

# **ARIYAMAGGA BHAVANA**

**(The Sublime Eightfold Way)**

Level III - Awakening from the dream of existence



by Ven. Dr. Madawela Punnaji Maha Thera

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# ARIYAMAGGA BHAVANA III

## THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

ADVANCED RETREAT  
STEPS TO AWAKENING

### **Instructor**

*Venerable Dr. Madawela Punnañi Maha Thera*

This form of meditation is based on the original teachings of the Buddha as they are found in the Pali Sutta Pitaka. It is conducted at three retreat levels:

- (1) Beginner – Selective Thinking (*anussati*)
- (2) Intermediate – Cultivation of Tranquility  
(*sammappadhāna*)
- (3) Advanced – Awakening from the Dream of  
Existence (*satta bojjhanga*)

# FOREWORD

This booklet is the third and final in the series of booklets on the three levels of meditation that provide step-by-step guidance toward attainment of the imperturbable serenity of mind – *Nibbāna* – as taught by the Buddha and recorded in the Pali language in the Sutta Pitaka of the Tripitaka.

The reader is invited to read all three booklets before beginning on the meditative path. This will serve as a map to enable one to understand the terrain to be traversed before starting the journey.

The profound teachings of the Buddha are not easy to decipher and put into practice. Today, the *Dhamma* is mostly practiced at the basic *saddhā* and *sīla* levels. The more advanced teachings encompassing *samādhi* and *paññā* are not well understood or practiced. The primary reason for this is the difficulty in deciphering the Buddha's extraordinarily intelligent description of the realities of life, the problem of existence, and the salvation through awakening from the dream of existence.

The author has dedicated over 60 years to the task of understanding and practicing the advanced teachings of the Buddha based on the original teachings as recorded in the scriptures of the Theravada tradition. To do so, the author received training in science, medicine, philosophy, psychology, astronomy and even comparative religion. These fields of knowledge generated by very intelligent though spiritually unawakened human beings, whose perspectives may be quite different from that of the Buddha, can still be an invaluable aid to understand the deep insightful teachings of the Buddha. The theoretical studies of the author has been put into practice and verified through his own experience. It is these understandings

and experiences that the reader is presented within these booklets. May this knowledge offered by the author with great compassion to the general public translate into proper channels leading to the great transformations experienced by the Awakened seekers of the bygone era.

Many organizations and individuals, impossible to list completely, have helped in bringing these booklets to publication. First and foremost is the Sasana Abhiwurdi Wardhana Society of the Buddhist Maha Vihara at Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. May their strenuous work at propagation of *Dhamma* continue and extend around the globe. The writer acknowledges the pious devotees all over the world who provided support and participated in *Dhamma* discussions and meditation retreats over many decades. Special mention must be made of a number of individuals – Bro Vong Choong Choy, Bro Hilson Yeap, Bro Billy Tan, Bro Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Bro Vijaya Samarawickrama, Bro Lim Teik Leong, Sister Bodhi and many others who assisted in many ways including proof-reading and making illustrations that enhanced the quality of the booklets. May the merits so acquired strengthen their resolve to attain *Nibbāna*.

*May all beings be well and happy!*



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# Prologue

## *An apology*

It is with a humble apology that we begin to explain at the outset why we use uncommon terminology in our writings to translate the orthodox Pali terms. The reason is that we have made a careful effort to understand and express the **meaning** conveyed in a Pali **sentence**, rather than to merely translate the **words in the sentence**. Our aim has been to lay before the reader in a precise manner the message conveyed by the Buddha in his well-chosen words.

This does not mean that we are attempting to pick holes in the tremendous work done by the well-known English translators such as: Rhys Davids, F. L. Woodward, I. B. Horner, and many others. We are greatly indebted, to these great men and women for getting the English reading public interested in the teachings of the Awakened One, the Buddha. Yet these translations made by the early translators contained some errors. While being very thankful to these early translators, we also do not blame them for their errors because they had to learn Pali from Sinhalese monks who had no knowledge of English. Obviously the English translators had to make use of Sinhalese translators who knew English, though their knowledge of Pali could still be questionable. This explains the difficulty these English translators would have had in learning the Pali language and even translating the words of the Buddha. This is why we must appreciate the work done by these translators despite their shortcomings. They have produced much important literature that we still keep using.

While recognizing these facts with gratitude, we should also be aware of the possibility for error in these English translations. Present day readers in English who use these translations seriously want to know the genuine teachings of the Buddha as clearly as possible. Therefore there is a great need to rectify the mistakes for their benefit.

