes enslaved. Feelings arise, reactions arise, by the second. Mind-control remains a dream. In the

average man the aggregates of experience (sankhāras) are in such a state of confusion and disunity as to prevent exact perceptive facility. Only when the mind is centralized by the Samatha-Vipassanā technique and purged thereby does it become keen enough to observe psychic phenomenae with ease. This facility, too, is the method by which detachment (upekkha) is attained.

The problem of the practitioner of Samatha-Vipassanā is to unify whatever levels, or aggregates, of consciousness there may be and harness them into service so as to be available to perceptive immediacy at a moment's notice. Once this facility, of transiting from the crudest level to the most refined, has been attained, it can be said that the practitioner is in command of his faculties and an adept in the concentrated-absorption of mundane and supramundane states of consciousness.

It is to be observed that the term 'mystic' is not applied to these states, for there is nothing amorphous or dreamy about them. On the contrary, they are if anything extremely clear-cut and keen. For if they were not as clear-cut and keen as they are, there would surely be no release from the ceaseless round of birth and death, without end.

When face to face with refinements of the mind, terminology fails. The Pali terms of *manas*, *citta*, *viññāna*, are scarcely adequate to express the various aspects of mind, capable as they are of being pushed to translucent limits. Not only is consciousness passive, it is also active. It perceives, is aware, and cogitates at different levels of refinement. All of which involves a thorough comprehension of mind-instants and the analysis of to what extent the gamut of conscious states is resultant (vipāka), functional (kiriya), or volitional (javana).

It is to be understood, therefore, that Vipassanā involves something more than mere desultory human awareness. The confusion has always been to assume that mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) at the human level of consciousness is all there is to Vipassanā. Satipaṭṭhāna is vigilance of mind, a basic necessity of awareness whether in or out of jhāna. It is not to be transmuted immediately into the highest perceptive insight of Vipassanā Ñāna.

It is said that the dependent origination (paticca samuppāda) process in direct order (anuloma), commencing with ignorance as a condition (avijjā paccaya sankhāra), is also complemented by an inverted (patiloma) cessation (nirodha) process, commencing with the removal of ignorance (avijjāya tv-eva asesa-virāga-virāga-nirodhā sankhāra-nirodho).

This is so because when ignorance is removed through morality, concentration, and wisdom, then the offshoots (ceta-bhuta) of split-personality (anattā), which is only another term for the aggregate-composites (sankhāras), are as a consequence removed. That is, they are through concentration controlled to a point (at diaphragm-pit), smelted out of whatever defilements there are, and all conflicting impulses put to rest. Unified, integrated, purged, ceased, leaving no remainder (upadisesa), with no further issue. Thus put to rout, there is no subsequent base (paccaya) for the arising of rebirth-consciousness (viññāna), name and form (nāma-rūpa), and all the rest.

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta concludes with the promise:

*"Verily, O Bhikkhus, whosoever practices these four foundations of mindfulness (on formations, feelings, thoughts, and mental objects) in this manner for seven years. . . seven months... seven days. . . then one of these two fruits may be expected by him: highest knowledge (arahattaship) here and now, or if some remainder of clinging is yet present, the state of non-returner (anāgāmin). Because of this was it said: this is the only way, O Bhikkhus, which leads to the purification of creatures, to passing beyond sorrow and lamentation, to the destruction of grief and despair, to the attainment of the Method, to the realisation of Nibbāna. Namely, the four foundations of mindfulness."*

The paucity of Arahattas and Anāgāmins in the world is not due to any lack of practice, but rather to a fundamental misunderstanding of Buddha's promise. Firstly, ignorance of the method of inverted technique whereby each level of form, feeling, thought, and mental essence is observed, not as generally understood - confining itself to the human level alone. Secondly, that he was speaking in an especial context, in a specific period of history, knowing by supernormal insight many were those who possessed the faculties ripe for attainment. This promise cannot be converted at this juncture to mean all and sundry.

Nevertheless, although attainment is something dependent on individual maturity, the path to enlightenment is always open to all. As delivered to Subhadda, the last convert, before the final passing away:

*“Subhadda, if bhikkhus were to live rightly (sammā vihareyyum) the world would not be void of Emancipated Ones.”*

And the living rightly, as already made known, begins and ends with right understanding (sammā diṭṭhi) and right concentration (sammā samādhi).

## Chapter 6 : Of Essence (Dhamma)

*“You, O Bhikkhus, are my own true sons, born of my word, born of dhamma, formed by dhamma, heirs of dhamma, not of compounded things.”*

What is this dhamma? It may be rendered as nature, essence, the state of things as they are, life, a living thing. Because it is life and a living thing, this dhamma is respected and revered even by the Buddhas. And how is it revered? By sinking the peripheral faculties to diaphragm-centre and impermeating the spheres of dhamma there. This is revering the dhamma.

In its mundane aspect, dhamma is the emergence of all component forms. In its supramundane aspect, it is the Dhammakāya, or essence-form. In its collective transcendental aspect, it is the Ideal, the Uncaused, the Always-So.

Of dhamma, the contemporary of Buddha, Lao Tzu, has this to say:

*“The Tao (Dhamma) which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao. The name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name, it is the beginning of heaven and earth. With a name, it is the mother of all things. Only one who is ever free from desire can apprehend its spiritual essence. He who is ever a slave to desire can see no more than its outer fringe. These two things, the essential and the physical, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery, the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all wonders...”*

*“Tao in itself is vague, impalpable - how impalpable, how vague! Yet within it there is Form. How vague, how impalpable! How profound, how obscure! Yet within it there is a vital principle. This principle is the quintessence of reality, and out of it comes Truth... All things under heaven are products of Being. But Being itself is the product of Not Being... Tao produced unity, unity produced duality, duality produced trinity, and trinity produced all existing things... Not visible to sight, not audible to ear, in its uses it is inexhaustible. Tao lies hid and cannot be named, yet it has the power of transmuting and perfecting all things. Tao produces all things, its virtue nourishes them all, each formed according to its nature, each perfected according to its strength...”*

*“Man takes his law from the earth, earth takes its law from heaven, heaven takes its law from Tao. But the law of Tao is its own spontaneity.. O how still it is and formless, standing alone without change, reaching everywhere without incurring harm! It must be regarded as the mother of the universe. Its name I know not. To designate it, I call it Tao. Endeavouring to describe it, I call it Great.”*

As already alluded to in Chapter I, the ancient terms of Dhamma, Tao, and Form of the Good, are universal representations of that which is not merely abstract and ideal, but also immediate and concrete. They are abstract and ideal in that they represent a collective potentiality which may be aspired to. Whereas they are immediate and concrete in that they impermeate life as essential values, which gravitated into a specific field of personality, become actualised.

