



国际佛教大学

International Buddhist College

佛学研讨会

Convocation Seminar



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主办单位：



国际佛教大学

赞助：



檀香基金会、



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International Buddhist College Seminar 2009

August 1, 2009, Penang.

国际佛教大学学术会议 , 2009, 马来西亚槟城。

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Convocation Seminar Speaker Biodata



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Birth of Buddhism as a Critical Response to Spiritualist and Materialist Views

by Professor Emeritus Y. Karunadasa

Synopsis:

Anyone who has a general acquaintance with Buddhism will know that as a religion Buddhism is different from many other religions. In point of fact, many of the ingredients that go to make the definition of religion are conspicuously absent in it. Nevertheless, Buddhism is still a religion. Together with other world religions, Buddhism, too, believes in survival, in the operation of a moral order, in moral accountability, and in the possibility of final emancipation from our existentialist predicament.

If we are to understand this particular situation which is unique to Buddhism, we need to go to the very beginning of Buddhism, how Buddhism began as a new faith among many other faiths. Fortunately for us what led to the birth of Buddhism can be understood from the earliest extant Buddhist scriptures themselves. The scenario emerging from them is that Buddhism arose as a critical response to two world-views, which according to Buddhism have a tendency to persist throughout the history of human thought. The Pali Suttas introduce these two ideologies as *sassatavada*, i.e. the spiritualist view of life and *ucchedavada*, i.e. the materialist view of life. Buddhism sets itself equally aloof from these two ideologies. And this is precisely why Buddhism is said to follow a middle position, both in theory and practice. The Buddhist doctrine of causality is called "*majjhima desana*", the middle teaching, because it enables Buddhism to transcend the mutual opposition between the spiritualist and materialist ideologies. In the same way, the Noble Eightfold Path is called "*majjhima patipada*", the middle path, because it enables Buddhism to transcend the mutual opposition between self-mortification and sensual

indulgence, the two practical manifestations of the spiritualist and materialist ideologies.

Anyone who is acquainted with Buddhism will know that as a religion Buddhism is different from many other religions. In point of fact, many of the ingredients that go to make the definition of religion are conspicuously lacking in it. Nonetheless Buddhism is a religion. Together with other world-religions Buddhism, too, believes in survival, in a moral order, in moral accountability, and in the possibility of complete freedom from our existentialist predicament. What makes Buddhism a religion and yet different from other religions will become clear if we take into consideration the religious and intellectual milieu in which Buddhism arose.

In fact, the prevailing mood of the time is very well reflected in the early Buddhist discourses themselves. The first discourse of the Sutta Pitaka known as "The Brahma's All-Embracing Net" begins with an enumeration, and a refutation from the Buddhist point of view, of some sixty-two religio-philosophical ideologies that were current during the time. This and many other Buddhist discourses in the Pali Canon show that at the time Buddhism emerged there prevailed a wide variety of mutually exclusive speculations on the nature and destiny of man and his place in the cosmos. Despite their wide variety and diversity, we can classify them into three main groups. The first includes all the religions current at the time; the second comprises materialist theories which arose in direct opposition to religion; and the third consists of all forms of scepticism which arose as a reaction against both.

Among the many religions of the day, some were a linear development of Vedic thought while others seem to have emerged either in isolation from or in opposition to it. In the former, the trend was more towards theism, monism and orthodoxy; in the latter, it was more towards non-theism, pluralism and heterodoxy. Between the two groups there were a variety of religious teachings which were based on such epistemological grounds as scriptural authority (pitaka-sampada), revelation (anussava), the omniscience of the teacher (sabbannuta), knowledge gained through extrasensory perception, and

arguments based on logic and pure reasoning (takka-vimamsa). Although they represented a wide spectrum of religious views and practices, they all appear to have subscribed to one common belief, the belief in a soul or self-entity. Although this common belief had many variations, the early Buddhist discourses represent them all under a general statement: "the soul is one thing and the body something else" (annam jivam annam sariram). This distinction between the soul and the body seems to emphasize the facts that while the soul is something permanent and impervious to change the body is something perishable and subject to complete dissolution. There seems to have been a general consensus among all religions that, since this self-entity is something immutable, it survives death and that it is in this self-entity (soul) that man's true essence is to be found. We can introduce this religious or spiritual view of the human personality as the theory of the metaphysical self. It was this belief in a permanent spiritual substance within man that came to be represented in the Pali suttas as sassatavada, the belief in eternal existence. Accordingly, from the Buddhist point of view, all the religions of the day which subscribed to an eternal self-subsisting spiritual entity were but different kinds of sassatavada.

The materialist tradition which emerged in direct opposition to religion also seems to have had more than one school of thought. These took their stand on the epistemological ground that sense-perception was the only valid means of knowledge. Hence they questioned the validity of theological and metaphysical theories which do not come within the ambit of sense-experience. This explains why they rejected the religious version of atmavada, the belief in a metaphysical self, and gave it a new interpretation. This new interpretation is expressed in the Pali suttas by the words "the self /soul is the same as the physical body" (tam jivam tam sariram). This is quite in contrast to the religious view which emphasizes their duality rather than their identity. The line of argument which seems to have led to this conclusion may be stated as follows: there is no observable self-entity apart from the body, and since only the observable exists, this self-entity must be identical with the physical body. Therefore, for materialism the soul is a product of the four primary elements of matter (ayam atta rupi catummahabhutiko). We can introduce this materialist

view of the human personality as the theory of the physical self. Because materialism identifies the self with the physical body, it necessarily follows that at death, with the break-up of the body, the self too comes to complete annihilation (ucchindati, vinassati), without any prospect of post-mortem existence. In view of this inevitable conclusion to which the materialist view of life leads, it came to be represented in the Buddhist texts as ucchedavada, the belief in annihilation.

There is a general belief among some modern scholars that materialism (ucchedavada) rejects in toto what is called atmavada or the belief in a soul or self-entity. Generally speaking this may be true, but from the Buddhist point of view it is not valid. According to the Buddhist understanding of atmavada, any kind of thing, whether it is material, mental or spiritual, could become a soul if it becomes an object of self-identification. This process of self-identification is said to manifest itself in three ways: this is mine (etam mama); this I am (eso'ham asmi); and this is my self (eso me atta). As materialism takes the body to be the self, to be an object of self-identification, it is also a variety of atmavada. One objection that may be raised here is that what the materialists identify as the self is not a metaphysical entity but the perishable physical body. In the context of Buddhist teachings, however, what matters is not the permanence or impermanence of the object of self-identification but the very fact of self-identification. Thus Buddhism sees both sassatavada and ucchedavada as two varieties of atmavada.

The idea of self, as we all know, assumes many forms. It appears as "I" in ordinary discourse, as "soul" in religion, and as "ego" in philosophy. Whatever form it assumes, from the Buddhist point of view, it is a fallacious assumption, a conception without objective counterpart. Its origin is entirely psychological. This will become clear if we examine here the Buddhist teaching relating to cognition, i.e. the way we become aware of both physical and mental objects. Now, according to Buddhism, what we consider to be our apparently continuous psychological experience is analyzable into a series of discrete cognitive acts or units of consciousness. Each cognitive act, in turn, consists of a number of cognitive events, such as sensory contact, feeling, perception, investigation, and

all leading up to a complex stage called conceptual proliferation (papanca). The whole cognitive process is an entirely impersonal process. There is no self (subject) behind the cognitive process which experiences the object. Nor is there an agent that directs the various mental activities. They take place naturally according to the principles of psychological order (citta-niyama), where each stage in the continuum is conditioned by the immediately preceding one.

However, in every cognitive process of the unenlightened person the latent tendency for the ego-consciousness awakens and gradually solidifies, eventually becoming fully crystallized at the final stage called conceptual proliferations (papanca). Once the ego consciousness has arisen it cannot exist in a vacuum; it needs concrete form and content. In this regard, what the unenlightened worldling does is identifies the ego-consciousness in relation to the five aggregates into which Buddhism analyses the individual being, namely, corporeality, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. The process of identification takes the following form: This is mine (etam mama), this I am (eso'ham asmi), This is my self (eso me atta). Of these, the first is due to craving (tanha), the second to conceit (mana), and the third to wrong view (ditthi). What is called self-conceit arises at a pre-rational level, whereas the idea of self, although conditioned by craving, arises at an elementary reflective level. It is also called sakkayaya-ditthi, the personality view. It affirms the presence of an abiding self in the psycho-physical organism in one of twenty ways.

If consciousness (vinnana), for instance, is to be assumed as self, such an assumption could manifest itself in four ways:

- (1) consciousness is the same as self, as in the case of a flame of a lamp which is identical with its visual appearance,
- (2) the self possesses consciousness, just as a tree has a shadow,
- (3) consciousness is within the self, just as the scent is in the flower, and
- (4) the self is in consciousness, just as a gem in a casket. This description is extended to the other four aggregates as well. Thus there are in all twenty possible relations between the five aggregates and the hypothetical self. This is how Buddhism explains the origin of the

erroneous belief in a self-entity (sakkaya-ditthi-samudaya).

What is important to remember here is that once the self notion has arisen it becomes the base for a countless number of metaphysical, cosmological, and theological ideologies. Thus we read in Samyutta Nikaya, the Connected Discourses of the Buddha:

"Now, householder, as to those diverse views that arise in the world and as to these sixty two views set forth in the Brahmajala [Sutta] it is owing to the self-view that they arise and if the self-view exists not they do not exist"

As the above quotation clearly shows, all metaphysical ideologies whether they are religious or philosophical, which seek to explain the nature of the self and the universe, can be traced to the false belief in a permanent individualized self.

Why does the belief in a separate permanent self give rise to a countless number of false metaphysical ideologies? The reason is that as long as the belief in a separate individualized selfhood persists so long will our ideational framework through which we perceive the world be conditioned by the ego-centric perspective. When we look at the world through the ego-centric perspective reality appears as a duality, a duality between an enduring percipient self-entity as the agent of experience and what is experienced by it. What Buddhism maintains here is that the ego-notion is a superimposition on the cognitive process.

The above quotation is important from another aspect. A number of modern scholars have given many explanations as to why the Buddha deemed it necessary to observe silence on some ten questions. These questions relate to whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, finite or infinite, whether the soul and the body are identical or not, and the last four concern the post-mortem existence of the Tathagata, whether it is one of existence, non-existence, both, or neither. Some scholars maintained that if the Buddha did not answer these questions it was because he did not know the answers to them some others maintained that the Buddha' silence was due to pragmatic reasons: What this means is that the Buddha knew the answers but for practical reasons he

withheld them. And some other scholars went to the extent of saying that the ten questions belonged to a class of profound metaphysics, bordering on mysticism, that they could be answered only by what is paradoxically called a “thunderous silence”.

All these explanations, we must say, are totally unwarranted, and totally uncalled for. As the above quotation clearly indicates, if the Buddha observed silence on the ten undetermined questions, it was because they are all meaningless questions. For, they are based on the illusory self-view, the view that there is an abiding self-entity within the constantly changing psycho-physical organism.

As we have noted above, according to Buddhism the notion of the self has two varieties. One is the spiritualist version of the self and the other the materialist version of the self. Early Buddhism presents these two views as occupying a position of mutual opposition, while describing its own position as one that sets itself equally aloof from both of them. It is in fact against these two views that Buddhist polemics are continually directed, and it is by demolishing them that Buddhism seeks to construct its own view of existence. The conclusion suggests itself therefore that from its very beginning Buddhism considered itself as a critical response to the mutual opposition between the spiritualist and the materialist ideologies.

These two ideologies, as Buddhism observes, prevail throughout the history of man’s intellectual thought. Thus, addressing Kaccanagotta, the Buddha says:

“This world, Kaccana, for the most part depends upon a duality – upon the notion of existence and the notion of nonexistence. But for one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world. ‘All exists’, Kaccana, this is one extreme. ‘All does not exist’, this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the Middle”. (The Connected Discourses of the Buddha).

Here the notions of existence and nonexistence mean the spiritualist and materialist ideologies. For these two are sometimes introduced as the view of existence (bhava-ditthi) and the view of nonexistence (vibhava-ditthi). And the words, "Dhamma by the Middle" are a reference to the Buddhist doctrine of Dependent Origination. For it is through this doctrine that Buddhism avoids the mutual conflict between the spiritualist and the materialist ideologies. This doctrine is defined to mean the arising of phenomena in dependence on other phenomena with no corresponding noumena behind the phenomena. The whole purpose of the doctrine is to establish the causal structure of individual existence. Individual existence is a process of functionally interdependent mental and material phenomena, all in a state of constant flux. Within the empiric individuality there is no independent self entity, spiritual, mental, or material which is impervious to change. Nor is there a soul in the form of a spiritual essence which relates it to a transcendental reality. This is where the Buddhist view of individual existence radically differs from all other religions. For as a religion Buddhism does not recognize any kind of transcendental reality which serves as a background to the phenomenal world.

Nor is the empiric individuality, as materialism claims, a pure product of the earth awaiting to be completely annihilated at death. Buddhism rejects the materialist notion that individual existence is due to fortuitous circumstances (adhicca-samuppanna) and that it is subject to abrupt termination (ucchedavada). It is through the doctrine of dependent origination that Buddhism seeks to explain moral responsibility and the uninterrupted continuity of the life-series in samsara.

According to the Buddhist diagnosis of the spiritualist ideology, i. e. the belief in a permanent self-entity, its psychological origin can be traced to what is called bhava-tanha, "the craving for eternal life", or the immortality of the soul. It is the desire for the eternalization of the self, the desire to perpetuate our individual existence into eternity. On the other hand, the psychological origin of materialism, i. e. the belief in a temporary self-entity, can be traced to what is called vibhava-tanha, "the craving for eternal death", the desire for self-annihilation. It is the desire to see a complete annihilation of the individual

existence, without any prospect of post-mortem survival. What seems to be assumed here is that materialism resists the belief in survival because of its fear of moral retribution, for this view gives an open licence to live our lives without being burdened by a sense of moral responsibility.

Thus the dialectical opposition between the spiritualist and materialist ideologies shows not only the perennial conflict between two mutually exclusive ideologies but also the human mind's oscillation between two deep-seated desires.

Buddhism sees a logical connection between the spiritualist version of the self-theory and the practice of self-mortification. The polarity between two principles, one spiritual and the other material implies a mutual conflict between the two. What inhibits the freedom of the soul is its bondage to the physical body. To redeem the soul it is necessary, therefore, to mortify the flesh. This is the principle that sustains all forms of asceticism, what Buddhism calls the practice of self mortification (*atta-kilamathanuyoga*). Ascetic practices could assume varying degrees of intensity and visibility depending on how in each religion the relationship between the soul and the physical body is defined. Nevertheless the duality-principle on which the spiritualist view is based logically leads to the justification of ascetic practices as a means to salvation. On the other hand, the materialist version of the self-theory veers towards the opposite extreme, that is, the pursuit of sensual indulgence (*kama-sukhallikanuyoga*). As materialism believes in the identity of the self and the physical body, it sees no reason why we should eschew immediate sense pleasures for the sake of an elusive bliss in a dubious future.

In Buddhism's assessment both self mortification and sensual indulgence are equally self-defeating. The practice of self-mortification is ignoble (*anariya*), fraught with suffering (*dukkha*) and does not lead to the realization of the goal (*anattasamhita*). The practice is based, as Bhikkhu Bodhi observes, "on the mistaken belief that the body is the cause of the bondage when the real source of the trouble lies in the mind, a mind obsessed by greed aversion and

delusion".¹ To mortify the flesh in order to liberate the soul is to impair an important instrument necessary for mental culture. The other extreme, which is sensual indulgence, is more unsatisfactory. It is lowly (hina), vulgar (gamma) and is associated with secularism (pothujjanika). The practice mistakes the mere titillation of the senses for abiding happiness. It fails to take into consideration, as K.N.Jayatilleke says, "the principle of diminishing returns which operates in the mere gratificatory quest for happiness".²

There is another important aspect of the Buddhist critique of views and ideologies. The Buddha says that he sees no single factor so responsible for the suffering of living beings as wrong view (miccha ditthi), and no factor so potent in promoting the good of living beings as right view (samma ditthi). This is the reason, as most of you are aware, why the Buddhist theory and practice of moral life begins with Right View. A system of morality, if it is to be oriented towards the right direction, should be based on a correct view of actuality, on a proper understanding of our world of experience.

Although Buddhism draws our attention to the right view, it does not endorse dogmatic adherence to views, even if they are right. To be infatuated with "the rightness" of our own views and ideologies is called sanditthi-raga, and dogmatic attachment to them is called ditthi-paramasa. The root cause of both is the belief, "This alone is true and all else is false" (idam eva saccam mogham annam). It is this kind of warped attitude that provides a fertile ground for bigotry and dogmatism, what Buddhism calls idam saccabhinivesa. Its external manifestations, as we all know, are acts of fanaticism and militant piety, indoctrination and unethical conversion, fundamentalism and persecution, not to speak of interpersonal conflicts and acts of terrorism often leading to internecine warfare.

From the Buddhist point of view therefore dogmatic attachment to ideologies is very much more detrimental and fraught with more danger than our inordinate attachment to material things. Inter-religious wars wrongly

¹ Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path*, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1985, p.34

² K.N Jayatilleke, *The Principles of International Law in Buddhist Doctrine*, Extract from *Recueil des Cours*, Vol II, Leyden, 1967, p. 24

referred to as Holy Wars are a case in point. The cold war between capitalism and communism which had nearly brought the world into the brink of nuclear disaster is another case in point.