We must remember that the success of a translation depends on the translator's ability to comprehend the meaning expressed in a sentence, more than on his understanding of the words in it. In other words, we believe that a translation should be more than a translation of words. It should translate the meaning expressed by the words in a sentence. The way an idea expressed in one language differs from the way it is expressed in another language. Very often the idea is lost if one translates word for word. If a translator is unable to comprehend the meaning conveyed by a sentence, the translation is unsuccessful and possibly misleading. The way an idea expressed in a European language differs very much from the way the same idea is expressed in an Indian language. In other words, it is important to know the idiom of the language. This is why it is very difficult for a Westerner to extract the meaning of a Pali statement even if they had studied the grammar and the vocabulary of the language.

Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese are very closely related languages. Often the same word is used to express an idea in these languages, though in a slightly different form. The grammar as well as idiom in these three languages is very similar. This is why a translation made by a person whose mother tongue is the Sinhalese language, and whose command of the English language is quite adequate, could be more successful than that of a Westerner who is proficient in the Pali language, but insufficiently familiar with its idiom.

There is, moreover, another problem commonly encountered by translators of the teachings of the Buddha. This problem is based on the fact that these teachings are not mere stories, although some stories are found in the teachings. The teachings of the Buddha are profoundly logical, scientific, philosophical, psychological, and even contain concepts used in modern scientific thinking. Therefore a person who is unfamiliar with at least the basics of these modern subjects, cannot comprehend these ideas of the Buddha, even though he/she may be familiar with the Pali language or even linguistics. Without fully comprehending the meaning of a Pali statement, it would not be easy to translate it effectively. We do not claim to be experts in these high-flown subjects, but our translator has spent almost his entire life studying some of these high level subjects, with the hope of comprehending the profound teachings of the Buddha. In addition, the translator has also tested these ideas, by putting them into practice, in order to verify the validity of the genuine teachings. An intelligent reader will be able to recognize this fact as he/she reads through the pages of this booklet. So it is advisable that the reader takes careful note of these facts and not jump into hasty conclusions and be over critical.

It would also be profitable to keep an open mind while reading, and carefully note the new meanings conveyed by the new translations, which may be quite different from the meaning conveyed by the common translations the reader is familiar with. The reader would also have an opportunity to judge for oneself whether or not the new translations give a meaning that is more enlightening than the former, and so bear witness to the validity of the translation of the words of an Enlightened One.

For the benefit of those who are puzzled by our use of new terminology, we plan to provide in the near future, a glossary containing the new words we use. We will also explain why we use the new terms instead of the commonly used ones.

### ***Our Presentation***

This booklet contains the **third and the most advanced level** of practice, in our series of lessons in progressive meditation instruction.

### ***Message in book one***

Our **first book** was about the **beginner's level** of meditation, which was a discussion of the **first five steps** of the Supernormal Eightfold Way. If one practiced these first five steps proficiently and systematically one could enter the level called **Stream Entrant** (*Sotāpanna*). Yet this title has to be confirmed by the "Great Community" (*Mahā Sangha*).

### ***Message in book two***

In the **second book** on meditation, which is the **intermediate level of practice**, we discussed the **Harmonious Exercise**, in the Supernormal Eightfold Way. This practice is also called the "**Four Harmonious Steps**" (*Cattāri Sammāppadhāni*).

The Four steps are:

- (1) Prevention (*Samvara*)
- (2) Elimination (*Pahāna*)
- (3) Cultivation (*Bhāvanā*)
- (4) Maintenance (*Anurakkhana*)

The aim of this **intermediate level** of meditation is to enter the **four levels of deep tranquillity** of mind called **Ecstasy**



**(jhāna)**, and therefore it is also called **Tranquility Meditation** (*samatha bhāvanā*).

We use the term **ecstasy** in a special sense here. It means, to “stand out” (**ec**=out, **stasy**=stand). When the first two of these steps are practiced proficiently, **the mind is withdrawn** from the **external surroundings, memories, and imaginations**, (i.e. standing out) and is ready to be **focused within** (introspection = *satipaṭṭhāna*) for **continuous observation** (*sati sampajañña*) of what is going on quite unconsciously within. When this is properly practiced, the **mind becomes completely free of hindrances** and the **five Constituents of Ecstasy** (*jhānāṅga*) appear, which are: inference (*vitakka*), inquiry (*vicāra*), cognitive satisfaction (*pīti*), comfort (*sukha*), unity of mind (*ekaggatā*).

If one practices this second level of practice or **intermediate level**, conscientiously, it is possible to attain the level of advancement called the **Once Returner** (*Sakadāgāmi*). This title too, however, has to be confirmed by the “Great Community” (*Mahā Sangha*).

### **Message in book three**

The **third level of practice**, given in this book, is the **final** and the **most advanced level** of practice, in our system of meditation. In other words, this **final level** is the practice of the **Harmonious Attention** (*sammā sati*), of the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**, which we refer to as **introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*), which is **introversion of attention** followed by the **constant observation** (*sampajañña*) of what is going on **within**. When this **introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is constantly maintained (*anurakkhaṇa*), it results in **beginning the Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*), because **introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is the first step in the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*). In other words, this third level of meditation

becomes the practice of the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*). This practice therefore is the final stage that awakens the practitioner from the **dream of existence** (*bhava nidra*).