The ineffability of dhamma, therefore, is not something upon which to speculate, but to initiate. For, as it is said:

*“Even in this very body... is the world. . .”*

Insofar as dhamma may be gravitated into a specific field of personality, it has its culmination as consciousness, as thought, as word, and as deed. It is here that Whitehead's observation regarding temporality (*‘some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact’*) begins to take on a really effective ring, although Whitehead himself would never have dreamed of the limits to which it might be pushed. The aim of life is, indeed:

*“The process of eliciting into actual being factors in the universe which antecedently to that process exist only in the mode of unrealised potentialities. The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual, and the fact of such transformation includes the immediacy of self-enjoyment.”*

All things (dhamma) are the product of process, and process is not something which is capable of being disassociated from the flow of temporal fact, for it derives its very existence from the flow of that temporal fact, from the nature of its becoming. This becoming necessarily implies some sort of power as its base, or it would not flow and become at all. As Plato observes:

*“My suggestion would be that anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another even for a moment, however trifling the cause and however slight and momentary the effect, has real existence. And I hold that the definition of being (becoming) is simply power.”*

Now of all dhammas, the mind is the most active and potent. As it is said:

*“Whensoever, Ananda, the Tathāgata concentrates form in mind, and mind in form, and entering on awareness of buoyancy and ease abides therein, at that time, Ananda, the Tathāgata's form is more buoyant, softer, more pliable, and radiant. With little effort it rises from the earth into the sky, and in divers ways enjoys supernormal power, to wit: being one he becomes many, being many he becomes one. And so forth.”*

However, if the mind is to attain to real potency, the first thing it has to do is to *stop*. That the mind is the most difficult of things to ‘stop’ cannot be too often stressed, for unless it stops jumping from one thing to the next it is a thing devoid of strength. To stop, however, is not to be confused with *inactivity*, but the capacity to harness energy so as to penetrate anything at which it is aimed.

Experience reveals that motionlessness is an impossibility insofar as life is concerned. And yet it is said:

*“I stand **still**, Angulimala. Do you likewise!”*

This utterance to the bandit of the name is as simple as it is profound. It is the third Noble Truth. For to stop is to put an end (nirodha) to pain. When mind itself a product of time, has ‘stopped’, then it attains to ascendancy over time. And how? Past time is recollected, future time unrolled. It is in control. In consequence of this facility the Buddhas are regarded as timeless. However, the Buddhas themselves are products of time, without which there would be no arising of Buddhas, since Buddhahood implies resolve initiated, effort applied, experience accumulated, enlightenment realised, and release attained. All of which has basis in time, impermeated in temporal fact, without which nothing has ever been known to arise.

To ‘stop’ is the most difficult of things to *do*. This in itself is a paradox. A paradox which issues in release.

Insofar as 'stopping' is concerned, it can be achieved only under the process of another frequency altogether than that by which consciousness is normally perpetuated. Namely, the concentrated-absorption of jhāna. And why? Because it has peculiar and far-reaching attributes. We might say, transcendental attributes. 'Stopping' implies either of two possibilities. Namely, consciousness (the quantity to be stopped) must be a potentiality capable of motionlessness, or possessed of an immense velocity. In the first instance, only something which is motionless can penetrate the flux around. On the other hand, a higher degree of vibrative intensity is capable of penetrating a lower degree. This is true of jhāna. For although jhāna may possess a deceptive appearance of inactivity, it vibrates at a higher degree of intensity than the most rapid of phenomena. It must be classified as activity in equilibrium.

In that the jhānic consciousness vibrates at a higher degree of intensity than its objective field, it possesses the capacity to apprehend the flux in things. For a flux (jhāna being also a flux) to apprehend a flux is a debatable affair. However, that is how things function, and the jhānic consciousness is not only capable of apprehending the flux in things, but its own flux as well. A technique whereby the mind abstracts itself from its environmental supports and absorbs itself in itself. It is, as Plato suggests, for the mind:

*"To withdraw from all contact with the body and concentrate itself by itself, and to have its dwelling, so far as it can, both now and in the future, alone by itself, freed from the shackles of the body."*

If the mind depends constantly on externalities for its support, then it will never be able to free itself from subjection thereto. Without detachment of mind no lasting happiness can ensue, since such happiness cannot depend upon the whim and fancy of every incident that upsprings.

Consciousness, or the mind, necessitates a specific field of containment, and is not just loosely dispersed in space without a centre of gravitation. Consciousness being a product of occasion, of a unification process, vibrates in a field, and does not exist otherwise. Since they are developed from the five sense-door field as base, the aggregates of personality, no matter how they may be processed, must still partake of the nature of aggregates in a specific field. Nothing can be processed to its ultimate refinement unless based on antecedent material.

Thus, as we have already observed from the previous chapter, the five sense-door field of human personality is capable of being pushed (bhāvanā) by concentrated technique to translucent limits, culminating in what is called the Dhammakāya. This Dhammakāya is a composite impermeation and fusion of element (dhātu) and essence (dhamma). Commencing with the five sense-door field of human personality, the aggregates are pushed (magga) until they change their lineage (Gotrabhū) from mundane to supramundane, emerging (phala) as essence aggregates (dhammakhandha). The specific field of personality is still there, only its *quality* has been changed, transmuted and transformed. It is no longer mundane, it has become supramundane. One occasion has become objectified in another, one actuality transmuted into the next, until the most translucent qualities have emerged. This is the perfection of consciousness through concentration, and the attainment of the transcendent mind (adhicitta). It is this transcendent mind, purged of all mundane residues, which the Emancipated Ones take with them (as a bird its wings) in final withdrawal. And how is this transcendent mind of the Dhammakāya attained?

*"There are three factors, O Bhikkhus, necessary for one intent on the attainment of higher consciousness (adhicitta). Namely, the factors of concentration, of energy, and of equanimity."*

By the potential of these three factors, the elemental (dhātu) portion of the human aggregate is

processed, until it emerges in pure form. The essence (dhamma) portion is processed, until it emerges in perfect qualities of consciousness (pāramī). The elemental portion is the ultimate resultant of the cognitive (viññāṇa) base. The essence portion is the fusion of experience into the specific field of personality, as signified by the cognitive base. Element and essence are fused in a specific field, to issue in the establishment of the Dhammakāya.

Now when it is said that to reverse the dhamma one sinks the peripheral faculties, commencing with the potential faculty of vision (cakkhindriya), to the diaphragm centre, it is to be understood that this form of penetration sinks consciousness deeper and deeper into space, and as a consequence accomplishes ascendancy over external supports.