If Buddhism does not encourage dogmatic attachment to views, it is because from the Buddhist way of looking at it, a view is only a guide to action. In his well-known discourse on the Parable of the Raft (Kullupama), the Buddha tells us that his teaching should be understood not as a goal unto itself, but as a means to the realization of the goal. Thus the teaching of the Buddha, as the Buddha himself says, has only relative value, relative to the realization of the goal. It is a thing to be used and not a thing to be ritually adulated. What this clearly implies is that even the right view, like all other views, is a conceptual model serving as a guide to action. If it is called Right View it is because it leads us directly to the right goal. The right goal according to Buddhism is a right vision (*samma dassana*) into the nature of actuality (*yathabhuta*). By right vision Buddhism does not mean some kind of mystic vision of a higher metaphysical reality, which is often considered as the ultimate ground of existence. For Buddhism right vision means a direct experiential insight into the true nature of the world of experience, the world we experience with our five senses and the mind.

From what we have observed so far, two things should become clear. The first is that *sassatavada* is the Buddhist term for all religions other than Buddhism which were current at the time of the Buddha. The second is that *ucchedavada* is the Buddhist term for all forms of materialism which reject all religions, including Buddhism. Thus the Buddhist critique of *sassatavada* and *ucchedavada* identifies Buddhism's position in relation to other world-views which were contemporaneous with it.

It must also be mentioned here that, although Buddhism rejects both *sassatavada* and *ucchedavada*, it does so after making a critical assessment of them. According to this assessment, the Buddha was more sympathetic towards *sassatavada* and more critical of *ucchedavada*. This becomes clear from the Buddha's first sermon, where he refers to the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. Three of the terms used here in criticizing the

former, which represents ucchedavada, are hina (inferior), gamma (rustic or vulgar) and pothujjanika (worldly). However, these three terms are conspicuously absent in the Buddha's assessment of self-mortification, which represents sassatavada. The implication seems to be that although sassatavada does not lead to the realization of the ideal of emancipation (anatta-samhita), nevertheless it does not lead to the collapse of the moral life. It is not subversive of the moral foundation of human society. As it recognizes a spiritual source in man, it also recognizes moral distinctions. In point of fact, according to Buddhism's assessment, all religions are different forms of kammavada, because they all advocate the supremacy of the moral life. On the other hand, ucchedavada, which represents the materialist theory, encourages a pattern of life which takes gratification in sensuality as the ultimate purpose in life. It takes for granted that man's present existence is entirely due to fortuitous circumstances and thus that he is not morally responsible for what he does during his temporary sojourn in this world.

If Buddhism avoids sassatavada, this means that there is no self-entity within man which is impervious to change. This may also be interpreted as the denial of any kind of spiritual substance within man which relates him to some kind of transcendental reality serving as the ultimate ground of existence. If Buddhism avoids ucchedavada, this means that the human personality is not a pure product of matter but is an uninterrupted and interconnected process of psycho-physical phenomena which does not terminate at death. Although Buddhism does not agree completely with sassatavada, it does not deny survival (punabbhava) and moral responsibility (kammavada).

Convocation Seminar Speaker Biodata



Professor Toshiichi Endo

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Value of Pāli Commentaries for the Study of Buddhism

by Professor Toshiichi Endo

Synopsis:

The pioneering work on the sources of the Pāli commentaries was undertaken and published by Dr. E.W.Adikaram under the title “*Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*” in 1946. It was hailed or at least hoped at that time to usher in the beginning of the study of Pāli Commentaries as source-material for the study of Buddhism in general and of Theravāda Buddhism in particular. Since his work was published, though it took a long time for the publication, many scholars including Ven. Walpola Rahula [*History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 1956] relied heavily upon this work for the discussions on the Pāli Commentarial Literature. It is in this sense that Adikaram's work bore witness to a new frontier of research on the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā* as source-material for Buddhist Studies.

Researches on Pāli Buddhism in areas such as its doctrine, history, culture, and many more disciplines may be undertaken utilizing the Pāli commentaries. However, the misconception that anything found in the Pāli commentaries belongs to the times of their commentators, Buddhaghosa or whosoever, still persists even today among the general public. This popular misconception is certainly untenable for the simple reason that the Pāli commentaries are the rearrangements and translations of the earlier sources known as the *Sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā* (Sinhalese commentaries) – this is the very idea that Adikaram strove to prove and make known. Therefore until such time that dates of the compilation of *Sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā*, the Pāli commentators, and other such matters which may influence the traditional understanding of the Pāli Commentarial Literature are reasonably established, scholars will have to rely at least tentatively upon the research findings so far presented for their

assessment of the Pāli commentaries as source-material. Due perhaps to the nature of Buddhist studies in Sri Lanka, the work undertaken by Adikaram attracted and inspired scholars more from abroad than within the country. Notable contributions made by two scholars from Germany and Japan almost simultaneously were published in 1982 and 1984 respectively.³ These two works, being perhaps called 'historical research,' revealed various types of the lost Sinhalese sources, their nature and origins, dates of their composition, etc., and also some views attributable to the Abhayagiri fraternity and its allies. In this field researches are being undertaken by interested scholars, and their findings are also being published.⁴ Some of them may change the perception about Theravāda Buddhism whose tradition has been hitherto unquestioningly upheld, perhaps in a popular parlance, as representing the pure and pristine form of Buddhism since the time of its birth in India. Studies on the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā*, though much progress has been made since Adikaram's time, remain to be continued perhaps in the same way as the *Tipiṭaka* study at least for the time being, and as their research advances, then for different areas which nobody would have dreamt of a couple of decades ago.⁵

³ Friedgard Lottermoser, *Quoted Verse Passages in the Works of Buddhaghosa: Contributions towards the Study of the Lost Sihaṭṭhakathā Literature*, Göttingen, 1982, xxxviii, 631 pp. Sodō Mori [森祖道], 『パパーリ註釈文献の研究 - アッタカターの上座部的様相』 (*A Study of the Pali Commentaries - Theravādic Aspects of the Aṭṭhakathā*, Tokyo, 1984, 718 pp.

⁴ See e.g., Sodo Mori [森祖道], Problems Associated with the Alleged Writings of Buddhaghosa, *IBK* (印度学仏教学研究) (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 41-No.1, 1993, pp.1-11; Karen Katsumoto [勝本華蓮], Light and Life-span of Buddhas in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Journal of Pali and Buddhist Studies* (パパーリ学仏教文化学), Vol. 13, 1999, pp.43-53; The Bodhisatta and Laymen in the *Buddhavaṃsa*: Differences between the Text and its Commentary, *Indotetsugaku-Bukkyogaku* (印度哲学仏教学), Vol. 15, 2000, pp. 85-100; *Buddhas and Pacceka-buddhas* as found in the *Apadāna*, *Indotetsugaku-Bukkyogaku* (印度哲学仏教学), Vol. 16, 2001, pp. 89-103; The Thirty *Pāramitā*-s in Pāli Buddhism, *IBK* (印度学仏教学研究), Vol.51-No.1, 2002, pp. 352-350; The Resolution to be a Buddha: A Study of 'abhinīhāra' in Pāli Buddhist Sources, *Indotetsugaku-Bukkyogaku* (印度哲学仏教学), Vol. 17, 2002, pp. 119-136; The *Dasakusalakammaṃsa*: Examples found in the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā*, *IBK* (印度学仏教学研究), 2003, pp.454-452; The *Paṇḍhāna* or the *Pāramitā*: Interpretations of the 'tathāgata' in the Southern Theravāda Buddhist Sect, *Indotetsugaku-Bukkyogaku* (印度哲学仏教学), Vol. 18, 2003, pp. 73-86; Interpretations of the *Pāramitā*-s: A Translation of the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (I), *Journal of the University of Eizan-gakuin* (叡山学院大学紀要), Vol. 26, 2004, pp.59-102; Interpretations of the *Pāramitā*-s: A Translation of the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (II), *Journal of the University of Eizan-gakuin* (叡山学院大学紀要), Vol. 27, 2005, pp. 55-100; Takatsugu Hayashi [林隆嗣], On the Authorship of the *Aṭṭhasālinī*, *Bukkyo Kenkyu* (佛教研究)(*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 28, 1999, pp.31-72.

⁵ One area of study that needs a serious consideration is the study of Mahāyānism in India.

The commentaries by nature contain explanations for what the commentators thought to be helpful for a better understanding of words or phrases appearing in the *Tipiṭaka*, exegetical treatises prevalent at the time, narratives and episodes both of Indian and Sri Lanka origins inserted in the texts, all of which make them a rich source of information not only for Buddhist studies but also for the study of secular history of both countries in ancient times. Such being the nature of commentaries, the following may be given as some research areas that have been already initiated and undertaken by some on the one hand, and also for potential future researches on the other:⁶

- 1) Philological studies and translations.⁷
- 2) Doctrinal and philosophical studies.⁸

⁶ Mori has traced the history of research specially in Japan on the Pali commentaries since 1984 which was the year his book 'A Study of the Pali Commentaries' was published. See Sodo Mori, Recent Japanese Studies in the Pali Commentarial Literature: Since 1984, *JPTS (K.R.Norman Festschrift)*, Vol. XXIX (2007), pp.175-90. In his article he gives the following areas of research undertaken so far by the Japanese scholars: 1. Japanese Translations of Some Commentaries; 2. Historical Studies of Buddhist Doctrine and Thought; 3. Philological Studies in the Source References for the Commentaries; 4. Problems of Authorship Pertaining to Each Work; 5. Comparisons with the Texts of Northern Sects; 6. Comparison with Mahāyāna Texts and Studies in Sri Lankan Mahāyāna.

⁷ Philological studies should include the 'text critique' for the *Tipiṭaka*. The major concern here is to find out whether or not the present Pāli *Tipiṭaka* we have today was the same *Tipiṭaka* that the commentators used for their commentaries. For instance, the *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā* (BvA) lacks a commentary on the chapters 27 (*Pakīṇṇakakathā*) and 28 (*Dhātubhājanīyakathā*) of the *Buddhavaṃsa*. In this connection, it may be questioned whether or not these chapters were added to the present Bv after BvA was composed – here BvA means the *Sihala-Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā*, the source material of the present Pāli BvA. The *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā* (SnA) comments only on twenty verses of the *Kokāliya-sutta* of Sn which at present has twenty-two verses. This also leads to the question whether the last two verses in the present *Kokāliya-sutta* were a later addition. (See Sodo Mori, *Studies of the Pāli Commentaries – A Provisional Collections of Articles*, 1989, p.6). Further, readings of certain words of the same *sutta* sometimes differ from one another. This could be due to the difference of the *bhāṇaka* tradition in ancient times (See T. Endo, Views attributed to Different *Bhāṇakā* (Reciters) in the Pāli commentaries, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 31, Hamamatsu, Japan, 2003, pp. 1-42; especially, pp .8-9, 29-30; etc.) With regard to the translations, since the commentaries are to expound the meanings of the canon, their utilization for a better understanding particularly of Theravāda Buddhism is essential. In this regard, K.R. Norman's translation of *the Elder's Verses* I & II (London, 1969-71) in English can be given as a good example where the commentaries have been made use of to the fullest.

⁸ A special reference may be made here to the study of views held by the Abhayagiriṅgins. The commentaries often refer to views of different groups of individuals including those of the Abhayagiri School by the expressions of 'keci, apare, eke, aññe, ekacce, etc.' all of which can be translated as 'some' or 'some people'. With the help of the *Ṭīkā* (sub-commentaries), some of them can be identified. Sodo Mori has identified 28 views that can be ascribed to the Abhayagiri School in his 『パーリ註釈文献の研究 – アッタカターの上座部的様相』 (*A Study*

- 3) Linguistic studies.⁹
- 4) Historical, geographical, social and cultural studies.¹⁰
- 5) Comparative studies between the Northern and Southern Buddhist traditions.
- 6) Mahāyāna Elements in Theravāda Buddhism.
- 7) Mahāyānism in India.

The Pāli commentaries in a narrower sense of the term are a collection of comments upon difficult words or phrases found in the Pāli Canon – this can be categorized as ‘the commentaries to the *Tipiṭaka*’. They often repeat the words or phrases of the Canon when giving comments and explanations. Derived from this literary characteristic of the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā*, a comparison between the present Pāli Canon and the commentaries of words and phrases used therein, thereby the textual critique as to whether or not the contents of the present Pāli canonical texts were the same as those of the texts actually used by the commentators could be investigated, is a subject to be undertaken urgently. As a matter of fact, there is literary evidence that new Sri Lankan elements were added to some of the canonical texts that we have today,¹¹ suggesting that even the Mahāvihāra fraternity, though traditionally projected as conservative,

of the Pali Commentaries - Theravādic Aspects of the Aṭṭhakathā), Tokyo, 1984, pp. 559-689’ (See also, Sodo Mori, *Uttaravihāraṭṭhakathā* and *Sārasamāsa*: Some Unattributed Non-Mahāvihāravāsin Sources for the Pāli Commentaries, *JPTS*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 1-47; Cf. T. Endo, *Keci* and *Apāre* in Dhammapāla’s Commentaries, *Journal of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1999, pp. 36-68; etc.)

⁹ As for the Pāli language, it is clear that the Pāli language used in the commentaries shows some characteristics of linguistic development in the history of Pāli language. This is where the linguistic studies of the Pāli language are needed to determine whether or not the commentators such as Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla, and the rest followed the Pāli language of their times beyond the boundary of personal style. In this field of study K.R.Norman, Oskar von Hinuber, Ole Holten Pind, etc. have been active (see articles under their names mentioned elsewhere.)

¹⁰ This field of studies utilizing the commentaries has witnessed the most bountiful results so far. The following are some of them: W. Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, ed. by H. Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960; E. W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1946; W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1956; E. Ellawala, *Social History of Early Ceylon*, Colombo, 1969; T. Hettiarachchy, *History of Kingship in Ceylon up to the Fourth Century A.D.*, Colombo, 1972, etc.

¹¹ See Oliver Abeynayake, *Sri Lanka’s Contribution to the Development of the Pali Canon, Buddhism for the New Millennium*: London, World Buddhist Foundation, 2000, pp. 163-183.

not willing to entertain any idea of tampering with the Canon, was liberal than thought to have been otherwise.

Another area of benefit derived from the utilization of the Pāli commentaries is the translation as has been done by many in the past. With regard to the doctrinal and philosophical studies the Pāli commentaries can be utilized in the same way as the *Tipiṭaka*. This requires no further elaboration. The linguistic studies of the commentaries are also another important area of research. Unfortunately only a few scholars so far have paid attention to this area of study.¹² Further, the commentators and other aspects of the Pāli commentaries, which have of course been the topics of research by different scholars,¹³ must be studied in depth. Many works, though not adequate, have been undertaken by scholars and are available to us.

The most popular area of research utilizing the Pāli commentaries is perhaps the areas of historical, geographical, social and cultural studies. A good number of works have so far been published. Such a use of the Pāli commentaries as source-material is quite understandable as they contain a rich

¹² See for instance, K.R.Norman, von Hinuber, Kogen Mizuno [水野弘元], etc.

¹³ For the examination of individual commentators, the following are available: S. Paranavitana, Mahānāma, the Author of Mahāvamsa, *University of Ceylon Review (UCR)*, Vol. XX, No. 2, Ceylon, 1962; B.C. Law, *The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa*, Calcutta, 1923; B.C. Law, *Buddhaghosa*, Bombay, 1946; A.P. Buddhadatta, *Who was Buddhaghosa?*, *UCR* Vol. II, Nos. 3-4, 1963; R. Subramanian & S.P. Nainar, Buddhaghosa – His Place of Birth, *JOR*, Vol. XIX, Madras, 1951; B.M. Barua, Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa, *UCR*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1945; R. Siddhartha, Mahānāma in the Pāli Literature, *IHQ* (Indian Historical Quarters), Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1932; Lily de Silva, ed. *Dīghanikāyaṃhakathāṅkā, Līnatthavaṇṇanā*, 2 vols., *PTS*, 1970 (Introduction); Aloysius Pieris, The Colophon of the Paramatthamañjūsā and the Discussion on the Date of Ācariya Dhammapāla, *AAWG*, 1978, pp.61-77; A.P. Buddhadatta, The Second Great Commentator, Ācariya Dhammapāla, *UCR*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1945; etc. And also see relevant entries in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Colombo, 1961 - ; Oskar Von Hinuber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, Berlin, 1996; K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*; G.P. Malasekera, *Pāli Literature of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1928. More recent publications on the works of Buddhaghosa: Ole Holten Pind, Buddhaghosa – His Works and Scholarly Background, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 21, Hamamatsu, 1993, pp.135-156; Ole Holten Pind, Pāli Grammar and Grammarians from Buddhaghosa to Vajirabuddhi, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 26, Hamamatsu, 1998, pp.23-88; Ole Holten Pind, Mahānāma on the Interpretation of Emptiness, *Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies* [パパーリ学仏教文化学], Tokyo, 1992, pp.19-33; K.R. Norman, The Influence of the Pāli Commentators and Grammarians upon the Theravādin Tradition, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 15, Hamamatsu, 1985, pp. 109-124; A.K. Warder, Some Problems of the later Pāli Literature, *JPTS*, 1981, pp. 198-207; etc.

storehouse of information of both Indian and Sri Lankan origins, and because of this very reason that the Buddhist scholars and historians alike can make use of the materials.

In addition to these uses of the Pāli commentaries, new trends in their study have emerged and been pursued by some for some time now. The general direction into which to pursue the Pāli commentarial studies would be still centred upon the detailed and related studies, which the pioneers have left undone or unfinished. However, comparative studies between the Northern and Southern Buddhist traditions have attracted some young and upcoming scholars especially from Japan where Chinese Buddhist sources are frequently consulted. In this paper emerging new trends in the Pāli commentarial studies particularly in Japan will be introduced.