This **Ariyamagga Bhavana Level III**, which is also called **Vidassana Bhāvanā** is **for advanced regular meditators**, and **not for occasional meditators** of short-term duration. It is for those who have been practicing **tranquility meditation** (*samatha bhāvanā*) and have reached a high level of tranquility or **ecstasy** (*jhāna*). We compare this practice of meditation to the practice of the **final step** in the game of **golf**, which is only for players who have already completed the earlier stages. The reader who is unfamiliar with Ariyamagga Bhavana Levels I and II is encouraged to read them prior to reading the present booklet, in order to avoid confusion.

In practicing the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*) in this way, the **five hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇa*) can be **completely eliminated forever**. When the mind is thus **completely free of hindrances** the emancipated individual **remains with a pure mind throughout his/her life**. This means, an **emancipated individual** or **Arahat** will be constantly **in ecstasy**, because he/she stands **out of the emotional world**, until the death of the body. This explains the meaning of the **statement in the Ratana Sutta**: “What the Buddha extolled as the **supreme uninterrupted purity and tranquility**” (*yam Buddha setthoparivannayīsucin, samādhim-ānantarika aññamāhu*). This uninterrupted purity and tranquility (*Anantarika samādhi*) = the imperturbable serenity (*akuppā-ceto-vimutti*), which is the unshakable **Nirvana** (*Nibbāna*). It is also a return to the original state of purity (*pabassaraṇ idaṇ cittaṇ*), or **homeostasis**.

This means, if a person practices according to this **final level of practice** conscientiously, it is possible for such a

practitioner to become an **Emancipator** or **Destroyer of Bonds** (*Arahat*), or at least a **Non-returner** (*Anāgami*). This too, however, has to be **confirmed** by the *Mahā Sangha*.

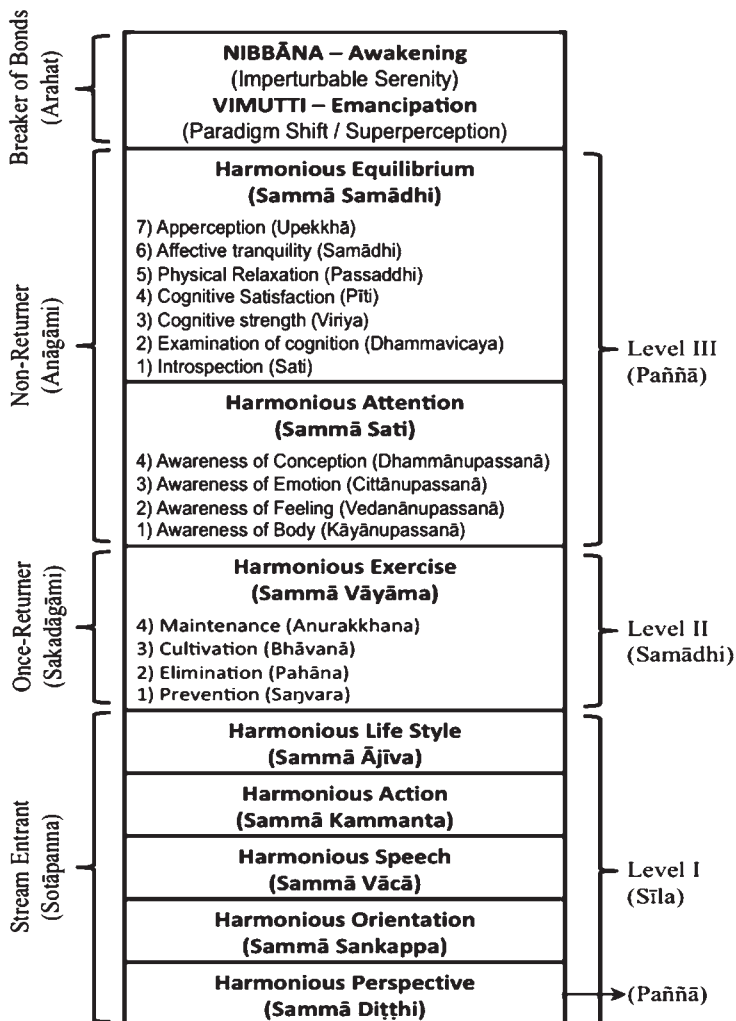
No one can claim to have entered any level of spiritual perfection without the approval of the Buddha, or in his absence the *Mahā Sangha*. Any monk who claims otherwise comes under *PARAJIKA*.