Insofar as spatiality is concerned, it is to be understood that the space which presents itself to the five sense-door field of apprehension is a compounded element, inextricably fused into the four basic principles of elemental solidity (pathavi dhātu), fluxive liquidity (apo dhātu), thermal temperature (tejo dhātu), and atmospheric gaseousness (vāyo dhātu). Pure space, uncompounded and underived, exists in primal state only as the Nibbānic element (Nibbāna Dhātu), and is cognised through introverted technique by the pure mind (viññāṇam) of the Dhammakāya.

What normally passes for space is not an absolute as to essence. Although space is a category of experience, its extensibility is indefinite and amorphous, to say the least. The more refined consciousness becomes, the greater penetration it attains over the five sense-door field of spatiality, which as a consequence becomes more elastic. It is said to be 'elastic' because it is not merely a subjective phenomenon, but also in the transcendental sense objective. Due to this facility of expansion and contraction peculiar to pure mind, it is able to investigate phenomenae in detail, revealing as a consequence that all component things are void at core. Much has been said of this void centre, or core, inherent in things, but the mystery remains. As old Lao Tzu observes:

*"Thirty spokes unite in one nave. The utility of the cart depends on the **hollow centre** in which the axle turns. Clay is molded into a pot: the utility of the pot depends upon its **hollow inside**. Doors and windows are cut in order to make a house: the utility of the house depends on the **empty space within**. The excellence of a dwelling is its site, the excellence of a mind is its **profundity**."*

Voidness is the centre from which all things emerge, have their momentary existence and utility, and become void again. Whensoever pure mind is established in this voidness, freed of elemental tension, it becomes deep, immeasurable, profound. As it is said:

*"A Tathāgata released from what is called bodily form, feeling, perception, aggregates, and consciousness (mundane), is profound, immeasurable, hard to plumb, like the great ocean. It is not fitting to state that he is reborn, not reborn, both reborn and not reborn, neither reborn nor not reborn."*

Due to the fact that the mind is clouded by the aggregates (sankhāras) of peripheral personality, it is unable to penetrate and comprehend the void core of things, to pass beyond the delusive dreams of its subjective world, endless in its self-creativity. As Shakespeare observes:

*"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."*

It is the purpose of right insight to purge the life principle of delusive dreams and to attain to purity of essence. As it is said:

*"Mud I do not call dirt. Delusion (moha), hate (dosa), and greed (lobha) I call dirt."*

The technique, therefore, is one of transmutation. When the consistencies of earth, water, fire, and air are purged from consciousness, it becomes bright, lucent, pure. As it is said:

*“Both the personal and external elements are to be regarded as they really are, by perfect insight: this is not mine, not this am I, herein is not the self of me. So regarding them, one is repelled by them and cleanses one’s heart thereof.”*

The elemental bonds of temporal personality are something to be purged. For although the mind develops and fructifies through a temporal process, traversed in compounded spatiality, it nevertheless eventually reaches a stage, or sphere of experience, where, to paraphrase Buddha:

*“There is neither earth, water, fire, nor wind. Nor the formless states of the Arūpa Brahmas (ākāsanañca āyatana, etc.). A state of existence wherein neither this world nor any other, sun nor moon, may infiltrate its gross materiality. A state such as this, where nothing comes or goes in rebirth process, which neither loiters in shackles of temporality, nor passes away therefrom to again arise. Unsupported by random causality of process or base, no deleterious repercussions may impinge upon its specific field.”*

There are still some who labour under the misconception that Nibbāna is a state bordering on extinction, an annihilation of all residues, consciousness inclusive. They arrive at this view through inference, with the Buddha word itself as reference:

*“Since in this very life a Tathāgata is not to be regarded as existing, is it proper to speak of him thus: the Tathāgata comes to be after death, he comes not to be after death, he both comes to be and comes not to be after death, he neither comes to be nor comes not to be after death?”*

Due to the fact that even in this very life the Dhammakāya of the Buddha remains unperceived, whether the aggregates of human personality are present or disintegrated at death makes no difference at all. The term ‘after death’ in this instance has no significance at all and does not apply. Hence it is said:

*“A Tathāgata is to be proclaimed in **other** than these four ways.”*

Nowhere is it ever said that the supramundane consciousness (lokuttara citta) is in any way rendered extinct, or that an emancipated one is beyond feeling (vedanā), happiness (somanassa), or equanimity (upekkha). As it is said:

*“Even here and now, O Bhikkhus, in this present body (not to speak of after death thereof) that essential emancipated consciousness which is the Tathāgata’s remains unplumbed. And although this is what I teach, there are those who accuse me falsely of proclaiming a doctrine which is annihilationist.. As of old, so now proclaim I only this: suffering, and the ceasing of **suffering**.”*

Annihilationism (uccheda ditṭhi) and eternalism (sassata ditṭhi) are both condemned out of hand. Extremes are to be deplored. The Middle Path, avoiding both extremes, is just the great fact of process, wherein cause and effect follow one another, begetting more causes and effects, *ad infinitum*.

*“The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes... Everything exists, that, Kaccayana, is one extreme. Everything does not exist, that, Kaccayana, is the other extreme. Transcending these extremes, Kaccayana, the Tathāgata expounds dhamma **by way of cause**.”*

Now, insofar as the attainment of Nibbāna is concerned, what is rendered extinct is: (1) the mundane forms subject to decay (upādāna rūpa), (2) the mundane feelings of attachiveness (upādāna vedanā), (3) the mundane faculty of perception (upādāna saññā), (4) the mundane aggregate of grasping tendencies (upādāna sankhāra), (5) the mundane grasping consciousness (upādāna viññāṇa).

The five aggregates of grasping personality (pañcupādānakkhandha) are rendered extinct before entry into final Nibbāna. Perception and feeling as pertaining to the human residues is extinguished by jhānic process (saññā vedayita nirodha). Having extinguished the human residues by this method, only the perception and feeling pertaining to the Dhammakāya remains. It is to be understood that the mundane consciousness is extinct and that which activates henceforth is the supramundane emancipated mind. This will be better understood in the light of there being higher levels of consciousness than the mere mundane, which may be instigated by the adept at will, and that the lower levels of mundane contact become a hindrance once the highest level is in function, and are therefore put aside.

The fivefold mundane aggregate is rendered extinct because it is this which imposes suffering, and since the goal is the cessation of suffering, it is rendered extinct. This, however, in no way implies that the perfections of experience (pāramīs) accumulated through many an aeon also become extinct, because if they become extinct then it would render nonsense of the whole process, for it would be a process which renders its own fulfilment extinct. A contradiction in terms.