Comparative studies between the Northern and Southern Buddhist traditions

Confining the meaning of 'commentaries' only to those on the *Tipiṭaka*, it can be argued that the Pāli commentaries attempt to elucidate what Theravāda Buddhism - more precisely the Mahāvihāra tradition of Sri Lanka - believes to be the truthful interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. They contain interpretations and other stocks of information relevant to the times of their composition – their origins may as a matter of fact go back to the time of *Sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā* which began their compilation soon after the transmission of Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century B.C., and came to be completed by about the beginning of the 2nd century A.C. corresponding to the reign of King Vasabha (A.C. 65-109) with minor additions made till about the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century corresponding to the reign of King Mahāsena (A.C. 276-303), according to Mori's study.¹⁴ Being such is the nature of the Pāli commentaries, a comparison between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli

¹⁴ Mori, *op.cit.*, 460.

commentaries may appear to be superfluous and less meaningful since the general understanding is that the former is the *canonical* literature while the latter is the *commentarial* one. Recent researches however have brought to light that some Chinese *Āgamas* contain elements which are not found in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* proper but in the Pāli commentaries. It must be admitted that the first discovery of such similarities between the two seemingly unrelated sources was reported in the late 1920s¹⁵ and since then, new discoveries were made from time to time, which fact may therefore propel some to argue that such researches are not new. However, their discoveries in almost all the cases were purely accidental while the aims of research lay elsewhere. What is new in this respect is a systematic approach to the comparative study between the Chinese sources and the Pāli commentaries with the specific intention of finding out possible answers to the problems relating to the evolution of the Chinese sources, particularly the *Āgamas* and Vinaya texts, and the relationship between them.

For instance, when the Chinese *Āgamas* were compared with the Pāli *Nikāyas* and when one could find differences between them, then the scope of textual comparison had to be confined to something like the following: (1) the common elements between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli *Nikāyas*; (2) the elements found only in the Chinese *Āgamas* and vice versa. In other words, the research scope so far imagined and actually examined were mainly based on the relationships between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli *Nikāyas*. Here the focus and what had actually been thought as possibilities were based on the conception that the Chinese *Āgamas* were basically translations of the older sources preserved mainly in Sanskrit while the Theravādins preserved the *Tipiṭaka* in Pāli or what is termed as the language of Magadhas (Magadhabhāsā) from the very beginning of their transmission.

Historically speaking, the earliest known Indic texts translated into

¹⁵ See, for instance, Goho Hayashi [林五邦], *Kokuyaku Issai-kyō*, Agon-bu 8, 9, & 10 [国訳一切経・阿含部 8 - 10], Tokyo, 1929.

Chinese were around the 1st century A.C., and since then translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese continued unabated. This conception has however been given a new dimension and there has emerged a new scope of study, fortuitously arisen, to show similarities between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli *Nikāyas* together with their commentaries. Based on this there has emerged the new thinking that if the Pāli commentaries are brought in for such a comparison, then one may broaden the perspective of understanding about the relationship between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli sources including the commentaries specially with regard to the historical development and the structural peculiarities of the Chinese *Āgamas*. This will open up a new horizon leading to a third scope of comparison, i.e., (3) the elements shared between the Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli commentaries. In fact the studies done so far have shown that certain elements found in the Chinese *Āgamas* are not common to their respective canonical texts but found only in the Pāli commentaries. This gives rise to the question: "How can such phenomena be possible, if the *Āgamas* were the counterparts of the *Nikāyas*?" In this regard it is worth paying attention to the following two possible interpretations suggested by Sasaki in relation to the *Samantapāsādikā*¹⁶ - such interpretations, it must be remembered, are also applicable to the *Āgamas*.

1) The Vinaya texts other than the Pāli Vinaya included the information relevant to the time of the composition of the *Samantapāsādikā*. That is to say, with regard to the Pāli Vinaya, the information of later periods came to be put together into a separate collection that can be termed as 'commentary' independent of the main contents of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*, and the *Samantapāsādikā* (it must be the *Sīhaḷa-Vinaya-aṭṭhakatha*, SVA) came to be composed as a summary based on that collection, while the other Vinaya texts incorporated such information into their main bodies from time to time

¹⁶ Shizuka Sasaki [佐々木閑], *The Samantapāsādikā and the Vinaya Texts: The Second Pārājika (1), Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 29, Hamamatsu, 2000, p.71

without separating it. If this interpretation is possible, we can explain the phenomenon that the information found in the *Samantapāsādikā* is also found in the other Vinaya texts other than in the Pāli Vinaya.

2) Such information as found in the *Samantapāsādikā* was originally included in all the Vinaya texts including the Pāli Vinaya. But with regard to the Pāli *Vinaya*, that information was deliberately or due to some reasons, erased or taken out of it. It was however not that what had been taken out [of the Vinaya text] suffered its natural loss but that it was preserved in the form of a commentary and finally found its way in the [*Śiḥaḷa-Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā* and later in its translation] *Samanatapāsādikā*.

These two possibilities may be shown graphically as follows:

(1)

	Pāli Sources	Āgamas or Vinaya texts of the Northern Tradition
Canon	Nikāyas or Vinaya	* Elements common to the Nikāyas or Vinaya. * Elements common to the Aṭṭhakathā.
Commentaries	Aṭṭhakathā	

(2)

	Pāli Sources.	Āgamas or Vinaya texts of the Northern Tradition.
Canon	Nikāyas or Vinaya + Aṭṭhakathā	* Elements common to the Nikāyas or Vinaya. * Elements common to the Aṭṭhakathā.
Transition	Aṭṭhakathā elements deleted from the canon.	
Commentaries	Aṭṭhakathā reappeared as a separate collection.	

The possibilities suggested above may have to be carefully examined particularly in relation to the formation of the Buddhist texts in different Buddhist traditions in both India and Sri Lanka. One thing is of course quite

clear; that is, since the Chinese sources except perhaps a couple of translations from Pāli, were translated all from the Indian languages, the materials incorporated in them were of Indian origin unless later additions were made elsewhere in the process of the final formation before they were translated into Chinese. The first possibility appears to be more convincing if we assume that there was a difference in the method of transmission between the Theravāda school which transmitted the Pāli *Vinaya* and the other schools which transmitted the other Vinaya texts. It is not unnatural to believe that the Theravādins, because of their conservative attitude, tenaciously stuck to the traditional and what they called pristine form of the Buddha's teachings, and perhaps this attitude of the Theravādins would have determined the separation of the original teachings of the Buddha from what was added subsequently; thereby transmitting the original teachings as the Vinaya - for that matter any Nikāya, to be included in the canon and any additions or interpolations to be put together in the form of a commentary. Although the circumstances favour the first hypothesis, the second possibility cannot be ruled out outright. A recent publication by Gregory Schopen on the question of the duties associated with the practice of *stūpa* worship has suggested that the present Pāli *Vinaya* had lost a section dealing with these duties on the basis of some passages found in the *Visuddhimagga* and the 12th century Sinhala inscription, the *Mahā-Parākramabāhu katikāvata*.¹⁷ The implication of this hypothesis is that even the Pāli *Vinaya* had erased the information once contained in it. This comes very close to the second hypothesis mentioned above. However, this problem still remains to be solved and our first hypothesis appears to be more probable than the second. In order to give some examples in this field of

¹⁷ Gregory Schopen, *The Stūpa Cult and the Extant Pāli Vinaya*, *JPTS*, XIII, 1989, pp. 83-100. In this article, he argues that the Theravādins once knew a Vinaya text different from that now available to us. His hypothesis has created a great interest among scholars of Theravāda Buddhism in the west. Some of the articles related to Schopen's are listed here: Oskar Von Hinuber, *Khandhakavatta: Loss of text in the Pāli Vinayapiṭaka?*, *JPTS*, XV, 1990, pp.127-138; Richard Gombrich, *Making Mountains Without Molehills: The Case of the Missing Stūpa*, *JPTS*, XV, 1990, pp.141-143; Charles Hallisey, *Apropos the Pāli Vinaya as a Historical Document: A Reply to Gregory Schopen*, *JPTS*, XV, 1990, pp. 197-208; etc.

studies, the following are a summary of the studies undertaken so far specially by Japanese scholars.

(A) The *Vinaya-piṭaka*.

Shizuka Sasaki [佐々木閑] is leading in this field of studies and has pointed out that the *Samantapāsādikā* contains elements that are shared by Vinaya texts of different Buddhist schools in Chinese translation such as the *Ssu-fen-lu* [四分律] (Dharmaguptaka-Vinaya), *Mo-ho seng-ch'i-lu* [摩訶僧祇律] (Mahāsaṅghika-Vinaya), *Shih-sung-lu* [十誦律] (Sarvāsitivādin-Vinaya), etc. Either structural similarities or common elements between the two are found in the following places according to the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā*: pp. 317-8, 332-3, 351-2; 358-60, 362-3, 363-4.¹⁸

Yamagiwa [山極伸行] has also conducted researches using the *Samantapāsādikā* for a comparison with the Chinese Vinaya texts. He also points out some similarities between these two sources.¹⁹

(B) The *Sutta-piṭaka*.

As for the comparative study of the Chinese *Āgamas* and Pāli *Nikāyas*, numerous books and articles have been published in the past. The first Japanese scholar who discovered the existence of common elements between the Northern Chinese *Āgamas* and the Pāli commentaries is Goho Hayashi [林五邦] in his Japanese translation of the *Ekottara-āgama*.²⁰ Since then, some scholars attempted to focus their attention on this aspect of the Pāli commentaries and pointed out similar elements existing between them.²¹

¹⁸ Shizuka Sasaki [佐々木閑], *The Samantapāsādikā and the Vinaya Texts: The Second Pārājika* (1), *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 29, Hamamatsu, 2000, pp.69-85. Also see, Shizuka Sasaki [佐々木閑] and Nobuyuki Yamagiwa [山極伸之], *An Introduction to the Study of the Samantapāsādikā*, *Journal of Pali and Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 10, Tokyo, 1997, pp.25-35.

¹⁹ Nobuyuki Yamagiwa [山極伸之], *The Importance of the Samantapāsādikā in the Study of the Development of the Vinaya Rules*, *Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyū* [印度学仏教学研究] (*IBK*), Tokyo, 1996, pp. 410-406.

²⁰ Goho Hayashi [林五邦], *Kokuyaku Issai-kyō*, Agon-bu 8, 9, & 10 [国訳一切経・阿含部 8 - 10], Tokyo, 1929.

²¹ Kiyotaka Minami [南清隆], *The I-tsu-ching and the Aṭṭhakavagga*, *Bukkyō-shi Kenkyū* [仏教史研究], 2, Tokyo, 1986, pp.1-15; Kogen Mizuno [水野弘元], *The Chinese Versions of the*

Norihisa Baba [馬場紀寿] in his article²² dealing with the subject of 'Dependent Origination' as found in the canon of the Northern tradition shows that the *Dīrgha-āgama* and *Madhyamaka-āgama* contain elements that are not found in the corresponding section of the *Dīrgha-nikāya* but in the *Sumaṅgalavāsinī* [DA II, 485]. The following are some of the places in the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā* where such similar elements are found: DA II, 459 = SA II, 115 corresponding to some descriptions in the *Samyukta-āgama* and *Dīrgha-āgama* and *Ekottara-āgama*; DA II, 487-8 corresponding to some elements in the *Ekottara-āgama*. However, it must be remembered that among the canonical texts of the Northern tradition, differences in the elucidation of or stories leading up to the main topics discussed therein are also observed. Such differences could be attributed to the fact that four major *Āgamās* preserved in the Chinese translation belong to different schools of Buddhist Thought such as the Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, etc., unlike the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*. This may suggest that the difference in transmission among these schools is reflected in the Chinese tradition.

Mahāyāna Elements in the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā*

Another aspect of research based on the Pāli commentaries, which has not been adequately explored, is the study of Mahāyānism or Mahāyāna elements found in them. S. Paranavitana,²³ Nandasena Mudiyanse,²⁴ and others from Sri Lanka showed some interest in this field of studies, and in recent

Madhyama-āgama-sūtra and of the *Ekottara-āgama-sūtra*, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 18, Hamamatsu, 1989, pp. 1-42; Masahiro Shimoda [下田正弘], *The Mahāyāna Parinirvāṇa-sūtra* as a Commentary, *Abhidharma Buddhism and Indian Thought*, Tokyo, 2000, pp.327-339; etc.

²² Norihisa Baba [馬場紀寿], *Commentarial Elements as Found in the Northern Buddhist Canon*, *Bukkyō Kenkyū* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 31, Hamamatsu, 2003, pp.193-219.

²³ S. Paranavitana, *Mahāyānism in Ceylon*, *Ceylon Journal of Science, Sect. G*, 2, 1928, pp. 35-71.

²⁴ Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahāyāna Monuments in Ceylon*, M.D.Gunasena, Colombo, 1969; A Bodhisattva Figure from Giridara, Ceylon, *Spolia Zeylanica* 31, 1969, pp. 325-27; Architectural Monuments of the Mahāyānists of Ceylon, *Indo-Asian Culture*, 19(3), 1970, pp.13-30; Bodhisattvas from Pidururāgala-stūpa (Ceylon), *Mahā Bodhi* 80(2&3), 1972, pp. 66-68; etc.

years Sodo Mori from Japan has also dealt with the subject.²⁵ Nevertheless their main sources of information were not the Pāli commentaries.

Compared with the other commentators, Dhammapāla seems to show familiarity with Mahāyāna Buddhism. He incorporates in his commentaries ideas such as new interpretations of terms like 'mahākaruṇā,' the six *pāramīs* (*pāramitās*), *mahāsatta*,²⁶ *dasakusalakammaphasīla*,²⁷ etc. which are not commonly found in Theravāda but in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Bhikkhu Bodhi has also drawn our attention to the fact that some passages in the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* are identical with or similar to passages in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* of the Yogācāra school of Buddhism.²⁸ It is therefore worthwhile investigating further as to how far Mahāyāna Buddhism found its way in the Pāli commentaries. This kind of research will certainly broaden the horizon of comparative studies between Theravāda Buddhism and the other traditions.

That Pāli commentaries contain some Mahāyāna elements undoubtedly suggests that the Theravāda Buddhist tradition of Sri Lanka since its introduction in the 3rd century B.C., had close interaction with the other sects of Buddhist Thought of India and even with other religious schools. And the fact that some of these new elements had become more accepted in the Pāli tradition, such as the concept of the Eighteen Qualities of the Buddha (*aṭṭhārasabuddhadhammā*), also shows that the Theravādins could not have been after all so rigid and conservative as had been believed in ancient times in Sri Lanka.

²⁵ Sodō Mori, *Mahāyāna Buddhism in Sri Lanka*, Japan, 1999.

²⁶ See Toshiichi Endo, *Buddha in Theravada Buddhism – A Study of the Concept of Buddha in the Pāli Commentaries*, Dehiwala, 1997 & 2002.

²⁷ See, Karen Katsumoto [勝本華蓮], The *Sīla* called 'Dasakusalakammaphasīla' – Usages in the *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā*, *Indogaku-Bukkyōgaku-Kenkyū* [印度学仏教学研究] (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies - IBK*) Vol. 52-1, 2003, pp. 454 ff.

²⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views: The Brahmajāla Sutta and Its Commentaries*, Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), Kandy, 1978, p.46. Karen Katsumoto [勝本華蓮], *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*: Inclusion of the Doctrines of Yogācāra School in the Pāli Commentaries, *Bukkyo Kenkyu* [佛教研究] (*Buddhist Studies*), Vol.34, Japan, 2006, pp.173-192.

Mahāyānism in India

Another possible area of study by utilizing the Pāli commentaries is the search for Indian Mahāyānism. The Pāli commentaries contain both Indian and Sri Lankan elements. Scholars have so far mainly focused their attention on the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The commentaries, since their introduction from India in the 3rd century B.C., however, added new elements of Indian origin in the course of their expansion. References, though not by name but by allusion such as '*kecī*', '*apare*', etc., which mean 'some people', are made even to the Viññānavāda, and they have traces of borrowing from the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* of the Yogācāra School of Buddhism as well. Dhammapāla in particular has shown in his commentaries a clear inclination towards Mahāyāna Buddhism. This suggests that the Sri Lankan Buddhism as found in the present Pāli commentaries kept abreast with religious movements in India – in fact history shows that Dhammaruci, Vaitulyavāda, and other religions were introduced to Sri Lanka from time to time. It is in this sense that the Pāli commentaries can become a rich source of information to examine the development of Mahāyānism in India.

Convocation Seminar Speaker Biodata



Professor Kapila Abhayawansa

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The Significance of Kamma in Buddhist Ethical System

by Professor Kapila Abhayawansa

Synopsis:

In this presentation, Buddhism shows the importance of concept of kamma in the field of Buddhist ethics. An attention is thus focus on the definition of kamma and its characteristics. Theoretical aspect of Buddhism –the theory of dependent origination- is explained in relation to the concept of kamma. Our main concern is to examine the concept of kamma in line with right vision of Buddhism in its ethical path. Buddhism recommends a way of life based on ethics to its followers in day to day life. Hence it is our intention to draw the attention of the audience to the importance of Kamma in the daily life of a Buddhist.

Introduction

Theory of Kamma looms large in the whole field of Buddhist teaching. In the real sense, Buddhism becomes meaningful only with the assumption of Kamma theory. In this presentation, it is intended to make clear the following aspects of Kamma in Buddhism which, bring forth its importance especially in the field of Buddhist ethics.