“This fact is noteworthy” because today in the modern world there are many who are believed to be *Arahats*, and some even claim to be *Arahats* though not confirmed by the *Mahā Sangha*.

### ***Is this vipassanā bhāvanā or insight meditation?***

This proper cultivation of the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*) is the **real “Insight Meditation”** (*vipassanā bhāvanā*), as taught by the Buddha, in the Sutta Pitaka. We, however, call our third level of meditation ***vidassana bhāvanā*** instead of *vipassanā*, in order to distinguish it from the common kind of *vipassanā bhāvanā* that is taught all over the world today, which is based on the teachings in the *Visuddhi Magga*, written by the well known author Buddhagosha. Our method is not based on the *Visuddhi Magga* but on the words of the Buddha as found in the Sutta Pitaka. We describe our method of meditation as **“the development of Superperception”** (*abhiññā*). This means the term **apperception**, as we use it, means: **focusing attention on the process of perception**, rather than on the **object perceived**. When this is done a paradigm shift occurs between existential thinking and experiential thinking, which results in **Superperception** (*abhiññā*). This will be explained in more detail in due course. It is difficult for the beginner to understand this at this stage. A reference to the **Mulapariyaya Sutta** can be helpful in comprehension.

In support of our use of the term **vidassanā**, instead of *vipassanā* we quote a passage from the Metta Sutta: “*diṭṭhiñca anupagamma sīlavā dassanena sampanno*,” which we understand as: “Having withdrawn attention from the **objects perceived**, the disciplined individual focuses attention on the **process of perception**.” This method of meditation will be elaborated as we proceed.



# Chapter I

## A Marvellous Method

### *The Supernormal Eightfold Way*

The Buddha had spoken of two ways of helping a blind man cross the road. One method is to hold his hand and guide the way. In such a case the blind man does not know where we are taking him. He must have blind faith in us. The other method is that of a surgeon who performs an operation on the blind man's eye to make him see for himself. This way the **blind faith** is eliminated. The Buddha declared that his method of teaching meditation is similar to the method of the surgeon. This is why the teaching of the Buddha is not based on blind faith but on clear comprehension. This marvellous method of the Buddha has eight steps. It is called the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**, commonly translated as the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the method we follow. It is called **supernormal** because the aim of the Buddha was not to get people to believe in him blindly and obey him, but his aim was to transform normal people with worries and anxieties to a supernormal level of happiness. This aim of the Buddha is the counterpart of the modern psychotherapist's aim, which is to bring abnormal suffering to a normal level of unhappiness. How The Buddha's **supernormal aim** is realized, however, will be made clear in due course, because that is the main purpose of this booklet.

### *Enlightenment first or last?*

An important question that arises at this point is: whether enlightenment arises after meditation, or whether one should be enlightened before the meditation. This seems to be

a question that arose in the mind of *Acariya Buddhagosa* when beginning to write the *Visuddhi Magga*. Obviously, he thought that knowledge came after meditation. This was why he saw the path as *sīla-samādhi-paññā*, which he saw as starting with **control of behaviour**, followed by **concentration of mind**, and ending up in gaining **insight**.

He even quoted the words of the Buddha, in support of this position:

**The enlightened human, being disciplined**

– *Sīle patitṭhāya naro sapañño*

**Develops the mood and intellect**

– *Cittaṇ paññānca bhavaṇaṇ*

**This tranquil intelligent mendicant**

– *tāpi nipako bhikkhu*

**He does solve this problem**

– *So imaṇ vijaṭaye jataṇ*

### ***The three level way is not the path***

Unfortunately, he misunderstood the quotation. He seems to have ignored the statement: “**Enlightened human, being disciplined**” (*sīle patitṭhāya naro sapañño*). (*naro sapañño* = the enlightened human). The fact that **enlightenment precedes discipline** is further supported in the *culla vedalla sutta*, although it is often misinterpreted even there. In other words, the path is the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** and not the **three levels** (*sīla, samādhi, and paññā*). This means the control of behaviour (*sīla*) has to be based on an understanding of the reason for control, as indicated by the precedence of the **Harmonious Perspective** (*sammā diṭṭhi*). This is why **The Supernormal Eightfold Way** (*Ariya Aṭṭhangika Magga*) begins

with the **Harmonious Perspective** (*sammā diṭṭhi*) followed by the **Harmonious Orientation** (*sammā sankappa*) before getting into the discipline of behaviour, which is: **Harmonious Speech** (*sammā vācā*), **Harmonious Action** (*sammā kammanta*) and **Harmonious Life Style** (*sammā ājīva*). This means, this control of behaviour (*sīla*) is not something to be done on blind faith. If it is done on blind faith, it becomes a **heteronomous morality** (*sīlabbata parāmāsa*), which is a **morality** subject to **external impositions**. What is needed here is **supernormal morality** (*ariya sīla*), which is an **autonomous morality** based on personal conviction and a quietist and benevolent orientation (*aparāmaṭṭha samādhi sanvattanikaṇ*).