The extinction of the fivefold mundane base is so often confused with complete oblivion because it is not understood that nature (dhamma) contains the possibility of an infinite refinement in its life processes. The fivefold base of form, feeling, perception, impressions, and consciousness, may be processed by integral involuted technique until it culminates in the highest refinement. Thus the Dhammakāya itself is possessed of form, feeling, perception, impressions, and consciousness (dhammakhandha), but they are so refined that they are devoid of connection with their original base. It is this Dhammakāya which attains release, and only this. What is this dhammakhandha? It is a group or collection of essences. Form is a khandha, so is feeling, perception, impressions, and consciousness. So is morality (sīlakkhandha), concentration (samādhikkhandha), and wisdom (paññākkhandha). Anything which represents a collection or group is termed thus. Thus the dhammakhandha implied here is that collection of purified essences which make the supramundane personality what it is. The Dhammakāya differs from the concept of an antecedent changeless and eternal soul in that it is not something given and ready-made. It is something which, through a strenuous process of integral discipline, is finally built.

And how is it built? By the accumulation of experience, for one thing. Finally, by the introverted technique of concentration, signified by mergence in the Path of morality, concentration, and wisdom, with its emergence in release. Established at diaphragm pit, experience is smelted and pounded out of what it is not, processed in essence, to finally issue out in pristine state, as signified by the Dhammakāya. Because this Dhammakāya is a 'release' (vimutti) form it is not correct to say that it existed or does not exist.

The central core of the ideal does not signify annihilation of the life process as such, but develops and cultivates it to the refinedest degrees. Suffering is reduced to zero, leaving only the perfections to stand. How abstract and yet concrete *dhamma* is cannot be too often stressed. For although it arises through environmental contact, traversed in spatio-temporality, it is nevertheless transcendental in potentiality, ideal, pure mind stuff. Although the supramundane consciousness is something which is developed and abstracted from the mundane as base, it finally outlives it, leaving it behind. As it is said:

*“Man’s eye, ear, nose, tongue, form, and mind, O Bhikkhus, are as an ocean. Their motion is made up of shapes, of sounds, of smells, of tastes, of sensations, of ideas. He who conquers these, stands upon the other shore... One who has reached the other shore, O Bhikkhus, thinks thus: this raft has been of great use to me, resting on it have I crossed to the further shore. Suppose now I haul it up or sink it in the deep and go my ways! By so doing, O Bhikkhus, that man would have finished with the raft.”*

It is implicit, therefore, that there is *someone* who finishes with the raft. The emancipated mind habitually dwells in either of two supports (ārammana), happiness (somanassa) and equanimity (upekkha). They are not considered as defilements (kilesa) because they do not grasp. It is grasping which defiles, and its impulsions are the motivating force which determine the arising of mundane form and the other aggregates. Due to this, this factor of grasping is the very quality which is absent from the emancipated mind. Happiness, however, remains, and release is classed as the greatest bliss (nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukham). If Nibbāna is the greatest bliss, then there must be some experiencing subject to appreciate the bliss, otherwise it renders nonsense of the whole concept.

Besides happiness and equanimity, the emancipated mind absorbs itself in another state of cessation attainment (nirodha samāpatti) whensoever it wills. This cessation is not to be confused with unconsciousness in the normally accepted sense of the word. It is impossible for the layman to accomplish this cessation attainment, because it belongs to the domain of only the emancipated mind. The mind of the layman is never under control in the emancipated sense. The emancipated one, however, accomplishes cessation attainment by an act of will, sinking consciousness down into the Dhammakāya, stopping activity at the depths. It does not imply that the life-flow or continuum is rendered extinct, but merely that it is sunk into substrate ineffectuality.

When the emancipated mind is in nirodha samāpatti of the Dhammakāya, it also covers and envelopes the life-processes in the physical form. That is why fire or any other calamity is ineffectual against the body of the emancipated one so long as he is in cessation attainment. The psychic potential of the Dhammakāya encompasses (unseen) the body, rendering it impervious to externality. An unconscious human cannot control even his limbs, whereas the emancipated one in cessation attainment is in elemental equilibrium.

This cessation attainment of the emancipated ones differs again from the jhāna of unconsciousness as practised by a species of Brahmas (asaññāsatta). When such yogis or Brahmas accomplish cessation it is only a mundane effort, and it is only the Brahma form which covers the physical form. It in no way destroys rebirth or the defilements, something which the emancipated one has already cut off at the root.

Nirodha samāpatti, as its name implies, is a cessation attainment and must be distinguished from the subject who accomplishes it as pleased. And this applies for all the other attainments of formlessness, the experiences of the infinity of space, of consciousness, of voidness, and of a state which is neither perception nor non-perception. They are experiences involving a distinct subject who volitionally instigates the states to immediacy of attainment whensoever he wills. Indeed, the margin of distinction between subject (the percipient) and object (the experience of formlessness, etc.) is not something involving space-time measurement; nevertheless it is for clarity of definition that a margin between experiencer and experience is differentiated.

Thus the term Arūpa Brahma may lead one to suppose that the deities who go by the name possess no form, when in reality what is implied is merely that possessing form these deities absorb themselves in formless states of mind. Also, that these so-called formless states are not so formless as to be vague, but have a centre of one-pointedness, which serves as an orientation base. Namely, the subject

himself. This centre is basic, because if no centralisation exists, then equilibrium will immediately be lost. From this centre, the radius of experience (whether of the infinity of space, etc.) is expanded out. The centre, as distinct from the radii, always remains or the jhānic state collapses and is no longer jhāna but mere random and stupefied life-flow (bhavanga), under no unified control. Sensorial aggregates and tendencies (sankhāras) may then arise in the subject, and all manner of dreams may result. This is so because the life-flow is not completely pure, and when the mind sinks into subconscious aspect these unpurged aggregates may come into play.

When it comes to Nibbāna and those beings that have attained to it, the case is different. It is different because those beings have extinguished the aggregates of defilement, and therefore no delusive or deceptive dreams arise whenever consciousness sinks into the subconscious aspect of bhavanga. Bhavanga, in the case of the completely emancipated one, flows on like a pure unadulterated stream. This in no way implies that these beings too are formless. Theirs is the form of the Dhammakāya, and it does not decay because it is made up of pure Nibbānic element. But it is to be understood that in its initial stages it was something smelted and transmuted from the mundane (lokiya) Arūpa Brahma form as base, to become a supramundane (lokuttara) form by virtue of process.