What is Kamma in Buddhism?

An attention is focused here to explain the definition of Kamma in Buddhism and its distinguished characteristics, compared to other religious and philosophical theories of Kamma.

Ethical Ideal of Buddhism and its relation to Kamma

Buddhism Presents through its theory and practice an ethical Ideal. It is our intention to discuss here the nature of Buddhist ideal and the question how it relate to the concept of Kamma.

Theoretical aspect of Buddhism and the concept of Kamma

Theoretical aspect of Buddhism is centered on the concept of Kamma which mainly depend on the ethical value. The fact, that how the concept of kamma becomes the basis of the theory of Buddhism is here taken into our account. Theoretical aspect of Buddhism is considered to be consisted of the theory of dependent origination. Here our main purpose is to explain the place occupied by Kamma in the theory of dependent origination.

Kamma in the ethical path which leads to the ethical ideal in Buddhism

The ethical path presented by Buddhism in its practical aspect, which leads to the highest goal of Buddhism finds expression in the Noble Eight fold Path. The basis of this noble path is considered to be the Right Vision or the Right Understanding. The right vision is mainly consisted of the belief in Kamma. Here our main concern is to examine how the concept of Kamma is related to right vision of Buddhism in its ethical path.

Buddhist ethics in general and it relation to the concept of Kamma

Buddhism recommends a way of life based on ethics to its followers for their day to day life. Here it is our intention to draw the attention of the audience to the importance of Kamma in the daily life of the Buddhists.

Ethics in Buddhism

When we say Buddhist ethics, it really encompasses the entire field of Buddhism which bases its theory and practice mainly on ethics. Buddhism introduces a philosophy of existence in theory while in practice it shows a way of the cessation of existence. According to Buddhism, beings in the Samsara exist mainly because of their ethical behavior. Ethics, in technical sense takes into account good and bad behavior of man. As Buddhism explains the nature of the existence of the man giving more emphasis to the ethical character, in its theoretical aspect, Buddhism is an ethical philosophy. The path leading to the

cessation of existence as prescribed by Buddhism is undoubtedly an ethical path which consists of ethical culture both in physical and spiritual aspects of the man. Therefore, it can legitimately be said that ethics plays a major role in the whole field of Buddhism.

The concept of Kamma in Buddhism

Before we discuss the place occupied by Kamma in Buddhist ethics, it is important to have an understanding of the concept of Kamma in Buddhism. The concept of Kamma is not an invention of Buddhism. It was the religious assumption accepted by some thinkers of the main religious movements of Brahmana-s and Sramana-s that prevailed during the time of the Buddha. According to the Buddhist canonical records, religious thinkers of those days were divided into two fractions as *kiriya-vādi* (one who accepts the theory of Kamma) and *akiriya-vādi* (one who rejects the theory of Kamma) on the basis of the acceptance or rejection of the concept of Kamma. The Buddha was known as *Kiriya-vādi* or *Kammavādi* as he advocated the efficacy of Kamma in the life of the beings²⁹. It should be mentioned here that though it was not invented by Buddhism, Kamma was not a concept that Buddhism borrowed from the religions prevailing at the time. It was the Buddha's own enlightenment that revealed the Truth and the role of kamma played in both existence and cessation of existence. Therefore, the concept of Kamma in Buddhism is a realization of the Buddha³⁰.

The common belief in the operation of the Law of Kamma is that every human action has an effect that appears at its maturity. The doer has to face the relevant effect of the action, good or bad. Though this belief is shared by all the religions which accept the Kamma theory, Buddhism differs in many respects from other religions in terms of its distinctive features of the concept of Kamma

²⁹ "Samano khalu bho gotamo kammavādi kiriya-vādi apāpapurekkharo" D.Sonadanda-sutta; M. Canki-sutta.

³⁰ Ariyapariyesana sutta (M. PTS.) talks about the enlightenment of the Buddha, clearly implies that existence and cessation are possible only when there is Sankhāra and the cessation of Sankhāra respectively. Ref. "Sabbasankhāra-samatho sabbūpadhi-patinissaggo nirodho nibbānam". Sankhāra in Buddhism refers to Kamma.

in Buddhism. Buddhism defines kamma in its own way quite contrary to other religions and it has its own explanations of Kamma pertaining to its capacity, scope and the role which kamma plays in the life of the beings.

According to the Buddhist definition of Kamma, it is a mental quality called intention or volition (cetana) accompanied with the physical, verbal and mental activities of the man. In the words of the Buddha, "O monks, I say intention is the Kamma in the bodily, verbal and mental activities intentionally done."³¹ All the conscious activities of the man which find expression through bodily, verbal and mental actions are first rooted in the mind together with certain mental factors. Among these mental factors, the intention or volition (cetana) which is one of the universal mental concomitances is said to be the Kamma when it accompanies a mental consciousness. When a man does an intentional activity, intention performs its function in bringing the whole contents of process of the consciousness to work together in an organized whole and gets it registered in the mind. This intentional activity of the mind is said to be the Kamma or Sankhara in Buddhism. The special characteristic attached to this particular type of mental behavior is that it bears the efficacy of giving rise to an effect.

It should be emphasized here that the intentional or volitional activity of beings becomes Kamma only when the activity arises from a consciousness rooted in either wholesome or unwholesome mental factors. Therefore the law of Kamma is said to be inoperative in those who have eradicated all mental defilements. It thus follows that the Arahant, one who has eradicated all the defilements, is said to be free of the karmic results of his volitional activities which are now not Kammā-s. Kammā-s may be either wholesome or unwholesome. The volitional activity based on the consciousness which is rooted in greed (Lobha), hatred (Dosa) or illusion (Moha) is considered as unwholesome Kamma which gives bad result while the volitional activity based on the consciousness which is rooted in the non-greed (Alobha), non-hatred (Adosa) or non-illusion (Amoha) is wholesome kamma which gives good result.

³¹ Cetanāham Bhikkhave kammam vadāmi, cetayitvā yam kammam karoti kayena vācāya manasā

As indicated above, Kammā-s are produced only in the mind of the being so long as his cankers remain in his mind.

The definition of Kamma in Buddhism excludes the idea that Kamma is a metaphysical concept which cannot be attested by our experience. It is really related more to the psychological than to the physical aspect of man. Though the psychological aspect cannot be verified by our ordinary senses due to their limitation, it is considered to be verifiable by some with the capacity for supersensory perception so that they could variously gain knowledge of past lives (Pubbenivāsa-ñāna), knowledge of others' minds (Cetopariya-ñāna), and the knowledge of deaths and births (Cutūpapāta-ñāna). Effective capacity of the Kamma is said to be experienced by the knowledge of deaths and births.³²

Capacity of Kamma

Some religions such as Jaina, which speak of the Kamma, accept Kamma as all determinative concept of the entire life of man. According to them, everything in life whether pleasurable, unpleasurable or indeterminate is due to the results of the past Kamma-s.³³ Buddhism does not ascribe such an all inclusive power to the concept of Kamma. Buddhism does not advocate a deterministic philosophy. It explains the entire phenomenon in the world in accordance with the theory of dependent origination. Kamma is one of the laws which govern the events of our existence. According to the theory of dependent origination (Buddhism), there are five laws which are responsible for the events of the universe. They are as follows:

Kamma-niyāma: Karmic law

Dhamma-niyāma: Natural law

Bija-niyāma: Biological law

Citta-niyām: Psychological law

Utu-niyāma: Physical law

The law of Kamma is believed to operate only on beings due to the fact that Kamma-s are done by beings on their own free will. Beings are responsible

³² Yathā kammūpage satte upapajjamāne caviyamāna..." D. Sāmaññaphala-sutta.

³³ Yam kiñcāyam purisapuggalo patisamvedeti sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā sabbam tam pubbekatahetu". M. Devadaha-sutta

for their intentional activities and therefore are the recipients of the result of what they have done deliberately.

Though the sphere of the Kamma is confined only to the existence or the life of the beings, Buddhism does not say that all the occurrences of the events of life are due to the effect of Kamma. Kamma is considered to be one of the causes mentioned earlier which are responsible for the existence of the quality of the life of beings. For example, illnesses in a life may be due to the different causes such as the operation of biological law, physical law and Karmic law. Therefore, if we ascribe all the occurrences of a life only to Kamma, it is certainly over-estimating the power of Kamma. It is our ignorance that we are unable to distinguish the causes of the events in the life of a being.

The efficacy of the Kamma according to Buddhism is not limited only to certain events of a life. Kamma is said to be mainly responsible for the continuation of the life through the Samsara. As Buddhism rejects both eternalism and nihilism, it maintains continuation of life through the power of the Kamma-s. Immediately after the passing of the final consciousness of the present life, kamma comes forward to give rise to a new consciousness for the next life³⁴. Therefore, in its fullest sense, Kamma is responsible for the continuation of life to life, and for the maintenance of the life span of beings.

Free-will and the concept of Kamma

Buddhism is not in favor of any kind of determinism in the existence of beings. It accepts man's responsibility for his own emergence and existence in the Samsāra. According to Buddhism, the man is responsible for his activities as he acts in accordance with his own free will. That was the reason why the Buddha taught that one is one's own savior.³⁵ When Buddhism accepts both free will and the efficacy of Kamma in human existence, it may seem to some that there is a contradiction between the acceptance of free will and that of Kamma. It is really a contradiction if Buddhism admits that Kamma is the only inevitable reason for everything in the life of man. Buddhism does not ascribe

³⁴ Refer to "Sankhāra paccyā viññānam" in the formula of the theory of dependant origination. .S. Nidana vagga

³⁵ "Attā hi attano nātho"

such almighty power to Kamma. Buddha condemned the Kamma theory advocated by Jaina-s for the reason that it goes against the free will and the effort of man.³⁶

One of the distinctive features of Buddhism which set it apart from all the other religions is that it accepts the supremacy of man's free will over his possibility of overcoming present predicaments of his existence. In this case, man's free will together with his effort play a major role driving him to the desired end. This was the reason why Buddha introduced Right Effort as one of the practices leading to the cessation of existence. Right effort prompted by free will is considered as the driving force of overcoming even bad kamma-s already done. The Saccavibhanga-sutta nicely puts it in the following way: "Uppannānam akusalānam dhammānam pahānāya chandam janeti viriyam ārabhati cittam pagganhāti padahati"³⁷

(Feel free to act, exercise effort, determine and resolve to overcome the unwholesome kammās which have already arisen.)

This really suggests that man has the ability to change himself either to a better or worse position than he is at present, thus overcoming the power of Kamma. Free will and Right effort are also instrumental in producing more powerful Kamma-s which are able to subdue the effects of weak Kamma-s and to give rise to their own effects. This further implies that man is his own god as he is responsible for his own achievements and deeds.

Another striking feature, according to the discovery of Buddha, is man's power to eradicate completely all the root causes which produce Kamma-s if he follows the prescribed method introduced by Buddhism. With the destruction of all the root causes of Kamma-s, man is said to be free from his existence which is the source of all sort of sufferings.³⁸

Place of Kamma in Buddhist Ethics

So far we have discussed already the definition of Kamma, its territory and capacity in accordance with Buddhist teaching. We may next turn to the

³⁶ "Pubbekataṃ kho paṇa sārato pacchāgatam na hoti chando vā viriyo vā". M. Devadaha-sutta.

³⁷ S. Saccasamyutta, Saccavibhanga-sutta

³⁸ "Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti"- S. Nidānavagga

question relating to the place occupied by Kamma in Buddhist ethical system. At the beginning of this article, we mentioned that the Buddhism introduces a philosophy of existence in its theoretical aspect while it brings forth a way for the cessation of existence through its practical aspect. One primary inquiry of the Buddha was the coming into being of sentient beings. Before his Enlightenment, Buddha put forth this question in his noble quest in the following way:

*"Alas; this world has fallen upon trouble. There is getting born and growing old, and dying and falling and being reborn. And yet from this suffering an escape is not known, even from decay-and-death. O when shall escape from this suffering, even from decay-and-death, be revealed?"*³⁹

It is evident that the quotation above necessarily refers to the existence of beings, their birth, aging, dying and rebirth. In the night of his enlightenment, the Buddha learned not only the philosophy lying behind this existence but also found the way to solve the problem of existence. The philosophy of existence was presented by the Buddha in terms of theory of dependent origination. The existence of the beings, according to the theory of dependent origination, is mainly due to ignorance (Avijjā) or in other words the lack of right knowledge (Sammā-ñāna). In ignorance, one grasps wrong views. Another root cause of existence as pointed out in the theory of dependent origination is craving (tanhā). Ignorance and craving are taken as the two main causes of existence in the theory of dependent origination. This is further attested by the following statement of the Buddha:

*"Anamataggo'yam samsāro pubbākotī na paññāyati avijjā nīvaranānam sattānam tanhā samyojanānam sandhāvatam samsaratam"*⁴⁰

The nature of craving is to attach to beautiful things (Piya-rūpe rūpe sārājati)⁴¹. As pointed out in the first sermon of the Buddha, craving leads to

³⁹ M. Ariyapariyesana-sutta.

⁴⁰ "Anamataggo Bhikkave samsāroa pubbāktī n paññāyati avijjānīvaranānam tanhāsomyojanāna sattānam sandhāvatam samsaratam"

⁴¹ M. Mahātanhāsankhaya-sutt

attachment here and there (Tatra tatrābhīnanadini ⁴²). The concepts like right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, etc. associated with ignorance and craving point to the fact that the existence of beings is connected with their ethical behavior.

The place occupied by Kamma in the philosophy of existence is clearly evident when we examine the concept of Sankhāra or mental formations in the theory of dependent origination. According to Buddhist explanation of the existence of beings, existence is not confined only to the present existence. It is a continual process connected together with three time frames, namely, past, present and future. Therefore it has two links which combine together present life with the past life, and the present life with the future life. The Samkhāra-s or mental formations are said to be responsible for providing an object to the consciousness that result in linking past life and present life or present life and future life. The consciousness does not arise without an object ⁴³. During our life span, our senses contact with sensory objects which provide the required objects for the consciousnesses. In this way, life is maintained by way of consciousnesses that arise and pass consecutively. But the question as to how the consciousness arises immediately after the death consciousness remains unsolved as our senses are unable to provide an object for the next consciousness to arise in order to begin a new life span after the death of a being. The real significance of the Kamma in the Buddhist philosophy of existence can be seen in this particular moment of the Samsāric process of existence. It is the Kamma that provides the base or the object for the new consciousness to arise for the continuation of the Samsāric existence. This is made clear in the theory of dependent origination by saying that consciousness arises depending on Sankhāra; "Sankhāra paccayā viññānam". The terms Sankhāra and Kamma are synonymous in Buddhist terminology.

The psycho-physical unit of the being is said to be the outcome of Kamma. The importance of Kamma in the Samsāric existence is stated by the Buddha in the following Sutta-passage:

⁴² S. Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta

⁴³ "Aññātra paccayā natthi viññānassa sambhavo" M. Mahātanhāsankhaya-sutta.

"Nāyam bhikkhave kāyo tumhākam na pi aññesam. Purānam idam bhikkhave kammam abhisankhatam abhisancetayitam vedaniyam datthbbam".⁴⁴

'This body, brethren, is not your own, neither is it that of any others. It should be regarded as brought about by action of the past by plans by volitions, by feeling'.

This discourse explains that beings are born due to past sankharas-mental formations. The following discourse of the Buddha further clarifies how Sankhāra or Kamma is responsible for the emergence of a new consciousness filling the gap between former existence and the present existence:

'Yañ ca kho bhikkhave ceteti yañ ca pakappeti yañ ce anuseti. ārammanam etam hoti viññanassa thitiyā. ārammane sati patitthā viññānassa hoti. Tasmin patitthite viññāne virulhe āyatim punabbhavābhiniḅbatti hoti. āyatim panabbhavābhiniḅbattiyā sati āyatim jarāmarana sokaparidevado manassupāyasā sambhavanti ⁴⁵

"Brethren, what one intends and what one plans and whatever one has a tendency: this becomes a basis for the persistence of consciousness. When there is a basis there is a support for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and has come to growth, there is the production of future renewed existence. When there is the future of renewed existence, then there arise decay-and-death, grief, suffering, sorrow and despair. Such is the origin of this entire mass of suffering'.

The existence of being in Samsāra is considered as a mass of suffering (Dukkakkhandha) in Buddhism. All sorts of suffering such as birth, decay and death, grief, suffering, sorrow, and despair are associated with the existence, and are finally based on Sankhāra or Kamma.

Kamma and the ethical ideal in Buddhism

The practical aspect of Buddhism presents a means and an end. The end

⁴⁴ S. Nidāna samyutta, prt.ii. (PTS.) P.64

⁴⁵ S. Nidāna samyutta, prt.11.p.65.

or the goal of Buddhism is considered as the cessation of existence which is a mass of suffering. The end or the ideal of Buddhism is undoubtedly an ethical ideal. The cessation of existence or in other words, the emancipation which can be achieved through the means presented by Buddhism, is an ethical excellence (Paramakusala). It is a state where the boundaries of general ethics are surpassed. Therefore, it is known as the appeasement of all sorts of ethical or unethical conduct (Sabbasamkhārasamatha) or relinquishing of good and bad (Puñña-pāpaphāna). Here, in Buddhist ethical ideal, the importance of Kamma quite apparent in its negative presentation as emancipation is possible only when there is the destruction of Kamma (Kammakkhaya). If Kamma is led to produce existence, cessation of existence is possible through stopping the Karmic force. This is the basis of Buddhist practice of the path of stopping the Karmic force.