### ***The Harmonious Perspective***

The first step, therefore, on this extraordinary path is the **Harmonious Perspective**, commonly translated as **Right View**, or **Right Understanding**. In other words, we start by **explaining** to the follower what **the problem** is, the **cause of the problem**, and the **solution to the problem**. In other words, we explain **what** should be done, **why** it should be done, and **how** it should be done. This means **we explain**, so no one can **complain**. In other words, this is not a “monkey see, monkey do” method. We speak to intelligent people who want to understand what they are doing, and why they are doing it.

### ***Only way to emancipation***

In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, that deals with the last days of the Buddha, we learn of a person called Subhadda who came to the Buddha and asked, “Are there emancipated spiritual men in other religious sects in the world?”

The Buddha replied, “I do not wish to talk about other religious sects. I will speak only about the views of my own religious sect. As long as the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** is practiced, the world would not be devoid of emancipated spiritual men.”

This clearly indicates that if we want to be **spiritually emancipated**, or to **solve the problem of existence**, or **be freed from the insecurity of life**, the path to be followed is the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**. This is why the method of meditation discussed in this booklet is based on this **Supernormal Eightfold Way** (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*), as practised and taught by the Buddha in the Sutta Pitaka. It is not based on the **Visuddhi Magga**, the famous book on meditation, written by the well-known author Buddhaghosha. This **Supernormal Eightfold Way** is as follows:

- (1) Harmonious Perspective (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*)
- (2) Harmonious Orientation (*Sammā Sankappa*)
- (3) Harmonious Speech (*Sammā Vācā*)
- (4) Harmonious Action (*Sammā Kammanta*)
- (5) Harmonious Life Style (*Sammā Ājīva*)
- (6) Harmonious Exercise (*Sammā Vāyāma*)
- (7) Harmonious Attention (*Sammā Sati*)
- (8) Harmonious Equilibrium (*Sammā Samādhi*).

This Supernormal Eightfold Way has been explained in more detail in the first and second books on meditation published by us. The reader is encouraged to read them for further clarification.



## Chapter II

### Prevalent Errors

#### *Is this mindfulness?*

A mistake frequently made by practitioners is that the fourfold practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* is today translated as: “the **four establishments of mindfulness**.” But the English term mindfulness refers to **being aware of** or **recognizing** what is going on **outside**. *Satipaṭṭhāna*, however, means: **focusing attention within** (*sati* = attention + *upaṭṭhāna* = placing **within**). A more appropriate English term to translate the Pali term *satipaṭṭhāna* would be “**introspection**.” It is **looking within** in order to **observe the experience** (*sampajañña*) that is going on quite unconsciously **within**. What is going on **within** is the **emotional reaction** to **circumstances** outside. The emotion aroused is dependent on the interpretation made by the cognitive process (*mano*).

In one of the Suttas the Buddha has given a very interesting analogy to explain *satipaṭṭhāna* (as introspection). Let us suppose there is a musical show, along with dancing, going on before an audience. A person is given a bowl full of oil, filled to the brim, and asked to walk between the front row of the audience and the stage on which the show is going on. A ferocious man carrying a sword is following him saying, “If you drop one drop of oil on the floor I will cut off your neck.” Imagine you are the one walking with the bowl of oil in your hand. What would you be doing? Will you be looking at the show, or looking at the bowl? No doubt your attention will be on the bowl. That is how the introspection (*satipaṭṭhāna*) has to be practiced. This will help you to understand the difference between “mindful awareness” and the “intensive introspection” that has to be

carried out throughout the day, while walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, recognized the need to eliminate emotions. He saw that the emotions were responsible, not only for all neuroses and psychoses, but also for all the crimes, wars and terrorism in the world. He saw that although emotions helped some animals to preserve their lives and even propagate, human beings have begun to use emotions even for destructive purposes that often harm themselves as well as others. Human beings, however, have something better than emotions, which can be used more constructively, and that is the ability to think rationally. This was why Freud said, "In place of the *id* there shall be the *ego*," where *id* referred to the **emotions**, and the *ego* referred to the **rational faculty**. Erich Fromm, the Neo-Freudian quotes this passage often. Freud thought, however, that the emotions could not be rooted out, because they were inborn instincts that were built into the system. The only solution to this problem that he saw was **sublimation**, which was to direct the energy of the emotions into socially acceptable good channels. He also pointed out, however that to be **civilized** is to be **discontented**, because when civilized, the emotions are not adequately gratified.