Now when an emancipated one still inhabits a physical form in the sensual world, the mundane aggregates of personality are still in service, whereby contact with the world is made. It is because these mundane aggregates are not completely extinguished that they are something to be rendered extinct before final entry into Nibbāna, their uses having been outworn. But when these residues are rendered extinct, it in no way implies that the emancipated one ceases to be conscious and no longer exists.

It cannot be too often repeated that, as in the case of the unconscious deities (asañña satta) of the Brahma plane, the cessation attainment known as nirodha samāpatti in no way implies extinction of selfhood, but merely the cessation of thought and feeling for temporary predetermined periods, after which thought and feeling are eventually returned to (supramundane) normalcy. Since an emancipated one while still in physical form accomplishes nirodha samāpatti at will, it is of no consequence whether he inhabits a physical form or not insofar as Nibbāna is concerned. To distinguish them, however, an emancipated one while still in physical form is said to be in Nibbāna with residue (saupādisesa Nibbāna). Without residue it is termed anupādisesa Nibbāna. The Dhammakāya of the emancipated one is perpetually in Nibbāna, and the jhānic states it accomplishes from time to time are only a functional exercise.

In our previous volume (*Sammā Samādhi II*), it was said that Nibbāna is a sphere of establishment, endowed with a specific size, a bounding edge, and occupying a certain place. And that this (Āyatana) Nibbāna is inhabited by Dhammakāya forms. It may be questioned why a sphere of establishment, endowed with a specific size, a bounding edge, and occupying a certain place?

It is a sphere because its specific field of influence is self-contained and has a limit. It is an establishment because all things once manifested are to be established somewhere and not just float about without an orientation centre. It possesses specific size because it has extension and depth, in proportion to the extent of pāramī of the beings who inhabit it, and which is measured not by yardstick but by ñāna, the way by which all things are measured in jhāna. It has a bounding edge because internality of each Nibbāna is distinct from externality, although the edge itself possesses no physicality but is lucent, and no bar to visibility or contact, being uncompounded and pristine. It occupies a certain place because it is only amorphous abstractions without foundation in manifested fact which can be said to occupy (save in the mind which conceives them) no place.

It is to be understood that an Āyatana Nibbāna is not something already given but something to be established. The Buddhas and their disciples who inhabit an Āyatana Nibbāna inhabit an establishment which is the product of their collective essence. It does not exist ready-made as something for a prospective Buddha to inhabit. He has to 'establish' it for himself. Namely, by the collective achievement of pāramī, by the magnitude of the aeonic travail, by the actuality of accomplishment which is Buddhahood itself. Without this accomplishment, Nibbāna would be mere pure space, with no one to experience its purity. That is why although Nibbāna is already existent as pure space, it is meaningless without beings to inhabit it. That is why it is to be specified that a 'separate' Āyatana Nibbāna comes to be because a Buddha comes to be, and not otherwise. Nor does one Buddha inhabit another Buddha's domain. As such, no ready-made Nibbānas strewn about in space exist awaiting prospective Buddhas. And it is said that each Buddha's Nibbāna is not standard as to size, because each varies in proportion to the extent of his field of pāramī. The varying degrees of effulgence pertaining to these Nibbānic beings are the external symbol of the extent of their accumulated pāramī or accomplishment, some more and others less.

An Āyatana Nibbāna, therefore, is to be understood as the end-result of an aeonic effort. Effort instigated in this temporal world fructifies in the accumulated potential of a transcendent sphere (āyatana) of release. The Buddha characterises Nibbāna as that *'which is unborn, unmade, un compounded, and unbecome'* in that it is the attainment of a primal purity which is essential in its universality. And that this primal purity is something which is to be fashioned into a specific field of consciousness as a status to be achieved through an aeonic effort traversed in temporal fact, being the only method by which it may be so realised. A process of gravitating the perfections of experience through the medium of the sense-door field into unification of personality. Which is how the dhamma becomes personified.

Nibbāna, therefore, is unborn, unmade, un compounded, unbecome, in the aspect of pure spatiality, which always existed to be realised. But it is realised at all only because of a conscious entity which does the realising. Namely, the Dhammakāya consciousness. When such an entity presents itself to realise this primal purity, then what was implicit as a potentiality to be experienced becomes explicit as an entelechy: a specific field of personality absorbed in a state of pure mentality.

It is apparent that there are two aspects of Nibbāna. As psychologicality and as spatiality. At one time the psychological aspect is presented to the fore:

*"The cessation of the defilements (āsavas) is Nibbāna."*

And at another time, the aspect of spatiality:

*"There is, O Bhikkhus, a sphere (āyatana) where there is neither earth, etc."*

It has already been belaboured that the only way to the attainment of this un compounded spatiality and sphere of establishment is through an integral process and technique, which delimits random phenomenae from encroaching into the individual field of apprehension. That this involves not only a physical but a psychical penetration of residues, and a purging thereof through first a moral (sīla) sphere of experience which delimits impurity from encroaching into its bounds. That this purity is not sufficient in itself, but has to be channelled again into a concentrated (samādhi) sphere of intensification. Which again is to be channelled into a sphere of intelligence (pañña) and thus achieve its release (vimutti) as well as perceive its release (vimutti ñāṇa dassana).

This is the therapeutic value of the Noble Path as practised by the Noble Ones. The path so practised is no dead formula but a living thing, a process of initiation and penetration into layers of becoming and the qualities of experience, a warding off of the superfluous and a bringing to birth of potentials

(indriya) latent in the organic psyche. The ultimate attainment of which is the last of the twenty-two potential faculties. Namely, the supramundane faculty (aññātāindriya) which sets the mind free.

Some consider that the emancipated one is absorbed like a drop in the ocean of Nibbāna, and therefore is formless, possessing no identity whatsoever. This view is widely prevalent because in the scriptures it is given that once the five aggregates of grasping personality have been cut off at the root the mind freed of the body is therefore '*profound, measureless, unfathomable, even like unto the great ocean.*'

It is not taken into account that the emancipated mind can be profound *like* the great ocean but not the ocean itself as such, and that an analogy is an analogy, to aid the understanding but not to confuse it. If the emancipated mind is absorbed into the ocean of Nibbāna and loses its identity altogether, then it is only another name for extinction. This, however, is a contradiction in terms, and renders nonsense of the whole process of psychic evolution, whereby a stream of life, starting from scratch, builds itself up aeon after aeon to culminate in the perfections of experience.

Why all the build-up if only to end in an ocean of nonentity? Truly, indeed, an '*emancipated one is to be proclaimed in other than these four ways*'.