Kamma and the ethical path of Buddhism

Ethics plays a major role in the Eight Noble path which leads to the emancipation or to the cessation of existence. Three out of eight constituents of the path are directly related to ethics. These are Right speech (Sammā vācā), Right actions (Sammā kammanta) and Right livelihood (Sammā ājiva), the components of ethical conduct or morality (Sīla). Morality is the basis of the other two disciplines (Samādhi and Paññā) of the path⁴⁶. These three constituents of the path point to the fact that the perfection of the moral aspect of the man is a necessary condition for the perfection of concentration (Samādhi) and that of wisdom. Sonadanda-sutta of Dīghanakāya empathetically mentions that wisdom is purified by morality, and morality is purified by wisdom: where one is, the other is, the moral man has wisdom and the wise man has morality, and the combination of morality and wisdom is called the highest thing in the world⁴⁷.

What is the significance of Kamma in the Buddhist path based on ethics?

⁴⁶ "Sīle patitthāya naro spañño cittam paññañca bhāvaye" S.

⁴⁷ Silaparidhotā hi brāhmana paññā, paññāparidhotam sīlam, yattha sīlam tattha paññā, yattha paññā tattha sīlam, silavato paññā, paññāvato sīlam silapññānan capana lokasmin aggam akkhāyati. D. Sonadanda sutta, (PTS). Vol.1. p.124

As we know, Right vision or Right Understanding (Sammā ditthi) is the fore-runner of all the other constituents of the Noble Eightfold Path⁴⁸. Really the acceptance of the efficacy of Kamma covers the most part of Right vision. Belief in Kamma and its effect comes under Right vision. As pointed out earlier, Buddhism recognizes the relation between Kamma and re-becoming (Punabbhava) in the Samsāric existence of beings. If there is no confidence on these two concepts presented by Buddhism, no one would follow the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Therefore, belief in Kamma is a necessary condition for the practice of the path set out by the Buddha for the realization of cessation of suffering.

Daily life of the Buddhists and the concept of Kamma

Buddhism recommends a way of life based on ethics for its lay followers. It covers speech, action and livelihood of a person. In all these three areas, all the immoral conducts have to be abandoned and moral conduct should be practiced. This way of life of the Buddhists is certainly a partial fulfillment of the Noble Eightfold Path as pointed out earlier. It is also conducive to leading a happier life in this very life and in the lives to come. Moral and immoral conducts are associated with Karmic force. Karmā-s are twofold, namely, wholesome karma and unwholesome Karma. Wholesome Karma leads to a better life or rebirth in higher realms such as heavens and human world with the conditions for more pleasurable life. Unwholesome Kamma leads to births in lower realms or unfavorable conditions for life. The first two stanzas of the Dhammapada remind us how good and bad kammā-s are associated with good and bad results respectively.

"If one speaks or acts with pleasant mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow never leaves"

"If one speaks or acts with unpleasant mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox"

⁴⁸ M. Sammāditthi-sutta.

*"Manasā ce pasannena bhāsati vā karoti vā Tato nam sukhamanveti
chāyāva anpāyini"⁴⁹*

*"Manasā ce padutthena bhāsati vā karoti vā Tato nam dukkhamanveti
cakkamva vahato padam."⁵⁰*

⁴⁹ *Dp Yamakavagga*

⁵⁰ *Dp Yamakavagga*

Convocation Seminar Speaker Biodata



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From Where Does Chinese Buddhism Come?

by Professor Charles Willemen

Synopsis:

Everyone knows that Buddhism originated in India, but where in India was the exact area from where Buddhism went to China? Which were the main routes to eastern Asia? Also: Why and how was Buddhism received in China?

Buddhism arrived in China in the first century A.D., but the translation of texts began only around the middle of the second century. At that time China had Confucianism and Daoism. One can see Confucianism as the *yang* of Chinese thought, and Daoism as the *yin* of Chinese thought. So, China apparently did not need anything else. While Buddhism was at first closely associated with Daoism, it never was a kind of Daoism. Buddhism became the international dimension of traditional Chinese thought. The end of the Han (23-220 A.D.), a vast empire extending far into Central Asia, was a quite international period. The first translators of Buddhist texts were almost all non-Han. During successive dynasties in the North after the Han Buddhism was widely respected by the invading barbarians, and in the South Buddhism was gradually accepted by the higher circles, by Chinese intellectuals and nobility. A separate evolution took place in the North and in the South, but China was united again during the Sui (589-618) and the Tang (618-907). That was the most prosperous period of Buddhism in China. Chinese Buddhism found its way to Korea and Japan during the Tang.

The main route from India to China was a net of roads, known as the Silk Road. There mainly were a northern and a southern road along the Taklamakan Desert. In the early period, i.e. before Kumarajiva (344-413), the southern road was most important. It went from Dunhuang to Loulan (Kroraina) and on to Hetan (Khotan). There was a way across the Karakorum Mountains to Gandhara, or the way could continue West from Kashi (Kaxgar, Kashgar) and branch off to

Bactria, mostly northern Afghanistan today. These two areas, Gandhara and Bactria, are India`s northwestern cultural area. Chinese Buddhism mainly originates here.

Jibin is the name for Gandhara and the Gandharans who came to Central Asia across the Karakorum. But to the West of Gandhara, which is northern Pakistan today, was Bactria, across the Khyber Pass. Bactria was a part of Gandharan culture, and it was part of Jibin. Jibin, so often translated as Kasmira, was actually Gandhara and Bactria. Kasmira became part of Jibin from about 200 A.D. on, but the most important part of Jibin remained its Gandharan part. Bactria already is Central Asia, included in the Chinese word Xiyu. While Xiyu is everything West of Dunhuang, it may be used for Bactria in particular. Someone from Bactria may be said to come from Xiyu or from Jibin. So, Chinese Buddhism mainly originates in this Jibin area, which is Bactria and Gandhara. Kasmira`s influence in China was very limited. Xuanzang (602-664) introduced the Buddhism of Kasmira to China, and even then the influence of Bactria and Gandhara was far greater.

The languages used in Jibin were Prakrits. They are known as Gandhari. The writing system was Kharosthi. The original Indian language of the texts which were translated in China was not Sanskrit, written in Brahmi. Sanskrit became the main original Indian language from the time of Kumarajiva. That is the main reason why the Chinese terminology changed from ancient translations (guyi) to old translations (jiuyi) from the time of Kumarajiva on. Also Paramartha belongs to the period of old translations, but Xuanzang actually just perfected Paramartha`s translation work. That is why Xuanzang begins the period of new translations (xinyi), which only slightly changed during the Northern Song (960-1127). In the Chinese capital of the Song, presently Kaifeng in Henan, there was a Translation Bureau (Yijing Yuan) where many late texts were translated, often esoteric texts (Mizong). So, the early period was a period of Gandhari Prakrit, translated to a Chinese language which was different from the language of the Confucian classics of the time. The ancient Chinese Buddhist texts are very "colloquial". If one wants to reach a large audience, one should not use a restricted, high-class language, but the language of common Chinese.

The subjects should also be familiar to a Chinese audience. The early Buddhist texts agreed with the cultural environment of the late Han. They explained Buddhist yoga and Buddhist terminology, very similar to Daoist yoga, e.g. breathing techniques.

The kind of Buddhism which can be found in Gandhara was mainly Sarvastivada, but not the Sarvastivada Buddhism from Kasmira. Sarvastivada was split up in two groups after the end of the second century A.D.. There was a new orthodoxy in Kasmira. They had a new Abhidharma, said to be proclaimed by Buddha, and they had a new Vinaya. The old, traditional Vinaya was very long, had many stories to explain the rules. The new Vinaya removed most of the stories and kept the rules. So, the Vinaya was still the same, but shorter, more "modern". This all happened in Kasmira during a Sarvastivada synod which was started during the reign of king Kaniska, end of the second century A.D.. From that time on the western, old Sarvastivadins were called Sautrantikas. They believed that only the sutras were Buddha's word. By the way, the Sarvastivadins in Central India also can be called Sautrantikas. The arhats in Kasmira established a central Abhidharma text, the *Jnanaprasthana*, and compiled a large commentary, called *Mahavibhasa*. That is why they are known as Vaibhasikas. They were in China only at the time of Xuanzang. The western Sarvastivadins and their Abhidharma influenced China much deeper. They even gave rise to an Abhidharma School in southern China in the fifth century.

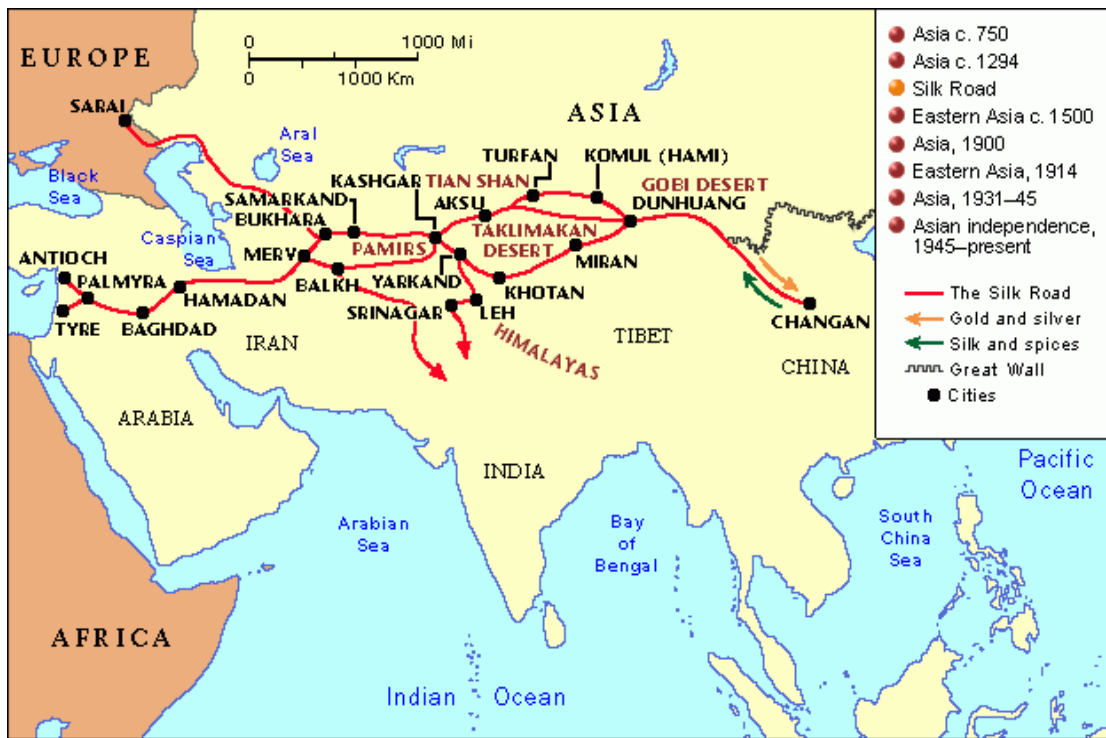
In the Gandharan area there also were the Mahasamghikas, rivals of the Sthaviras, of which the Sarvastivadins were one important group. The Mahasamghikas developed Prajnaparamita literature, about wisdom and emptiness. This literature arrived in China at the end of the second century, but its success seems to have been limited. There was no Madhyamaka in China before Kumarajiva. Also the Dharmaguptakas, another Sthavira group, reached China. Their Vinaya became very influential in China. The Dharmaguptakas had split off from the Mahisasakas in the northwestern, the Gandharan area. This last group originally came from Central India. It travelled to the northwestern area, but also to the southeastern area, to Andhra, and on to Sri Lanka. They really "converted the earth".

This brings us to a second road from India to China, namely the maritime road. From India's southeastern area ships set sail to the Malay Peninsula. The kind of Buddhism of southeastern India was almost exclusively Mahasamghika, but also Mahisasaka. It travelled along the Malay Peninsula to Funan, extending from Thailand to Cambodia. The ships then travelled along the coast of Vietnam to Jiaozhou, presently the area of Hanoi. This already was China at the time (third century). The end of the journey was the southern coast of China, Guangzhou, and also Nanjing. Avalokitesvara protected the sailors across the ocean. This southern, maritime road was important for Mahasamghika, for Mahayana Buddhism and for Avalokitesvara, who met Mazu in southern China.

There was a third road, but this road is not well studied. From the estuary of the Ganges ships sailed along the coast to the East, along the Myanmar coast. From there a road seems to lead to southwestern China, to Sichuan. So, Sichuan also was an area where Buddhism travelled to during the early period, certainly during Shu-Han (221-263). From there Buddhism travelled along the Yangzi to the East, to Nanjing. But the kind of Buddhism that came from present-day Bangla Desh and from Orissa is less known. It was most probably Sarvastivada and Mahasamghika Buddhism. We know that in Sichuan it was well received in Daoist circles. Maybe the same kind of Buddhism reached Sichuan coming from Assam, travelling across northern Myanmar.

So, Buddhism reached China along many roads, but most important was the road through Central Asia to Luoyang, and later to Chang'an. Bactrian Buddhism travelled that way. That is the way Abhidharma went to China, and also Amitabha's Pure Land, and Vinaya. The ancient Indian texts were written in a Prakrit language. The second, important road was the maritime road, from India's southeastern area to southeastern China. The third road led from India's northeastern area to Sichuan, but this road needs to be studied more.

Silk Road



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Convocation Seminar Speaker Biodata



Ven. Professor K.L. Dhammajoti

Ven. Professor K.L. Dhammajoti, PhD, a Malaysian. A Glorious Sun Endowed Professor in Buddhist Studies at the University of Hong Kong since 2007. He graduated from the University of Kelaniya, in Sri Lanka, joined the University's Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies in 1982 as a senior lecturer, and went on to become a professor and Head of the Department of Buddhist Literary Sources in 1992, a position he held until 2004, when he became a venerable professor at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong and subsequently the Chairman of the Departmental Research Postgraduate Committee.

Ven. Professor K.L. Dhammajoti is a leading scholar in the highly specialized field of Buddhist Studies known as Abhidharma as well as early Indian Yogācāra. He is well-versed in all the Buddhist Scriptural Languages, including Classical Chinese, Sanskrit, Pāli and Tibetan and, as such, his expertise is highly sought after by academic institutions around the world, including the University of Calgary, which awarded him the prestigious Numata Chair of Buddhist Thought in the year 2000. He is the author of a number of books on Buddhist doctrines and has written many academic papers on his specialty. Ven. Professor K.L. Dhammajoti is also the editor of the internationally-renowned Journal of Buddhist Studies, dedicated to Buddhist research.

The Question of the Oldest Teachings of the Buddha: Some Remarks of the Criteria for the Stratification of the Buddhist Canon

by Ven. Professor K.L. Dhammajoti

Synopsis:

In spite of traditional accounts, it is a historical fact that the *Tripitaka* was compiled through a gradual process, starting from the time of the so-called First Council shortly after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. This means that some material in the Buddhist Canon are older than other. Since the 19th century, there has been a controversy as to what constituted the "Original Gospel" of the Buddha. In this connection, some modern scholars consider it more fruitful to examine the question of stratification of the Canon, putting forward various criteria for the "old and "new" strata of the Buddhist scriptures. However, invalid criteria necessarily entail false conclusions.

In this lecture, I intend to offer a critique on some invalid criteria proposed by certain leading Buddhist scholars. In my humble opinion, the conclusions derived from these criteria have unfortunately not only seriously distorted the historical facts concerning the earliest Buddhist teachings, but also effectively reduced the profundity of the Buddha's teachings emanated from his Enlightenment to nothing more than some simple ethical exhortations.