The main concern of **Sigmund Freud** was the **conflict** between the *id* and the *ego*, but the modern day **Neo-Freudians** have begun to ignore this conflict and focus on a conflict between the *ego* and its **object**. They have begun to call the psychology of Freud **an *id* psychology**, and the modern psychology of the Neo-Freudians, which emphasizes the relationship between the *ego* and its **object**, **an ego psychology**. This **ego psychology** was really an idea introduced by **Alfred Adler** during the time of Freud. It appears that the Neo-Freudians have gone through

a paradigm shift from the partly experiential mode of Sigmund Freud to the fully existential mode of Alfred Adler.

Modern **cognitive psychologists**, however, seem to have **solved the problem** between *ego* and the *id* by pointing out that **emotions can be eliminated**, by changing the way we interpret our circumstances (cognition). They are aware that the emotion that is aroused is dependent on how the **cognitive process interprets** the external circumstances. In cognitive psychotherapy, they attempt to remove the aroused emotion, by **changing this cognitive interpretation**.

**The Buddha recognized** this fact about the relationship between the cognitive and the affective processes more than twenty-six centuries ago. In the first verse in the book of verses called *Dhammapada*, he points out that “Cognition precedes all experience” (*mano pubbangamā dhammā*). He even made use of this fact to **absolutely eliminate** all self-centered emotions **within him**, and even **taught his disciples** to follow suit.

### ***Is satipaṭṭhāna the only way?***

Another fundamental mistake among many who practice Buddhist meditation today is to ignore the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** altogether and instead practice *satipaṭṭhāna*. They believe that the path to emancipation is *satipaṭṭhāna*. This, however, is due to a mistaken translation of the Pali statement in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: “*ekayano ayan bhikkhave maggo*.” This Pali statement is translated to mean, “*satipaṭṭhāna* is the **only way** to **Nirvāna (Nibbāna)**.” As a result, people have begun to practice *satipaṭṭhāna* **only**, with no reference to the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*).

When the mistaken practitioner is questioned, “why have you ignored the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**?” The answer

commonly given is, “the Supernormal Eightfold Way is only a thought moment (*cittakkhana*),” which arises at the moment of enlightenment, when the *magga citta* is immediately followed by the *phala citta*. That *magga citta* is the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**, and *phala citta* is **Full comprehension** (*Paññā*). In other words, the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*) has mistakenly become a **mere thought moment** (*cittakkhana*). The **Supernormal Eightfold Way** has also become the **final part** of the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, instead of the *satipaṭṭhāna* being the final part of the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**. This **mistaken interpretation** of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta could be the reason for the **failure** of most serious meditators today, to attain **Arahatship** or the final Awakening.

### ***Golf as an analogy***

In attempting to explain the meaning of the statement “*ekāyano ayan bhikkhave maggo*,” in relation to the Supernormal Eightfold Way (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*) we make use of the following analogy of the **game of Golf**:

*Most of us are familiar with **Golf** where players use long metal sticks called **clubs** to hit a little white ball towards, and finally into, a small hole called **cup**, in a manicured lawn called a **green**. The final stage of this game is to strike the small golf ball so that the ball will slowly roll over and enter the tiny hole or **cup**. This is not everything in the game, however. This is only the last portion, or end of the game.*

*The game begins far away from the hole. The hole cannot even be seen at the starting point. Therefore a flagstaff is kept at the hole for the player to know where the hole is. It is only at the end of the game that the player sees the hole and hits the ball to go straight into the tiny hole, in one stroke. This game*

can be compared to the practice of the Supernormal Eightfold Way (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*).

Just as in this game of Golf, the **Supernormal Eightfold Way** begins far away from the goal, which is **Nirvāna (*Nibbāna*)**. The beginning is the **Harmonious Perspective (*sammā diṭṭhi*)**, which makes one **aware of the goal to be sought**, just as **the flagstaff** does in Golf. The **Harmonious Perspective** is an **intellectual comprehension** of the **problem** that we hope to solve, which is formulated as **suffering**, its **cause**, its **end**, and the **way** to its end. This problem and its solution is called the **Fourfold Supernormal Reality (*cattāri ariya saccāni*)**, commonly translated as the Four Noble Truths.

The **end** of our game, which is comparable to the **Golf ball slowly rolling over** and falling into the tiny hole or cup, is the completion of the **Seven Steps to Awakening (*satta bojjhanga*)**. The **Seven Steps to Awakening begins with Introspection (*satipaṭṭhāna*)**, and ends at the fourth ecstasy with **apperception (*upekkha*)**, resulting in **Nirvāna (*Nibbāna*)**

This is the end of the Supernormal Eightfold Way, which is **the Harmonious Equilibrium (*sammā samādhī*)**. The step before this end is the **Harmonious Attention (*satipaṭṭhāna*)** that **goes straight into the Harmonious Equilibrium** by completing The Seven Steps to Awakening (*satta bojjhanga*). This is **similar to the last step** in the game of Golf, which is striking the small ball to go straight into the small hole or cup.