Others, again, uphold that there is no such thing as 'temporary release', and that once emancipation of mind is attained there is no falling from that state. But this is in direct opposition to the texts, which are never weary of repeating that all things are impermanent, and therefore to be vigilant up to the end is of the essence. This is made clear enough in the case of Godhika who having attained temporary emancipation of mind for six times, but because of some ailment couldn't uphold it thus, fell therefrom. Wherewith, considering that for a man dying in such a state the destiny is uncertain, he then decided to cut his life short by his own volition, so as to attain Nibbāna *in full vigilance of mind*. Which he did, which later was by Buddha so confirmed.

This is only to illustrate that *temporary* release is not only possible but *inevitable*, so long as the physical body remains, and that there is no such thing as *permanent* release except once the physical body has been completely abandoned for good. That is why we observe Buddha going through all the gymnastic of jhāna before his final passing away, just to rid himself of the body for good, for that is the only way whereby in full presence of mind the supramundane consciousness is extricated from mundane residues.

This is by no means championing suicide, because, for the ordinary unemancipated mind, suicide has consequences as grave as murder, but merely to emphasise that the mind has to be kept in leash right up to the end, death's door being the most crucial moment of all.

Also, it is generally understood that there is no death, and the consequent attaining of Nibbāna, when in jhāna. This applies only to the jhāna of cessation attainment (nirodha samāpatti), wherein the mental impulsions and concomitants are temporally extinguished, and when in such state death is an impossibility, because there is no life-continuum relinkage. But it is obvious from the Parinibbāna Sutta that it is in jhāna that the Buddha took off, the fourth jhāna to be precise. The implication is that the attainment of Nibbāna signifies direction and purpose, of mental impulses, and that therefore those who uphold that Nibbāna is tantamount to extinction of identity do not know what they are talking about. That the attainment of Nibbāna is impossible without jhāna is too obvious to need further mention.

It is to be gathered from this, that there are various levels to truth, and he who only strikes the surface level, which is truth but only the surface truth, thinks that that is all there is to it, when as a matter of fact there is much more to delve below. For as it has been said over and over again: this dhamma is

hard to understand, rare, excellent, beyond the sphere of logic, to be understood only by the wise.

Verily, as has been said, the one who knows merely the written word is like unto a man who keeps cows for *hire*. Whereas the one who practises and understands the path is as the *owner* himself, enjoying the five products of the cow.

An emancipated one may be viewed as carrying his Nibbānic horizon with him wherever he goes (like a bird its wings), not to be separated therefrom. And if in this temporal world he lives, then in this temporal world his Nibbanā is. When, however, at the dissolution of the residues he departs beyond, then he departs taking his specific field of effulgent spatiality (like a bird its wings) therewith. Due to this integrated centrality, the specific field of effulgent spatiality which is the emancipated one's is said to be beyond elemental reach:

*“Where do earth, water, fire, and air no footing find? It is that state of consciousness (viññānam) unseen, unbounded, accessible from every side.”*

This is reminiscent of Lao Tzu: *“without moving you shall know, without looking you shall see, without doing you shall achieve.”*

For whensoever he wishes to apprehend a certain quarter, from that quarter apprehension does arise. Thus (to recall Plato) wisdom itself is a kind of purge. To achieve which purge, a special path (magga) of temporal intensification is requisite, so as to culminate and fruition (phala) in a specific field of release.

We may, therefore, conclude that the temporal world (lokiya dhamma) may be viewed as a manifestation of reality as *fluent*, in contrast to the Nibbānic state (lokuttara dhamma) as a reality which *endures*.

## Chapter 7 : The Wisdom Aspirant (Bodhisatta)

*“Many a house of life has held me, seeking ever him who wrought these prisons of the senses, sorrow fraught, sore was my ceaseless strife. . . Three eras of long toil bring Bodhisattas, who will be guides and help this darkling world unto deliverance. And the first is named of deep ‘Resolve’, the second of ‘Attempt’, the third of ‘Nomination’.”*

The ideal of the wisdom-aspirant, or bodhisatta, may be expressed in Western terminology, and for this we have selected Spinoza's treatise on *The Improvement of the Understanding*:

*“Man conceives a character much more stable than his own, and sees that there is no reason why he should not himself acquire such a character. Thus he is led to seek for means which will bring him to this pitch of perfection, and calls everything which will serve as such means a true good. The chief good is that he should arrive, together with other individuals if possible, at the possession of the aforesaid character... This, then, is the end for which I strive, to attain to such a character myself, and to endeavour that many should attain to it with me. In other words, it is part of my happiness to lend a helping hand, that many others may understand even as I do, so that their understanding and desire may entirely agree with my own. In order to bring this about, it is necessary to understand as much of nature as will enable us to attain to the aforesaid character, and also to form a social order such as is most conducive to the attainment of this character by the greatest number with the least difficulty and danger. We must seek the assistance of moral philosophy and the theory of education. Further, as health is no insignificant means for attaining our end, we must also include the whole science of medicine, and as many difficult things are by contrivance rendered easy, and we can in this way gain much time and convenience, the science of mechanics must in no way be despised. But before all things, a means must be devised for improving the understanding and purifying it, as far as may be at the outset, so that it may apprehend things without error, and in the best possible way...”*

*“Thus it is apparent that I wish to direct all sciences to one end and aim, so that we may attain to the supreme human perfection which we have named. And, therefore, whatsoever in the sciences does not serve to promote our ‘object’ will have to be rejected as useless. To sum up the matter in a word, all our actions and thoughts must be directed to this one end. Yet, as it is necessary that while we are endeavouring to attain our purpose, and bring the understanding into the right path, we should carry on our life, we are compelled first of all to lay down certain rules of life as provisionally good, to wit, the following:*

- (1) To speak in a manner intelligible to the multitude and to comply with every general custom that does not hinder the attainment of our purpose...*
- (2) To indulge ourselves with pleasures only in so far as they are necessary for preserving health.*
- (3) Lastly, to endeavour to attain only sufficient money or other commodities to enable us to preserve our life and health, and to follow such general customs as are consistent with our purpose.”*

This expresses in point the underlying principle under which the wisdom aspirant lives and works,

though often enough unconsciously. It is often 'unconscious' because the original resolve (adhiṭṭhāna) has through repeated impermeation in the world of spatio-temporal fact become submerged in the life-continuum substrate (bhavanga). Nevertheless, it is this subconscious life purpose, or momentum, which drives him along the level of a peculiar destiny, colouring and transforming invisibly the character of all he performs.