研讨会论文发表者履历



魏查理教授

魏查理教授——比利时皇家科学院院士、著名的汉学家。魏查理教授在对佛学的研究方面有着很深的造诣，对部派佛教之一的说一切有部有很独特的研究，认为中亚的菩萨乘出现，是说一切有部推动的。

魏查理教授原任比利时国立根特大学中文系主任，他对中国的文化、历史、哲学、宗教作了深入的、富有创见的研究。从 1971 年获得博士学位以来，他在美国、中国、加拿大、日本、印度、西欧等国作了上百个有关汉学和佛学的学术报告，出版了多部学术专著，如：《法句经》、《法集要颂经》、《阿毗昙心论的研究》等等。发表了许多学术文章，如：《六法发微》、《般若波罗密多心经研究》、《善无畏三藏的印度名字》等等。

魏查理教授会讲多国语言。是一个蜚声世界的佛学和汉学专家，他被印度、中国、北美、日本、欧洲等大学聘为客座教授。魏查理教授目前担任国际佛教大学副校长。

汉传佛教始源

魏查理教授

大纲：

人们都知道，佛教起源于印度。然而，佛教从印度的哪个地区传入中国？通往东亚的主要道路是哪条？中国为什么接受了佛教以及怎样接受了佛教呢？

佛教传到中国的时间是公元一世纪，但是佛教经典译本却在公元二世纪中期才出现。那时的中国，已经有了儒教和道教。一般认为，儒教代表中国思想中的“阳”而道教代表中国思想中的“阴”。很显然，中国那时并不需要其他的宗教。佛教最初与道教产生了联系，但没有被衍变成道教的一个种类。佛教成为了中国思想中的国际方面。汉代之后（23A.D. - 220A.D.）中国是一个版图延伸至中亚的庞大帝国，这一时期也是中国特别国际化的时期。第一位佛教经典的译者几乎可以说不是汉族。在接下来的朝代里，汉代之后的北方佛教受到侵略中国的民族——胡人的广泛尊敬；在南方，中国的上流社会、士人和豪门贵族也逐渐接受了佛教。佛教在中国北方和南方有着截然不同的发展，但当中国再次在隋（589- 618）唐（618- 907）统一时，佛教发展空前的繁荣。唐代的佛教成为了韩国和日本的重要宗教。

佛教从印度传到中国的道路是一个道路网，被称之为：丝绸之路。这条路主要分为北路和南路。鸠摩罗什（344- 413）之前的时期最重要的道路是南路。这条路从敦煌经楼兰通向和田。南路可以跨越卡拉昆仑山到达犍陀罗，也可以从喀什一直向西从一个分支去往大夏。大夏大部分位于今日阿富汗的北部。犍陀罗和大夏属于印度西北部文化区域。中国佛教主要起源于这两个地区。罽宾是犍陀罗国和犍陀罗人的名字，他们穿越卡拉昆仑山到达中亚。犍陀罗是现在的巴基斯坦北部，它以西，通过开伯尔关就是大夏。大夏既是犍陀罗文化的一部分也是罽宾的一部分。罽宾常常被译为迦湿弥罗，但是，事实上，罽宾是犍陀罗和大夏。

迦湿弥罗成为罽宾的一部分始于公元二世纪末，然而，罽宾最重要的部分仍然是犍陀罗的地区。大夏已经是中亚的一部分，中文称之为“西域”。西域可以指敦煌以西的区域，同时也可以特指大夏。从大夏来的人可以被说成是从西域或从罽宾来。中国佛教主要发源于罽宾地区，即：大夏和犍陀罗。迦湿弥罗佛教对中国的影响是十分有限的。玄奘（602- 664）把迦湿弥罗佛教介绍到中国，但是大夏和犍陀罗佛教的影响还是更大。

罽宾使用的语言是俗语。罽宾俗语又被称之为犍陀罗语。罽宾使用的文字是“kharosthi”。最早被译为中文的佛教经典使用的印度语是梵语 (Sanskrit)，用梵文 (Brahmi) 写成。梵语成为主要的印度早期语言始于鸠摩罗什时代。这也是为什么中国的术语从古译变为旧译的时期是鸠摩罗什时代的原因。真谛也属于旧译的时期。玄奘实际上只是修改和完善了真谛的译本。这就是为什么玄奘开始了新译的时代。玄奘的术语在北宋（960- 1127）时期被稍微地修改了。北宋的首都，今开封市，有一个译经院，在那里很多佛教经典都被翻译了，通常被翻译的是密宗仪轨。那么，早期的印度语就是犍陀罗语的时期。中国古译佛教经典的语言与那时儒教文学使用的语言大不相同。中国古译佛教经典十分“口语化”。想要赢得更多的读者和听众，佛教经典使用的语言就不可以是晦涩的、上层社会的语言，而应该是普通百姓的语言。并且，所表达的主题，应该是中国百姓耳熟能详的。早期的佛教经典符合了东汉末期的文化环境。这一时期的佛教经典解释了佛教的瑜伽和术语，这些与道教的瑜伽十分类似，例如：对呼吸的控制。

犍陀罗地区的佛教主要是说一切有部，而不是迦湿弥罗的说一切有部佛教。从公元二世纪末开始，说一切有部分为了两派。在迦湿弥罗新正统派创立了。新正统派有了一个新阿毗达磨，并称新阿毗达磨是佛所说，同时，他们有了一个新

毗奈耶。古老的传统毗奈耶很长，包括了很多用来解释戒律故事。新毗奈耶剔除了大部分故事并保持了原有的戒律。毗奈耶实际上还是同一个，只是新的更加简短和“现代”。这一切都发生于公元二世纪末的迦湿弥罗的说一切有部会时。这个会于迦腻色迦王在位时开始。从那时开始，西方传统说一切有部被称为经量部。他们认为只有经典是佛说。另外，印度中部的说一切有部也被称为经量部。迦湿弥罗的罗汉创立了一个中心阿比达磨论，叫做“发智论”，并编辑了很长的注释，叫做“大毗婆沙论”。这就是为什么迦湿弥罗的罗汉被称为毗婆沙师。但是，他们的观点在玄奘时期才传入中国。西方的说一切有部及其阿毗达磨影响中国甚深。五世纪时，中国南方甚至建立了毗昙宗。

犍陀罗地区还包括大众部，他们的竞争者是上座。说一切有部是上座的重要部分。大众部发展了关于智慧和空性的般若婆罗弥多文学。这一文学在公元二世纪末传到中国，但它的成就十分有限。鸠摩罗什之前，中国没有中观派。上座的另一个部分法藏部也传到了中国。法藏部的毗奈耶在中国十分有影响。法藏部从位于印度西北部的犍陀罗地区的化地部分支出来。化地部最早源于印度中部。化地部传播到了印度西北部，同时也传播到了东南部的 Andhra，之后继续传播到了斯里兰卡。他们真可以被称之为“教化大地的使者”。

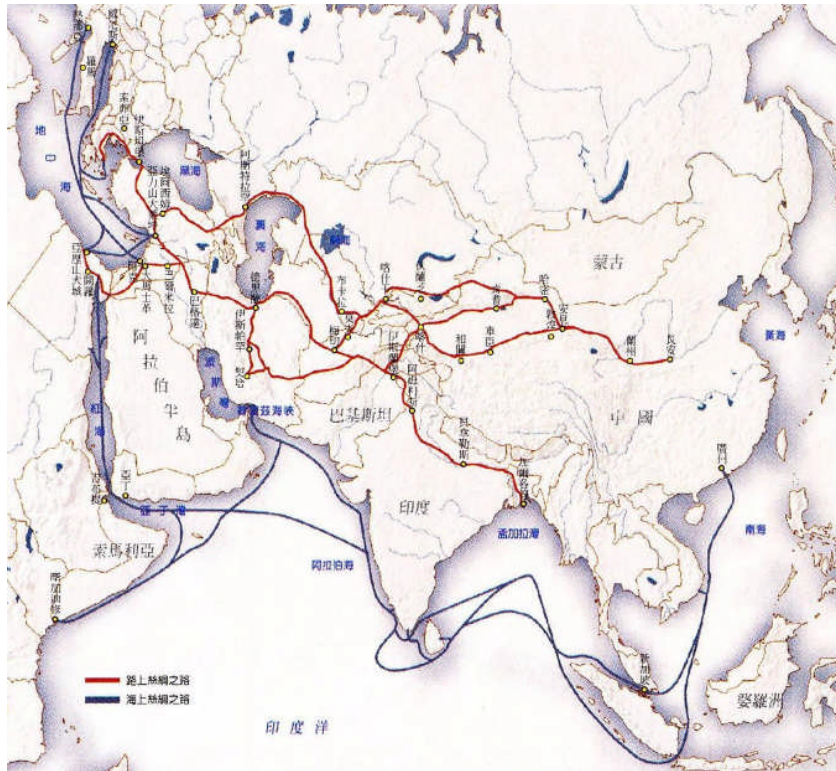
这样，我们就又发现了一条从印度通往中国的道路，即：海上之路。从印度东南部出发的船只可以航行到马来半岛。印度东南部的这支佛教，几乎只有大众部，但也有一些化地部。这一支佛教沿着马来半岛传播到夫南。夫南是泰国和柬埔寨沿海的一个地区。这些船只航行到越南沿海，直到交州，即今日的河内地区。三世纪时，交州也是中国的一个地区。这一航行的终点是中国的南部沿海地区，广州和南京。观音菩萨保佑着水手在大洋中航行。这一南部的海上之路对于

大众部、大乘佛教和观音菩萨很重要。观音菩萨在中国南方结识了妈祖。

还有第三条佛教的传播之路，但这条路尚未被充分研究。从恒河口出发的船只向东航行，一直延伸到缅甸沿岸。从那里开始，似乎有一条通往中国西南（即：四川）的路。早在蜀汉时期（221-263）佛教就已经传播到了四川。从四川，佛教又沿长江向东传播，直到南京。但是从今天孟加拉国和奥利萨传播开来的佛教人们尚不清楚其种类。有可能，从这条路传播来的佛教是说一切有部和大众部。我们知道，四川的道教信徒很好的接纳了佛教。四川的这个佛教类别也有可能是从 Assam 穿越缅甸北部来的。

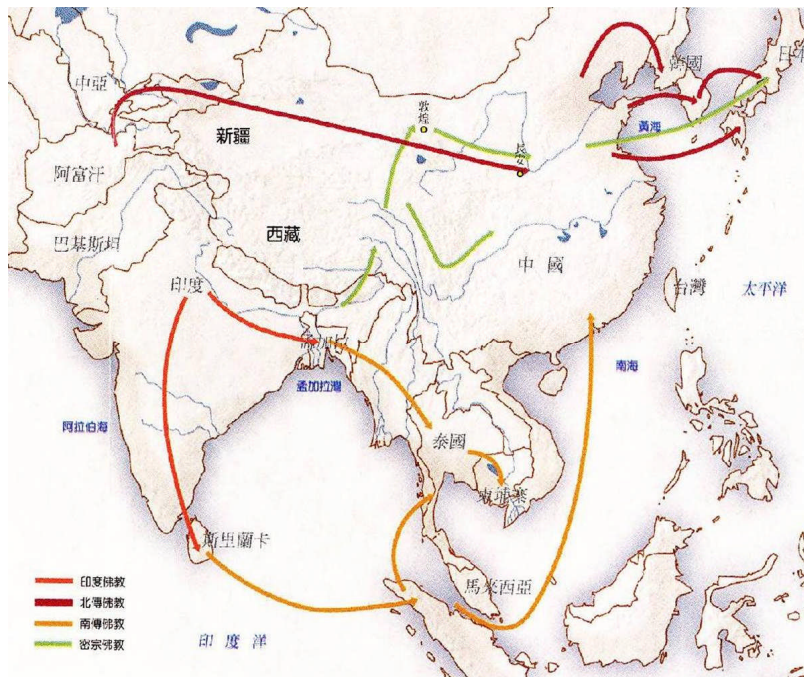
因此，佛教通过很多道路传到了中国。但是，最重要的一条路是从中亚到洛阳最终到达长安。大夏佛教就是通过这条路传播的。这条路也是阿毗达磨、阿弥陀佛的净土和毗奈耶传到中国的路。印度早期经典是用俗语写成的。第二条重要的路就是海上之路。这条路从印度东南通向中国东南。第三条路是从印度东北到中国的四川，但这一条传播途径还有待继续研究。

丝绸之路



摘录之慈济《经典杂志》

佛教东传路线图



摘录之慈济《经典杂志》

研讨会论文发表者履历



法光法师

法光法师来自马来西亚。2007 年荣获香港大学- 旭日佛学名的教授席。法光法师毕业于斯里兰卡拉尼亚大学并于 1982 年成为该大学巴利与佛学研究学院的高级讲师。1992 至 2004 年，法光法师当上该大学教授及佛学资料部主任。法师现任教于香港大学，是佛学研究中心教授亦是学系研究生课程委员会主席。

法师专长阿毗达摩及早期瑜伽思想。法师也精通许多佛教经典语文，例如：华文、巴利文、梵文、藏文。法师的学术专长受世界各地的学术学府所重视，加拿大 Calgary 大学也曾于2000 年底颁发 Numata 荣誉教授席于法光法师。法师所著的佛学书籍种类繁多，亦发表多篇学术论文。除此之外，法师还身兼倍受国际学术界所肯定的《佛学学报》主编。

佛教的“古”与“新”—— 对佛教圣典层次化的一些评论

法光法师

大纲：

不管传统所说如何，历史的事实是：佛教三藏之集成，是从佛灭后不久的所谓第一次结集开始逐渐完成的。这意味著佛教圣典裡的资料，应有「古」与「新」的区别。自十九世纪，有关佛陀的原本教义——所谓的“原本福音”——成为佛教界的一大争议。一些近代学者，聪明的逃避了这个争议，而致力於圣典层次化的问题，并提出了种种作为区分圣典之「古」、「新」的准绳。然而，准绳若不正确，结论也必然是谬误的。

在此讲座中，我将检讨某些佛教学者所提出的一些无效准绳，并略加评论。在我的浅见中，从这些准绳所得来的结论，不仅严重歪曲了最早期佛教教义的历史事实，更实质上把佛陀正觉等流的甚深佛法，简化为仅是一些纯朴的道德规劝。这是很令人遗憾的。

研讨会论文发表者履历



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《爱莲说》：佛理与义理的融合

朱雪芳博士

大纲：

1. 《爱莲说》创作背景

1.1 作者简介

周敦颐(1017—1073),字茂叔,号濂溪,谥号元公,道州营道县(今湖南道县)人,中国北宋著名的思想家、理学家和哲学家。周敦颐原名敦实,为避英宗旧讳而改敦颐,晚年定居庐山莲花峰下,以家乡营道之水“濂溪”命名堂前的小溪和书堂,故人称濂溪先生。周敦颐一生为官清廉,勤政爱民,以洗冤泽物为己任。北宋文学大家黄庭坚对周元公这种高洁人品大加称誉:“人品甚高,胸怀洒落,如光风霁月……。”

1.2《爱莲说》创作背景

1063年,周敦颐正当47岁时在浙江余杭写下了光辉篇章《爱莲说》,全文144字(含标点),文笔流畅,优美简练,风格简劲,语言凝练自然,比喻贴切,寓意深刻,成为历来被学者推崇的上佳文学作品。《爱莲说》通过对莲的形象与品质的描绘,歌颂了莲花坚贞的品格,从而表现了作者洁身自爱的高洁人格和洒落的胸襟。所以,在民间,《爱莲说》已是家喻户晓,孩提传颂。

《爱莲说》是周敦颐处于成熟期之杰作,雅俗共赏,让人读起来朗朗上口,悠然生起“虽不能至,然心向往之”之感,起着潜移默化的作用。对大多数人而言,不一定有追求圣人之道,至少能够洁身自爱,追求君子之道,唤起对生命价值的追求和不断自我完善和理想。

2. 佛理、义理解义

2.1 佛学有关莲花的经文

华严宗《华严一乘教义分齐章》说:性“犹为明镜,现於染净。虽现染净而恒不失镜之明净。只由不失明净故,方能现染净之相。以现染净,

知镜明净；以镜明净，知现染净。是故二义，唯是一性。虽现净法，不增镜明；虽现染法，不污镜净，非直不污，亦由此乃显镜之明净。当知真如，道理亦尔。”

《华严探玄记》把人性比作莲花，认为莲花的特性是“在泥不染”，人性也应像莲花一样，“在世而不为世法所污”。

2.2 儒学有关君子的文句

子谓子夏曰：汝为君子儒，毋为小人儒。《论语·雍也第六》

子曰：君子喻於义，小人喻於利。《论语·里仁第四》

子曰：文质彬彬，然后君子。《论语·雍也第六》

子曰：君子坦荡荡，小人长戚戚。《论语·述而第七》

子曰：君子成人之美，不成人之恶。小人反是。《论语·颜渊第十二》

子曰：君子上达，小人下达。《论语·宪问第十四》

古之君子，过则改之。今之君子，过则顺之。古之君子，其过也，如日月之食，民皆见之；及其更也，民皆仰之。今之君子，岂徒顺之，又从为之辞。《孟子·公孙丑下》

3. 《爱莲说》原文疏释

水陆草木之花，可爱者甚蕃。晋陶渊明独爱菊；自李唐来，世人盛爱牡丹；予独爱莲之出淤泥而不染，濯清涟而不妖，中通外直，不蔓不枝，香远益清，亭亭净植，可远观而不可亵玩焉。

予谓菊，花之隐逸者也；牡丹，花之富贵者也；莲，花之君子者也。噫！菊之爱，陶后鲜有闻；莲之爱，同予者何人；牡丹之爱，宜乎众矣。

4. 《爱莲说》体现的佛学与儒学思想

《爱莲说》旨在论述君子之道。

周敦颐《爱莲说》以人性比作莲花，有学者认为直接吸取佛教华严宗的思想。（陈运宁著，《中国佛教与宋明理学》，湖南人民出版社，2002。序页7。）

研讨会论文发表者履历



法庆博士

2001年考获加拿大卡尔加里大学 (The University of Calgary) 佛学博士学位后，便在马来西亚檀香寺属下的佛教中心开始了教务工作。2003年法庆博士被调往泰国协助创建国际佛教大学。如今法庆博士已是国际佛教大学资深教员兼任图书馆及资讯技术主任。目前，他正进行远程教学工作。

佛教对死亡的解释¹

法庆博士

大纲：

死亡的现象是一个谜，自古以来哲学家们都在探讨这个问题。现在人们正在试着用各种方式去了解它，如催眠、体外经历 (Out-of-Body Experience)、垂死经历 (Near-Death Experience)，小孩回忆等。

心脏移植的成功，使人们给予死亡不同的定义。藏传佛教有中阴身之说，中国佛教传统上有“七七”之说，南传佛教又有不同的解释。我们发现无论传统上有各种不同的解释，但在修行上都强调一点：每个人都必须学会面对死亡，临终时没有恐惧和执着。

一、介绍

印度佛学思想的历史发展可概括如下：对佛陀教法的不同理解，而产生了不同的佛教宗派。这些早期佛教宗派，除经量部外，皆可称为阿毗达磨学派，因为他们都信仰达磨(法)的存在。他们都有自己的阿毗达磨论藏，多数学者认为，大乘学派的产生和展开是在反对阿毗达磨学派对于法的理解的过程中而产生的，特别是有部的毗昙²学派。