This means the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* is the **final and specific shot** that goes straight to **Nirvāna (*Nibbāna*)**. The Pali statement: “*ekāyano ayan bhikkhave maggo ... Nibbānassa saccikiriya*,” means, “Monks, **this is the specific way to the single goal, which is Nirvana (*Nibbāna*)**” (*eka* = single; *āyana* = going to).

## ***Satipaṭṭhāna not the beginning***

Another important fact that needs attention is that practicing the ***satipaṭṭhāna*** is not the **first step in the path to Nirvana (*Nibbāna*)**. Everyone knows that a student who has just entered the university for studies is not ready to sit for the final examination, until he/she has completed the course of studies. In the same way, it is only by **completing** the **first seven steps** on the **eight-stepped path** that one is ready to focus one's attention on the **last step**, which is ***satipaṭṭhāna* practice**. Of course it is possible and even necessary to practice a certain level of introspection even at the beginning of the Supernormal Eightfold Way, but that level is different from the level of practice at this final point. This is why we have chosen to practice the path in three steps as follows:

- (1) **Selective thinking (*anussati*)**  
= learning to eliminate the hindrances (*pahāna*)  
= *sīla*
- (2) **Harmonious exercise (*sammāppadhāna*)**  
= tranquillity (*samatha*)  
= *samādhi*
- (3) **Seven Steps to Awakening (*satta bojjhanga*)**  
= insight (*vipassanā*)  
= *paññā*

It is useful to quote another important passage from the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta quoted above, in order to explain the reason for our choice of the three steps we practice. The ***Arahat Sariputta***, the chief disciple of the Buddha, came to the Buddha and expressed his great **appreciation** of the **Buddha** and his teaching ***Dhamma***. The Buddha in answer **questioned** him as to **how he came to recognize** the value of the Buddha

and the *Dhamma*. The **answer**, the *Arahat* Sariputta gave was that he knew it by **knowing the path to Nibbāna through his own experience**.

He then **summarized the path to Nibbāna** in the form of **three steps**:

- (1) Overcoming the Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*) = ***anussati***
- (2) Four focuses of introspective attention (*cattāri satipaṭṭhāna*) = ***sammāppadhāna***
- (3) Treading the Seven Steps to Awakening (*satta bojjhanga*) = ***satta bojjhanga***.

The three stages in our method of meditation are exactly the three stages described by the *Arahat* Sariputta.

- (1) **Selective thinking** (*anussati*) is the way to **overcome the five hindrances**.
- (2) The **Four Harmonious Exercises** (*sammāppadhāna*) is the way to complete the practice of **introspective attention** (*cattāri satipaṭṭhāna*).
- (3) The practice of **The Seven Steps to Awakening** begins with **introspective attention** (*satipaṭṭhāna*), and ends with **apperception** (*upekkhā*).

It is at this last stage that a **paradigm shift** occurs, Superperception (*abhiññā*) and the individual **awakens from the dream of existence** (*Samma Sambodhi*), which results in the **breaking of bonds** (*arahatta*) or **emancipation** (*vimutti*), thus entering the **“imperturbable serenity” (NIBBĀNA)**.

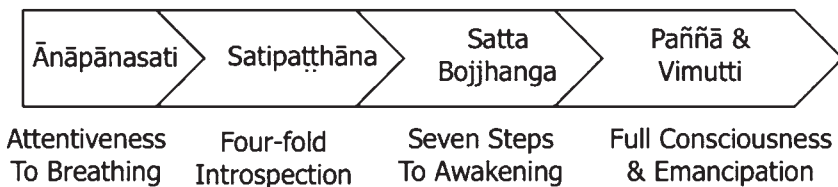
## ***Buddha revealed the path***

Another important quotation that supports our method is from the **Ānāpānasati Sutta** in the Majjhima Nikaya, where the Buddha points out:

“Monks, when **Attentiveness to Breathing** (*ānāpānasati*) is cultivated and developed, it is of great benefit and great profit. It helps get rid of the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*).

- (1) When attentiveness to breathing is cultivated and developed, it fulfills the **Four-fold Introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*).
- (2) When the **Four-fold Introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is cultivated and developed, they fulfill the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*).
- (3) When the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*satta bojjhanga*) are cultivated and developed, it results in **Full Comprehension** (*paññā*) and **Emancipation** (*vimutti*).”

This passage reveals that it is when the **Seven Steps to Awakening** (*bojjhanga*) are developed that the **Paradigm Shift** (*abhiññā*) occurs, which ends in **Full Comprehension** (*paññā*) and **Awakening** (*Sambodhi*) and **Emancipation** (*vimutti*), resulting in the **Imperturbable Serenity** (*Nibbāna*).