Though submerged from immediate cognizance, it manifests itself in tendencies (vāsanā) and as a resultant (vipāka) urge. Thus, Tolstoi:

*"It will hardly be believed what were my favourite and most constant subjects of reflection during boyhood, so incompatible were they with my position and age. But in my opinion the incompatibility of a man's position with his moral activity is the surest indication of his search for truth... I find myself confronted with the question: what is the aim of man's life? And I invariably arrive at the conclusion that the purpose of our human existence is to afford a maximum of help towards the completest development of everything that exists."*

To the casual eye, however, the wisdom-aspirant may seem to drift and eddy with the tide. But he is one with a mission, on his own, alone. As Lao Tzu observes:

*"All men are bright with joy as if at a great feast, in spring as if mounted on high. I alone am still and give as yet no sign of joy. I am as a babe which has yet to smile, forlorn as one who has nowhere to lay his head... I am unsettled as the sea, drifting as though I had no resting place. All men have their uses, I alone am stupid and a clown... Lonely though I am and unlike the rest, yet I revere the foster-mother Tao... My words are very easy to understand, very easy to put into practice, yet the world can neither understand nor practise them. My words have a clue, my actions have an underlying principle. It is because men do not know the clue that they understand me not. Those who know me are but few, and therefore is my honour more. Thus the sage clothes himself in coarse garments, but carries in his heart a gem."*

A career such as this is one of fortitude under stress. The layman seeks worldly gain or heavenly rewards, whereas the bodhisatta builds up perfections (pāramī). As a consequence, it is not the magnitude of worldly applause which matters, but the *quality* of the accomplishment. Merit (puñña) reaps even in this very life worldly gain and heavenly rewards, but it in no way ensures that final emancipation of heart which is the bodhisatta's struggle that all may one day have. The layman drifts as on an ocean without any ultimacy as goal, but the bodhisatta persists towards a harbour of refuge. Impelled thus, it becomes his strength, whereby his personality is perfumed. Worldly merit is as cash in the bank, but character is its own security. It is in this spirit, therefore, that Lao Tzu speaks:

*"Hoard not merit to yourself. For if you hoard it not to self how can it be taken away from you?"*

Because of this, the bodhisatta attains the eventuality of release for himself, and others besides.

But most creatures drift on towards nothingness, borne down the stream by the whirlpool of life. What this is like, Tolstoi gives us a glimpse:

*"What happened to me was something like this: I was put into a boat (I do not remember when) and pushed off from an unknown shore, had oars put into my unpractised hands, and was left alone, I rowed as best I could and moved forward, but the further I advanced towards the middle of the stream the more rapid grew the current bearing me away from my goal and the more frequently did I encounter others, like myself, borne away by the*

*stream. There were a few rowers who continued to row, there were others who had abandoned their oars, there were large boats and immense vessels full of people. Some struggled against the current, others yielded to it. And the further I went the more, seeing the progress down the current of all those who were adrift, I forgot the direction given me. In the very centre of the stream, amid the crowd of boats and vessels which were being borne down-stream, I quite lost my direction and abandoned my oars. Around me on all sides, with mirth and rejoicing, people with sails and oars were borne down the stream, assuring me and each other that no other direction was possible. And I believed them and floated with them. And I was carried far, so far that I heard the roar of the rapids in which I must be shattered, and I saw boats shattered in them. And I recollected myself. I was long unable to understand what had happened to me. I saw before me nothing but destruction, towards which I was rushing and which I feared. I saw no safety anywhere and did not know what to do. But looking back I perceived innumerable boats which unceasingly and strenuously pushed across the stream, and I remembered about the shore, the oars, and the direction, and began to pull back upwards against the stream and towards the shore.”*

It is the bodhisatta's ideal to pull not merely himself but others as well towards the shore, and to achieve this he exerts himself. Since to pull the drifting wrecks together to the shore is no easy task, seeing that they drift on so heedlessly and so fast, he doubles back and forth along the stream, giving a helping hand to each. This process is a tedious one, and due to this his mission cannot be achieved except under a perspective of aeons. Thus, birth and repeated birth in the stream of temporal fact is his destiny, so as to ferry folk across. In this process he perfects himself, and this perfection of experience is termed pāramī.

The three 'eras' of long toil, therefore, are first the establishing of an earnest resolve, followed by the actualising of the attempt, and finally by meriting nomination (from a Buddha of that period) as one for whom there is no turning back, as one who is destined to be.

In the last analysis, pāramī is character. Whensoever a wholesome thought, word, or deed is activated it leaves an impress upon consciousness, which serves as the base for character. Thus, one becomes generous by nature through giving (dana pāramī), becomes moral through morality observed (sīla pāramī), becomes self-sacrificing through renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī), becomes wise through experience (pañña pāramī), becomes energetic through effort (virīya pāramī), becomes forbearing through fortitude (khanti pāramī), becomes truthful through sincerity (sacca pāramī), becomes resolute through aspiration (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī), becomes compassionate through loving kindness (metta pāramī), becomes equable through serenity (upekkha pāramī).

The building up of pāramī is a process which is constantly to be developed and enlarged, for there are degrees of generosity, etc. Thus, ordinary generosity (dana pāramī) enables one to give of his substance, which is to be developed until flesh and blood are offered away as occasion demands (dāna upapāramī), which again is developed until even life itself is sacrificed (dāna paramatthapāramī). And so on for the other pāramīs.

Being mental in character, these pāramīs are contained in psychic spheres, fused into the life-continuum substrate, from which they arise as occasion demands, and into which they sink again when not in use. These spheres of pāramī expand and contract. They expand as merit and experience augments, and contract to condense to compactness and intensity. As they expand and contract they become more intense and manifest as radiance (rasmi).

The function of pāramī is to support, to perpetuate, and to preserve. Only insofar as this process continues in a continuum can it be said that any specific individuality is being preserved intact. If

anything pertains to identity, it is these spheres of pāramī gravitated into a specific field which may be identified as such, and only to that extent. And why? Because they serve as the base for futurity. Only in proportion to the extent of these pāramīs is any specific field of personality able to comprehend and know. What is beyond the scope of these spheres is beyond its experience, and therefore beyond its range to comprehend. It is thus that we witness Buddha dissuading disciples from attempting to attain certain supernormal scopes, as being beyond their range.

The extent of pāramī is, therefore, not standard for all, dependent as it is on the dimensions and intensity of the spheres involved. An ordinary disciple is not to be classed with a Buddha, whose range is vast through length of time involved. (The relative time-spans are given in *Appendix V (Pāramī) Sammā Samādhi II*). From this, it will be noted that a certain quota of pāramī is essential before the Nibbānic state can be attained.