在中国佛教思想的发展的起初阶段，佛经的翻译，采用了当时流行的道家和儒家的术语。早期的大乘佛教经论，诸如《般若波罗蜜经》和龙树菩萨的著作在早期阶段被介绍到了中国；随着尊者鸠摩罗什翻译的出现，中国人开始更加准确地懂得了印度人的思想，不再把道家和儒家的观念加进佛教的著述里。早期中国佛教的宗派，譬如俱舍、净土、三论、天台和华严宗都是由中国人自己创立的。

¹ 此文初稿由国际佛教大学学生果智法师从英文译出，原英文发表在 <http://www.c2rc.org/papers.php> Closer-to-Reality Conference 2008: Death & Beyond 27-29 December 2008, Thean Hou Temple, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

² 毗昙、阿毗昙和阿毗达磨是梵文 Abhidharma 的不同中译，这里毗昙、阿毗昙指有部的阿毗达磨。

随后，到了唐代，由于玄奘新译本的出现，产生了中国的唯识法相宗；后来，真言宗盛行于中国唐朝宫廷之中。随着禅宗和新儒家思想的发展，学派争鸣活动在中国佛教的传统信仰中走向衰落。这就是中国佛教发展的概要。

可以说，中国佛教历史是一个翻译印度佛教经典的历史。这些经典的传入和运用，更加影响了中国佛教传统信仰的发展。中国佛教最早的形成是经过中亚被传入到中国，这些学说主要是有部阿毗昙和早期的大乘佛教文献。一切有部在当时的北印是一个流行的宗派，它对法的分析的部分教义后来被大乘唯识法相学所吸收，与一切有部有密切关系的俱舍宗成为中国佛教的十三大宗派之一。正当有部阿毗昙在最早时期对中国佛教产生影响的时候，正量部阿毗达磨亦在一个相当早的阶段被传入到了中国。有部、正量部和早期的大乘学派都相信中阴身（生与死之间的中间状态）。中国人从这些传统信仰中继承了中阴身的学说。例如，中国人为亡者所举行的“七七四十九日”的传统仪式，毫无疑问，便是直接从有部学说的传统信仰中继承过来的。

二、死亡

死亡在佛教修行中是一个重要的话题。死亡使我们想起，从追求解脱的角度来看，人类的生命是最宝贵的生存状态。人的生命并不能认为是理所当然的，因为一个人死后，来世再转生为人是稀有罕见的。通常死和生放在一起，意指轮回或苦。

2.1 死亡的定义

在早期经典里，死亡被解释成对五蕴相续的终止，身体冷却和坏灭，寿命 (āyus) 或命根 (jīvitendriya) 的终结。“云何为死？谓彼彼有情，从彼彼有情类，终尽坏没，舍寿舍暖，命根谢灭，弃舍诸蕴，死时运尽，是名为死³。”

类似的定义可以在《大毗婆沙论》和早期的大乘经典里找到⁴，后期的

³ 《缘起经》T2, no.124 49a；又见《杂阿含经》T2, no.99, 85b；《佛说四谛经》T1, no.32, 815a；《增壹阿含经》T2, no.125, 797c。T指《大正新修大藏经》下同。

⁴ T28, no.1546, 148c 云何为死。答曰。诸行散灭是名为死。又，《佛说决定义经》T17, no. 762, 651b；

阿毗昙和法相学著作，对于死亡的标准定义是：“暖、命及识舍弃身根⁵。”

《俱舍论》判定死有两种：顿死和渐死。顿死指意识和身根迅速消亡，渐死是指意识和暖热缓慢地离开一个人的身体。如果一个人轮回地狱里，那么这个人的意识和暖热将在死亡的时候从头到脚离开；如果一个人投生为人，意识和暖热便从这个人的肚脐消失；如果它们是从心脏开始消失，这个人将被转生为天人或阿罗汉⁶。

《瑜伽师地论》谈论到关于意识和暖热在命终最后时刻⁷，从一个人的心脏开始消失。（假若把 A 的心脏传送到 B，A 的心脏的热量继续保留在 B 的身体里，鉴于此种情况，谁是死者？谁又不是死者？）一个造了更多恶业的人，在死的时候，意识将从这个人的头部开始消失，凉气从头部开始并逐渐到达心脏。一个聚积善业的人，意识将从这个人的较低部位离开而到达顶部，即是说，凉气从较低处升起并渐渐地到达心脏。在最后的时刻，意识从心脏离开，随后凉气传遍全身。

这里，涉及到如何理解寿命根 (jīvitendriya) 的问题，毗昙学派有着不同的看法。总而言之，它是一种心不相应行法 (citta-viprayukta-saṃskāra)。

《俱舍论》解释寿命根是指生命的相续性，并依靠暖热和意识。⁸《俱舍论》谈论到了生命的四个阶段：出生、从出生到死亡之间的一段时期、死亡，以及死亡到再生的一段时期。根据《俱舍论》和法相学著作，关于这一过程的一种解释为，寿命根保留了身体的暖热和意识的共生和持续的关系直至“生命的极限。”在那个时候——生命、暖热和意识三大要素——统统离开了身体，并产生了死亡。这种看法类似于被抛弃的一根木材，于是业力驱使着三大要素寻求到了另外的身体里。“命根”是“暖热”和“意识”的共生，死可以理解为“暖热”和“意识”分离。

《大宝积经》T11, no.310, 199c. ;《佛说分别缘生经》T16, no.718, p.844c.

⁵ 《阿毗达磨俱舍论》T29, no.1558, 26a; 《四谛论》T32, no. 1647, 384b 暖命及识舍离身根。是时名死。

⁶ T29, 1558, p.56b。

⁷ 《瑜伽师地论》T30, no.1579, 282a。

⁸ T29, no.1558, 26a.

蕴是从因缘条件和合的一种聚集体中而形成的，是暂时的自然现象，蕴本身是无常的，不断地产生和消亡。从“刹那”的观点出发，死发生在每时每刻。事物的反复出现总是刹那相续。在这种“刹那”和“寿命根尽”的死亡观念中，如何保留业的本体是一个关键问题。身体的消亡绝不意味着业的消亡，这就是为什么毗昙学派讲刹那死亡。事物总是瞬间存在的，从而任何的片刻变化都存在着死⁹。生命就像一条河流，连续不断地流淌着，从这种意义上来讲，死并不意味着业力的终止。

2.2 死亡的各种特征

通常，在早期的《阿含经》和晚期的大乘经典里，死被解释成两种：恶业死和善业死。《十二品生死经》里记载了十二种死¹⁰。

1. 阿罗汉（无生者）的无余死；
2. 阿罗含（不还者）的度脱死；
3. 斯陀含（一来者）的有余死；
4. 须陀洹（预流者）依见道学修度脱死；
5. 八等人（八忍位）的无欺死；
6. 行一心者的欢喜死；
7. 恶戒人的数数死；
8. 凡夫的悔死；
9. 孤独苦者的横死；
10. 畜生的缚着死；
11. 地狱众生的烧烂死
12. 饿鬼的饥渴死。

经中还提出人们需要追随佛陀的教法和修行的道路，因为死是痛苦的（从上述列举出的第 7——12 条便可知）。比丘应独居一处并认真修行三

⁹ 《四谛论》T32, Not. 1647, 384b。

¹⁰ 《十二品生死经》T17.No.753, p575a-b。陈兵《生与死——佛教轮回》
<http://www.lianhua33.com/sys.htm>

昧禅定¹¹。

《四谛论》列举了四种死¹²：

1. 由于业力导致的自然死亡。例如，病死。
2. 因为寿命根相续的耗尽而自然死亡。如，老死。
3. 自己残害致死。如，自杀。
4. 遭别人加害而死。如，被人谋杀。

书中还列举了另外三种死：

1. 假死或刹那死：世间万物都是瞬间地存在着，因此任何片刻都存在着死；
2. 意外横祸而死；
3. 缘散尽而灭：惟阿罗汉知道自己的寿命业报终止，于是进入无余依涅槃。

以上是各种不同的死。当一个人舍弃了法的正道，亦被称为死(舍离本道是名死事)，有两种¹³。

1. 放逸人死：懒惰之人即使整个生命没有走到了尽头，但平时放松或懒于修行正法。
2. 破戒人死：比丘违背或违犯戒律，破戒或失去比丘的身份。

又有五种死¹⁴：

1. 觉悟死：具善业者，谓菩萨与阿罗汉；
2. 悔恨死：违犯戒律者；
3. 放逸死：不尊重或不认真学修正法和戒律者；
4. 牵缠死：临命终时依恋家庭者；
5. 限定死：阿罗汉控制六根。

¹¹ T17. no.753, p575a-b.

¹² 《四谛论》 T32, no. 1647, 384b-c.

¹³ 同上 384b: 答慧命断故。名放逸人死。戒清净命破坏失故。名破戒人死。

¹⁴ 同上 384b.

《瑜伽师地论》声称当寿命相续到达极限时，于是就产生了人的死亡¹⁵。有三种：

1. 寿命相续的终止；
2. 业报命尽；
3. 可以避免的死亡，指九种由暴饮暴食所导致的死亡。

2.3 临命终时的情景

临终时，一生所造善恶业，就像放电影一样，一一浮现在眼前，死生相交。如果正念多没有贪念则升天上，贪念多则生禽兽，只有贪念则下地狱。

《首楞严经》中说¹⁶：“临命终时未舍暖触，一生善恶俱时顿现。死逆生顺二习相交，纯想即飞必生天上。……情多想少流入横生，重为毛群轻为羽族。七情三想沉下水轮，生于火际；受气猛火身为饿鬼，常被焚烧，水能害已，无食无饮经百千劫。九情一想下洞火轮，身入风火二交过地；轻生有间重生无间二种地狱，纯情即沉入阿鼻狱。”

《毗婆沙论》引自《阿含经》¹⁷云：“若男若女造身语意三种恶业，破坏尸罗，临命终时恶趣相现，如日欲暮，大山峰影来覆其身。当于尔时，身心惊怖，生大苦恼。”又，根据《阿含经》记载，“修善行者临命终时，见美妙堂阁园林池沼伎乐香花，处处陈列宝饰舆等似欲相迎；作恶行者临命终时，见危险沟壑猛火烟焰，刀山剑树独刺稠林，狐狼野干猫狸冢墓，秽恶众具似欲相迎¹⁸。”

经中还说，修善行的人临命终时，有地狱相现前，此时此人会忆念一生所修善业，深生欢喜。由于善的思念现前，地狱相即便隐没。天趣生相立即现前，从此命终生于天上¹⁹。

2.3.1 转生善趣

《正法念处经》列举出十七种中阴身，第一和第十四种，与人有

¹⁵ 《瑜伽师地论》T30, no.1579, 281b

¹⁶ 《大佛顶首楞严经》T19, no.945, 143b-c

¹⁷ T27, no.1545, p.121c

¹⁸ T27, no.1545, 360a

¹⁹ T27, no.1545, 360b

关。第一种讲到人临命终时转生天道的情形。

所谓死时，见于色相。若人中死，生于天上，则见乐相，见中阴有；犹如百毳，垂垂欲堕，细软白净，见已欢喜。颜色愉悦，临命中时，复见园林，甚可爱乐。莲花池水，亦皆可爱，河亦可爱，林亦可爱。次第闻诸歌舞戏笑，次闻诸香，一切爱乐。无量种物，和合细触，如是次第，即生天上。以善业故，现得天乐，得此乐已，含笑怡悦。颜色清净，亲族兄弟，悲啼号泣。以善相故，不闻不见，心亦不念。以善业故，临命终时，于中阴有，大乐成就。初生乐处，天身相似，天众相似，如是之相，生处相似，如印所印，亦如一切天众色相，亦如欲界六天受乐，亦如游行境界相似。触亦相似，天色相似，又住中阴，见诸天中盛处胜故。即生心取，爱境界故；即受天身，是则名曰初中阴有²⁰。

命终之人，再转人身：

临命终时，见大石山影来覆其身，竭力推之，家中亲人见其双手推至空中。再者，临命终人见于此山，犹如白毳，白色之后，转为红色，次第命终，入中阴身。次见一明处，未来父母和合之身，欲往其处。若贪恋父者，转为女身；依恋母者，再转男身²¹。

2.3.2转生恶趣

《首楞严经》根据一生所造恶业，列举出临命中时所现六种景象。而事实上，因众生所造恶业，故有地狱。一切众生六识造业，所招恶报从六根出。云何恶报从六根出²²？

1. 见报招引恶果。此见业交则临终时，先见猛火满十方界，亡者神识飞坠乘烟，入无间狱……
2. 闻报招引恶果。此闻业交则临终时，先见波涛没溺天地，亡者神识降注乘流，入无间狱……

²⁰ T17, 721, p.197c

²¹ T17, 721, p.200c

²² T19, no.945, 144a-145a

3. 嗅报招引恶果。此嗅业交则临终时，先见毒气充塞远近，亡者神识从地涌出，入无间狱……
4. 味报招引恶果。此味业交则临终时，先见铁网猛炎炽烈周覆世界，亡者神识下透挂网倒悬其头，入无间狱……
5. 触报招引恶果。此触业交则临终时，先见大山四面来合无复出路，亡者神识见大铁城，火蛇火狗虎狼狮子，牛头狱卒马头罗刹，手执枪槊驱入城门，向无间狱……
6. 思报招引恶果。此思业交则临终时，先见恶风吹坏国土，亡者神识被吹上空旋落乘风，堕无间狱。

这些痛苦，来自于无间地狱，皆由愚痴恶业所造。

2.3.3 《瑜伽师地论》

《瑜伽师地论》²³分三种死：善死、恶死和无记死。综述如下：

行善法者临命终时，善念显现；此种善念，依靠他人或其他物，能够激起。有此理智，信心等故，善法现前。此种意念，持续不断，直至粗念，变成细念；最后殁于无念中。“善死”的特征，即死有愉悦感。临命终时，身无痛苦；任何事物，亦不能够，分散其心。

行恶法者临命终时，恶念显现。依靠他人，或其他物，能够激起，此种恶念。命终之时，由于贪欲，瞋恚等故，恶念现前。“恶死”之特征，死时感到痛苦和焦虑；所见任何事物，亦可扰乱其心。

无记死者临命终时，所造之事，不能记忆；依靠他人，或其他物，亦不能记。因无忆念，临命终时，此人身心，无有愉悦，痛苦之感。

若造恶业，临命终时，见恶劣之景象，犹如梦中所见各种变化之颜色。

一生之中，若多恶业，晚年期间，恶业增长，临命终时，见山和山影等物在傍晚时倒悬或重迭。光明退去，黑暗来临。

一生之中，若多恶业，而此恶业，于晚年间，转成善业。临命终

²³ T30, no.1579, 281b-c

时，所见黑暗，逐渐消失，变成光明。临命终时，所见景象，犹如梦中，无量无数，奇光异彩。

若造最重恶业，见变化之怪色，四肢倒悬于空中，汗液逆流，头发倒竖，眼球凸起，唾液流出，无法自制。

所造较重恶业者，有时可见奇异之怪像，有时所见不甚明显。

总而言之，一生之中，若多善业，临命终时，见美妙之景象；若造恶业过多，则有不好的景象出现。

2.4 命终最后时刻，决定来世去向

大乘经典里经常强调，命终之时，再生善趣，最后时刻，至关重要。业力习气，日常行为，亦能决定最后时刻所生去向。《大宝积经》²⁴中云：

“最后识为主，彼业因缘故。以此二缘，生分之中识心初起。或生地狱，或生畜生，或生阎魔罗界，或生阿修罗，或生天人中。前识既灭生分识生，生分相续心，种类不绝²⁵。”

在此，以业力的因缘，最后的识决定来世所生去处。业力亦指在日常生活中个人的行为、经历和习气。假如我们修习善念，最后时刻，善念生起。最终，业力习气形成我们来世之果报。此经亦解释，无有永恒之自我，而能持续保持不变。

最后时刻，善恶之念，决定来世所生去处。据《大般涅槃经》中所言，若有比丘违犯戒律，临命终时，“心识怖惧，设有微善，悉不忆念，死即随业受地狱苦。若遵守戒律，临命终时，意识清楚，正念生起，死即转生极乐净土²⁶。”

若人希望临命终时，善念生起，应在日常生活中，时刻保持善念。就象五百匹马被控制成一匹马一样，这样一支军队足可消灭所有敌人。同样的道理，临命终时心念不散乱，而随自己意愿往生。²⁷ 因此，修行者在心念里，

²⁴ 《大宝积经》 T11, no.310, 706-13 CE

²⁵ T11, no.310, 417c; see also T11, 418a-425c

²⁶ T1, no.7, 195a

²⁷ 《众经撰杂譬喻》 T4, no. 208

应一直保持善思维。

此经亦说明，临命终时，若人观想佛陀，佛陀即现其前，此人将被转生极乐国土。

2.4.1从最后时刻，预知来世去处

我们怎样确定来世去处？从命终最后时刻之外观显现，可以预知来世去处。《守护国界主陀罗尼经》中有八种迹象表明，死即转生地狱

²⁸：

1. 舔吮嘴唇；
2. 身如火炭；
3. 直感饥渴；
4. 嘴张开而不能闭合；
5. 两眼干涩；
6. 大便失禁，却无小便排出；
7. 右膝先冷；
8. 右手直拽成拳头状。