It is in view of this fundamental importance of pāramī, that the bodhisatta has to complete his quota thereof, before his mission can be fulfilled. He is under the impulsion of a subconscious force which drives him on towards his objective, something which the layman does not feel. Because the process of building pāramī involves trial and error, many an aeon winnows away before it dawns upon the layman that life without some ultimate objective is exhausting and futile, and that life without an underlying principle to support it is adverse and painful.

The bodhisatta, however, is automatically pushed, as it were, by the momentum originally engendered by his earnest resolve (adhittāna) in the past, until it culminates in the requisite destiny. And since in this case the destiny is a mighty one, to be an All-Enlightened (Sabbāññu) Buddha in his own right, the momentum also accumulates with it a whole host of prospective disciples (who also make a resolve, though a lesser one), culminating in the establishment of another Āyatana Nibbāna.

It is to be understood that each prospective Buddha, as he traverses spatio-temporality in the process of accumulating the pāramīs, acquires a following which is limited by his resolve. Through the resultant (vipāka) contacts established from life to life, a prospective following eventually develops and attains release under his dispensation. The process of psychophysical evolution traversed in temporal fact is always followed by some form of involution, sublimated in the extrication of personality from its impermeated physicality. Thus, when a bodhisatta has completed his experience within the orb of prescribed limits, an involution process ensues, collecting to itself all its satellites, and extricating itself therewith from mundane residues. That is, those who have a connection with a certain Buddha are rounded up into the Āyatana Nibbāna over which he exercises authority.

It is, therefore, to be realised that one who is the prospective disciple of another prospective Buddha can in no wise attain release under the dispensation of some other Buddha, in view of the fact that he has no connection whatsoever with the said Buddha, and the said Buddha has consequently no jurisdiction over his destiny. This is why although this present Buddha, for instance, taught at large (for the benefit of futurity) he entered Nibbāna with the knowledge that his last convert (Subhadda) had been won. The rest belonged to the jurisdiction of the Buddhas to come.

The next Buddha in line, Metteya by name, was prophesied by the present Gotama Buddha as one who:

*"Shall lead an Order of disciples numbering many thousands, even as I do now lead an Order numbering many hundreds."*

This future Buddha was born during the present Buddha's lifetime, as the son of King Ajatasattu, and later became a bhikkhu, Ajita by name. That he did not attain Arahattaship like the others is evidence enough that no one attains release until his time is ripe. In this case, it was impossible for Ajita the

bhikkhu to attain Arahattaship, in that he was already destined (by antecedent resolve) to become a Buddha in his own right.

It should be understood that when the present Buddha portrayed himself as leading an Order of disciples numbering many hundreds, that only such a limited following was his. Those alluded to were human, whereas countless millions in the astral realms are not mentioned, being taken for granted.

What, in essence, is that for which the bodhisatta strives? It is the attainment of the Buddha Ratana, the Dhamma Ratana, and the Sangha Ratana. These three gems (ratana) are the ideal which he has to actualise until it is no more an ideal but an accomplished fact.

Thus, the Buddha Ratana is the attainment of the Dhammakāya form of enlightenment. Those who attain this are called Buddhas.

Thus, the Dhamma Ratana is the attainment of that refined issue which, having been processed from all experience through an aeonic travail, has its abode in the 'heart'.

Thus, the Sangha Ratana is the mental field (citta) unified into the emancipated state.

When these three ideals or gems have become actualised, they then become the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. As ideals they are a unity and inseparable, even as a human being is a unity and incomplete without body, heart, and mind.

The Buddha Ratana is the body of the Dhammakāya, the Dhamma Ratana the heart thereof, and the Sangha Ratana the psychic field of influence. As it is said:

*"You, O Bhikkhus, are my own true sons, born of my word..."*

He who would be a bodhisatta, therefore, is first a server of the multitude, come not to command but to serve. And this is well put by Santideva, in the India of the eighth century:

*"Well, we know indeed that the compounded is very bad and evil, and we will make a cutting off of this combination and assemblage, but for the sake of the ripening of creatures we will not proceed to a complete cessation of all compounded things... When to them that are burnt in the fires of pain shall I, through my favours born from the rain-clouds of my merit, shower peace? When shall I the void, to them that look on things as real, in reverence teach? ... Thus, through all the good accumulated by me, may I become a tranquillizer of the pains of all beings."*

## EPILOGUE

An extract from the concluding chapters of Leo Tolstoy's novel Anna Karenina:

Levin strode along the highroad, absorbed not so much in his thoughts (he could not as yet disentangle them) as in his spiritual condition, unlike anything he had experienced before...

*'And I looked for **miracles**, complained that I did not see a miracle which would convince me. A material miracle would have persuaded me. And here is a miracle, the sole miracle possible, continually existing, surrounding me on all sides, and I never noticed it! ...'*

And he briefly went through, mentally, the whole course of his ideas during the last two years, the beginning of which was the clear confronting of death at the sight of his dear brother hopelessly ill. Then for the first time, grasping that for every man, and himself too, there was nothing in store but suffering, death, and forgetfulness, he had made up his mind that life was impossible like that, and that he must either interpret life so that it would not present itself to him as the evil jest of some devil, or shoot himself.

But he had not done either, but had gone on living, thinking, and feeling, and had even at that very time married, and had many joys and had been happy, when he was not thinking of the meaning of life.

What did this mean?

It meant that he had been living rightly, but thinking wrongly.

He had lived (without being aware of it) on those spiritual truths that he had sucked in with his mother's milk, but he had thought, not merely without recognition of these truths, but studiously ignoring them.. .

It was quite dark now, and in the south, where he was looking, there were no clouds. The storm had drifted on to the opposite side of the sky, and there were flashes of lightning and distant thunder from that quarter. Levin listened to the monotonous drip from the lime-trees in the garden, and looked at the triangle of stars he knew so well, and the Milky Way with its branches that ran through its midst...

*'This new feeling has not changed me, has not made me happy and enlightened all of a sudden, as I had dreamed, just like the feeling for my child. There was no surprise in this either. Faith - or not faith - I don't know what it is - but this feeling has come just as imperceptibly through suffering, and has taken firm root in my heart.*

*'I shall go on in the same way, losing my temper with Ivan the coachman, falling into angry discussions, expressing my opinions tactlessly. There will be still the same wall between the holy of holies of my heart and other people, even my wife. I shall still go on scolding her for my own terror, and being remorseful of it. I shall still be as unable to understand with my reason why I pray, and I shall still go on praying.*

*'But my life now, my whole life apart from anything that can happen to me, every minute of it is no more **meaningless**, as it was before, but it has the positive meaning of **goodness**, which I have the power to put into it.'*