有五种标记表明，死即转为畜生：

1. 折磨妻室儿女，凝视着他们，不愿放弃；
2. 手指和脚趾蜷缩成一团；
3. 浑身出汗；
4. 发出吵闹声；
5. 嘴里充满唾液。

有十种标记表明，死即转为人身：

1. 生起善念：柔软心念、功德心念、感到快乐、没有忧虑；
2. 身无痛苦；
3. 忆念父母；
4. 以同情心念朝向家里成员，注视着他们，既不爱也不恨。喜

²⁸ 《守护国界主陀罗尼经》T19, no. 997, p574a,b

- 欢听到兄弟姊妹之名字；
5. 介于善与恶念之间，能够分辨；
 6. 正直而不曲意奉承；
 7. 感激父母和朋友之保护；
 8. 一种成就之满足感；
 9. 透露并赠送所有财富给家人；
 10. 善念生起，请求佛、法、僧三宝之护佑。

亦有十种标记表明，死即转生天界：

1. 生起同情心念；
2. 生起善念；
3. 生起欣喜心念；
4. 正思维显现；
5. 无任何恶臭味；
6. 鼻无偏斜
7. 心念无瞋恨；
8. 不受人、家庭和财物之系缚；
9. 双眸和面容清晰可见；
10. 面带微笑。

大乘传统强调，临命终时，能见佛或菩萨，若能观想菩萨或佛所特有之美德²⁹；甚至仅听到菩萨之名号，便能转生天道³⁰。《般若经》³¹和《华严经》³²中经常在经之末尾处记载，“彼人临命终时心不颠倒，一切诸佛及大菩萨俱来迎接，十方净土随意往生³³。”

《大方广佛华严经》中说：

“譬如有人当命终时见中阴相。所谓行恶行者，见于地狱畜生恶

²⁹ T3, no.156, 131a

³⁰ T16, no.663, 353a; T16, no.664, 396a; T16, no.665, 449b

³¹ T8, no.242, 784a

³² 《显无边佛土功德经》T10, no. 289, 591c

³³ T9, no.278, 782a

鬼，受诸楚毒。或见阎罗王持诸兵仗俘去，或见刀山或见剑树，或见利叶割截众生，或见镬汤鬻治众生，或闻种种悲苦音声。若修善者，当命终时，悉见一切诸天宫殿。或见天女种种庄严游戏快乐，见如是等诸妙胜事，而不自觉死此生彼，但见不可思议行业境界³⁴。

净土宗经常强调，若人修行，临命终时，念念不忘阿弥陀佛，阿弥陀佛即可现在其前，此人即随阿弥陀佛往生彼国，并转生成为不退转菩萨，最终达到觉悟圆满³⁵。”

2.5 小结

在早期经典里，主要解释有两种死，即善和恶业而死。关于死之更多详情，见于晚期大乘经典里。

临命终时，善念生起，无有系缚，是为决定来生去处，至关重要的因素。事实上，在日常生活中，若心念与善不相一致，怎能期望临命终时，善念生起，心不颠倒？修行意味着反复实践，在日常生活中去改变习气恶业，我们才能期望在临命终时，生起善念。

三、中阴

中阴，一种介于死和来生之间的中间状态，是早期佛教宗派里最具争议的话题之一。此话题在《毗婆沙论》、《俱舍论》、《三弥底部论》和《成实论》里能被找到。它能在许多大乘经和论里被发现，诸如《大方广佛华严经》、《大乘入楞伽经》和《大般涅槃经》，以及《瑜伽师地论》。有部，正量部，唯识法相学派都相信中阴。

3.1 《阿含经》里有关中阴的讨论

梵文 antarābhava 常被译成中文为“中阴”或“中有”。此术语“中阴身”惯用于杂部里。据说，当中阴身入一母体时，此母喜与人辩论。算命师为其预言，其体内婴儿将通晓诸论。又，当中阴身入母体时，此母身心转变，心平气和、意不颠倒，乐善好施，且远离一切颠倒梦想，身体变得越发柔软。

³⁴ T9, no.278, 782a

³⁵ T11, no.310, 98a

其子被预知，将成一名阿罗汉³⁶。

在《长阿含经》里，佛陀谴责婆罗门不相信轮回：“有些比丘从禅定中获得天眼，能见命终之人，于此地死，随其业力，却转生于彼处。”《长阿含·弊宿经》：“有比丘初夜、后夜捐除睡眠；精勤不懈，专念道品。以三昧力，修净天眼；以天眼力，观于众生。死此生彼，从彼生此；寿命长短，颜色好丑；随行受报，善恶之趣，皆悉知见。汝不可以秽浊肉眼，不能彻见众生所趣，便言无也，婆罗门。以此可知，必有他世³⁷。”

3.2 毗昙学派中有关中阴的讨论

《成实论》有两章致力于中阴话题。从此论中，我们能看出，一些讨论围绕着第二世纪（鸠摩罗什之前）有部和经量部之间展开，最终争论结果是，成实论者不支持中阴之实有。

3.2.1 有部

《法蕴足论》引自《阿含经》的《颇勒鞞那经》和《莎底经》支持健达缚之理论。《大毗婆沙论》解释‘健达缚’为于欲界“食香而存济³⁸”。

《俱舍论》以佛说五种名来支持有中阴：³⁹

由佛世尊以五种名说中有故，何等为五？

1. 意成。从意生故，非精血等所有外缘合所成故；
2. 求生。常喜寻察当生处故；
3. 食香。身资香食往生处故；
4. 中有。二趣之间所有蕴故；
5. 名起。对向当生暂时起故。如《契经》说，有坏自体起，有坏自体生，起谓中有。

《瑜伽师地论》亦有以不同名说中有故⁴⁰。佛陀列举上述五种术

³⁶ T2, 99, p.178b

³⁷ 《长阿含·弊宿经》T1. 1. 44b-c

³⁸ T27, no.1545, 363a

³⁹ T29, no.1558, 55b

语，以此方式从文中声明中阴之实有。“且依正理中有非无，现见世间相续转法；要处无间刹那续生，且如世间谷等相续；有情相续理亦然，刹那续生处必无间⁴¹。”

3.2.2 正量部

此部派学说见于《三弥底部论》，论中有三分之一的篇幅讨论中阴。最近对正量部的阿毗达磨作系统研究的有越南籍比丘 Thich Thien Chau⁴²，书中有较详细的讨论有关正量部支持中阴实有的理由。

3.3 大乘经典中有关中阴的讨论

许多大乘经典支持中阴学说，诸如《华严经》、《大宝积经》、《首楞严经》、《大乘入楞伽经》和《大般涅槃经》。

《华严经》云：“童真菩萨舍身受形，身根意识初不错乱，不受中阴而有留难，众生神离住于中阴，随其轻重殃祸之本便有留难⁴³。”

《入楞伽经》云：“应知诸超中，众生种种身，胎卵湿生等，皆随中有生⁴⁴。”

《大般涅槃经》详述了中阴之话题，虽有时佛宣说中阴之实有，但有时佛又说造重恶业者，死后直入地狱，故无有中阴；善业居多者，因直生天界，故无有中阴；处无形界者，亦无有中阴⁴⁵。”古德往往引用这段经文，说大乘主张中阴无定说。

《大智度论》云：“中阴身无出无入，譬如然灯，生灭相续，不常不断⁴⁶。”

《瑜伽师地论》云：“中阴之生起，我执习气故。自执于己体，故中阴

⁴⁰ T30, no.1579, 282b

⁴¹ T29, no.1558, 44b

⁴² Bhikshu Thich Thien Chau, *The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999) pp. 207-209.

⁴³ T10, p.983a

⁴⁴ T16, no.672, 639c

⁴⁵ T12, no.374, 566c

⁴⁶ T25, no.1509, 149b,c

生起，犹如来世之果报⁴⁷。”

有部解释，身形转为实体，是名为健达缚，“食香而存济”。具诸五蕴微细变化，照见众生来世情形，多数人于此生中，虽有一些感觉，但被业力所限，寻到合适母体，入胎于其腹中。普遍看法认为，健达缚四十九日完成此种过程。高级修行者，虽成不复还者，却能从此生中，达到涅槃境地。此观念被大乘学派欣然接受，并衍生出各种修行方法，还有专门为新亡者设计的各种法会仪式意图帮助其命终后得以往生。

3.4中阴之形量大小

关于中阴之身材大小，《大毗婆沙论》云：“问中有形量大小云何。答欲界中有如五六岁小儿形量，色界中有如本有时形量圆满⁴⁸。”《俱舍论》说此中阴身的形状与即将投生的众生相似。“若业能引当所往趣。彼业即招能往中有。故此中有若往彼趣。即如所趣当本有形。”⁴⁹

《瑜伽师地论》云：“造恶业者所得中有，如黑糝光或阴暗夜；作善业者所得中有，如白衣光或晴明夜。……又造恶业者，眼视下净伏面而行。往天趣者上，往人趣者傍⁵⁰。”

3.5.“七七日”

实行“七七日”可被追溯到魏代（551——554），胡皇帝颁布“其死后‘七七日’中，应设千僧斋供养⁵¹。”清代学者钱泳，亦提到“七七日”起源于魏代⁵²。“七七日”实践于中国，并普及到诸佛教徒，直至今日。可见于《大毗婆沙论》、《瑜伽师地论》，以及后期盛行之大乘经典，譬如《地藏菩萨本愿经》和《药师琉璃光七佛本愿功德经》。

⁴⁷ T30, no.1579, 281c

⁴⁸ T27, no.1545, 361b. 又见 T1546. 28. 267c. T1547. 28. 518c

⁴⁹ T29, No.1558, 46a

⁵⁰ 《瑜伽师地论》T30, no.1579, 282a

⁵¹ 《魏书·外戚传下·胡国珍》：“又诏自始薨至七七，皆为设千僧斋。”汉语大词典 2.0版光碟，香港商务 2006

⁵² 清·钱泳《履园丛话·考索·七七》：“丧家七七之期，见于《北史》《魏书》《北齐书》及韩琦《君臣相遇传》。汉语大词典 2.0版光碟，香港商务 2006

关于中阴实有话题，多数详细解释，可见于《瑜伽师地论》⁵³，最初出现于《大毗婆沙论》⁵⁴。

尊者设磨达多 (Śarmadatta) 曰，中有极多住七七日，四十九日定结生故。

尊者世友 (Vasumitra) 作如是说，中有极多住经七日，彼身羸劣不久住故。问若七日内生缘和合彼可结生，若尔所时生缘未合彼岂断坏。答彼不断坏，谓彼中有乃至生缘未和合位，数死数生无断坏故。

大德 (Dharmatrāta) 曰，此无定限，谓彼生缘速和合者，此中有身即少时住；若彼生缘多时未合，此中有身即多时住，乃至缘合方得结生，故中有身柱无定限。问中有形量大小云何，答欲界中有如五六岁小儿形量，色界中有如本有时形量圆满。

后来的《俱舍论》和《杂阿毗昙心论》⁵⁵采用了《大毗婆沙论》中的解释，而《俱舍论》解释为：“尊者世友言，此极多七日。若生缘和合，便数死数生。”⁵⁶

七日相续间，中阴可数死数生。此种看法被发展到后期之《瑜伽师地论》中，形成了中阴之学说：

“又此中有。若未得生缘极七日止，有得生缘即不决定；若极七日止未得生缘死而复生，即七日止。如是辗转未得生缘，乃至七日止，自此已后决得生缘。”⁵⁷

后来中国佛教学者，遵循“七七”传统，能于后期之著作中被发现，譬如《宗镜录》等。⁵⁸

对于往生净土，若人忆念阿弥陀佛之名号，临命终时，此佛即接引之

⁵³ T30, no.1579, pp279b-283b

⁵⁴ T27, no.1545, 361b. 又 T1546. 28. 267c. T1547. 28. 518c

⁵⁵ 《杂阿毗昙心论》T1552. 28. 959a

⁵⁶ T29, no.1558, 46b

⁵⁷ 《瑜伽师地论》T30, no.1579, 282a-b

⁵⁸ 《宗镜录》T48, no.2016, 711c-712a

到净土池中一莲花座上往生。此莲花即于四十九日后开花⁵⁹。

《地藏经》中，有关七七日的说法有最多最清晰的记载。若人命终之后，应于四十九日内为其积功累德，此亡故者可被得度。⁶⁰

《药师经》云，临命终人能被得度，若其家人眷属供养佛陀，故此病人能于七日、二七乃至七七日内，病体得以康复。西藏若遵照唯识法相学传统，亦应采用“七七日”。⁶¹

3.6 中阴身是否存在？

犍子部/正量部称除了五蕴外有补特伽罗 (pudgala) 和中阴的存在。他们认为补特伽罗和五蕴的关系是不可说。中阴身是一种“细微”的身体，它是各人的贪爱和执着心所造。正量部的《三弥底部》说：“自见其身细微细滑。如在地无异彼。随爱制故。依愿乐其身⁶²。”这里的“细微身”或各人的贪爱和执着心所造的身可以理解为另一种蕴。中阴是一部车运送补特伽罗到目的地，它是无常、苦、无我。

《俱舍论》说我们的业力引导我们去轮回，并生起中阴身。此中阴身的形状与即将投生的众生相似。“若业能引当所往趣。彼业即招能往中有。故此中有若往彼趣。即如所趣当本有形。”⁶³

《瑜伽师地论》说各人的贪爱造就了中阴：“又诸众生将命终时，乃至未到惛昧想位，长时所习我爱现行，由此力故谓我当无，便爱自身，由此建立中有生报。若预流果及一来果，尔时我爱亦复现行，然此预流及一来果，于此我爱由智慧力数数推求制而不着，犹壮丈夫与羸劣者共相掬力能制伏之。当知此中道理亦尔，若不还果，尔时我爱不复现行。”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ 《佛说观无量寿佛经》 T12, no.365, 346a

⁶⁰ 《地藏菩萨本愿经》 T13, no.412, 784b

⁶¹ 《药师琉璃光七佛本愿功德经》 T14, no.451, 416a

⁶² 《三弥底部》 T32, No.1649, 470c. Bhikkhu Thich Thien Chau, 108-115

⁶³ T29, No.1558, 46a

⁶⁴ T30, 281b. Ven. Dhammjoti's translation (unpublished). In the case of a worldling, so long as the dying being is still conscious, the self-attachment (*ātma-sneha*) that he has been practicing for a long time manifests, due to which he fears his non-existence, and is thereby, and a delight in his personal existence arise, making him subject to the intermediate

中阴的有无是由个人的贪爱和习气（业力）所定。临终之时，我们担心自己的失去，就生起了贪爱之心，这种强烈的生存愿望，产生了中阴，使我们在六道轮回中不断地生死。没有贪爱习气的人也不再在六道轮回之中，他们能看破事物的真相，不再担心我的存在与否，也就不会有中阴身。

四、修行

在《阿含经》里，佛陀建议怎样观想死亡，在临命终时，比丘应沉思死亡，深行禅法和修习七觉支⁶⁵。早期经典劝人平时修习善行，说地狱火烧不断，皆由个人业力故。修善心而死，被称为“非火烧之法”。⁶⁶ 佛陀劝告一年长婆罗门，若修身口意三善法，临命终时，善业是“舍宅可逃避处”。⁶⁷

行禅观、禅定有助于临终往生，保持沉着冷静的心态，面对死亡而无有恐惧。

⁶⁸ “本不调心故，临终生爱恋。”⁶⁹

《华严经》云：“念佛三昧必见佛，命终之后生佛前；见彼临终劝念佛，又示尊像令瞻敬。”⁷⁰

禅宗圭山大师云：“欲验临终受生自在不自在，但验寻常行心沉境自由不自由，二六时中当省察耳。”⁷¹

天台宗之创始人，智者大师临终时，语维那曰：“人命终时，得闻磬声增其正念，惟长惟久，勿令声绝，以气尽为期。”⁷²

五、结论

死是佛教修行中一重要话题。通常生死交错在一起，被称为轮回。死亡之标

existence and rebirth. A stream entrant or once-returned can overcome this self-attachment through wisdom, and it does not occur to a non-returned.

⁶⁵ 《增壹阿含经》 T2, no.125, 742b-c

⁶⁶ 《杂阿含》， T2, no.99, 341b

⁶⁷ 《别译杂阿含》 T2, no.100, 403c: 是舍宅可逃避处.

⁶⁸ 《大庄严论》 T4, no.201. 302b-c

⁶⁹ 《大庄严论》 T4, no.201. 347b

⁷⁰ T9, no.278, 437c

⁷¹ 《翻译名义集》 T54, no.2131, 1152c

⁷² 《释氏要览》 T54, no.2127, 307a-b

准定义，见于阿毗昙和唯识法相学中“暖、命及识舍离身根。”有各种各样的死亡详述于经典里，总括起来有两种：带着重罪恶业而死——死即转生地狱；具有多种善业而死——死即转生天道。临命终时各种迹象，修恶行者，临命终时，即见恶劣之景象。若平时修习善行，心常保持善念，临命终时，即见美妙之景象，死即转生善处。最终，业力习气决定我们来生去处。最后时刻，心之善恶形成来世转生之处。

我们亦讨论过中阴问题，它是毗昙学派中最具争议性的话题。许多大乘经典支持中阴学说，诸如《大方广佛华严经》、《大宝积经》、《首楞严经》、《大乘入楞伽经》和《大般涅槃经》。有部、正量部和早期大乘学派皆相信中阴身，同时中国人从这些传统中，继承了中阴之学说。中阴的有无是由个人的贪爱和习气所定。

在《阿含经》里，佛陀建议怎样观想死亡。修习禅观、禅定有助于临命终时，带着一颗平常心，能面对死亡而无有恐怖。“本不调心故，临终生爱恋。”事实上，在日常生活中，若我们心念不善，又怎能期待临命终时善念生起呢？

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