If we examine the **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta**, we find that when the **Four-fold Introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is developed,

- (1) The **Five Hindrances** are removed first,
- (2) Secondly the **Five Constituents of Personality** (*pancupādānakkhandā*) are **comprehended**,
- (3) Thirdly the **Seven Steps to Awakening** are **completed**,
- (4) Fourthly and finally the **Four-fold Supernormal Reality** is fully comprehended (*paññā*).

This clearly conveys the idea that the **real Awakening** occurs only by **completing the Seven Steps to Awakening**, which is at the end of the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**. This leads to the **Full comprehension** (*paññā*) of the **Fourfold Supernormal Reality**, resulting in emancipation (*vimutti*) that ends in the **Imperturbable Serenity, Nirvana** (*Nibbāna*).

### ***Nine Great Knowledges***

It is interesting to note that the **Visuddhi Magga** also refers to “**Nine Great Knowledges**” (*nava mahā vidassanā ñāṇa*). Such knowledges are not mentioned anywhere in the suttas, nor even in the Ratavinā Sutta, on which this particular system of **Visuddhi Magga** is based. This implies that this method in the **Visuddhi Magga** could be a **later addition** historically.

It is also interesting to note that there is a **passage in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta**, which is frequently repeated within the Sutta itself, with regard to the **Fourfold Focus of Attention** (*satipaṭṭhāna*). It is as follows:

- (A) One **sees the body** as body **subjectively**, one sees the body as body **objectively**, one sees the body as body **both subjectively and objectively**.

*(Iti ajjhattam vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, ajjhata bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati) – (3)*

- (B) One abides **seeing how the body comes into being**. One abides seeing **how the body ceases to be**. One abides seeing how the body **comes into being and ceases to be**. *(Samudaya dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vāya dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, samudaya vāya dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati) – (3)*
- (C) One **regards the body is**, when one pays attention to it, yet only as a matter of knowing or paying attention. *(Atthi kāyo’ti vā paṇassa sati paccupaṭṭhitā hoti yāvadeva ñāṇāmattā ya patissati mattāya) – (1)*
- (D) One **abides independent**. *(anissito ca viharati) – (1)*
- (E) One **does not personalize anything in the world**. *(na ca kiñci loke upādiyati) – (1)*

Similar statements are repeated regarding the **feelings** (*vedanā*), **mood** (*citta*), and **concepts** (*dhammā*). This adds up to nine levels of insight.

These seem to be **nine stages of insight maturity** that one has to go through as one progresses in the process of **Awakening**. This could probably be the real “**Nine Great Knowledges**” (*nava mahā vidassanā ñāṇa*), which are referred to in the **Visuddhi Magga** but not mentioned in any Sutta other than the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. The nine great knowledge’s mentioned in the *Visuddhi Magga*, however, are not found anywhere in the Suttas or Vinaya.

## ***Seeing things as they are***

A statement we often come across is in writings on Buddhism is **“Seeing things as they are”** which is supposed to be a quotation from the Buddha. It is really a **translation** of a statement of the Buddha, which was in Pali language. The Pali statement is **“yathā bhūtam pajānāti.”** We have translated it as, **understanding of how things come to be.** We are not attempting to argue against the common translation. We only point out that the common translation, and our translation are based on two different ways of thinking as follows:

The common translation = **seeing things as they are** = Existential Thinking

Our translation = **understanding of how things come to be** = Experiential Thinking

We may compare this to another well-known statement, connected with a person called Bahiya Dharuciriya. This statement: **“diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati”** is often translated as, **in the seen there is only the seeing**, which is understood as **“looking at something, without thinking about it.”** This interpretation, however, makes it look like, “guarding the senses” (*indriya-samvara*).

Our interpretation, however, is: “focusing attention on the **process of seeing** instead of looking at **the object that is seen.**” This means, becoming aware of the **process of perception**, rather than the **object perceived**. This change in perception is what we call **apperception**.

When one focuses attention on the **object** perceived, **the experience** is dichotomized into: a **subjective** and an **objective**. The **objective** is alienated as an **“external object,”** and the **subjective** is personalized as **“mine”** or **“my self.”** This leads on to an **“emotional relationship”** between the **subject**

and the **object**, which ends up in: grief, lamentation, pain, depression, and exhaustion. The sufferer may not always notice this experience of **suffering**, but others often do. For example: a couple in love is always suffering. They are happy when they are together. The moment they separate they are unhappy. Others can see this, but the couple never sees it. Instead, they think they are enjoying. This experience of the lovers is similar to the experience of the infant with the mother. Romantic love is a rehearsal of the experience of childhood.

***Apperception** is focusing attention on the experience, instead of the object perceived, which brings about a **paradigm shift** from “existential thinking” which is called **Super-perception** (abhiññā). Existential thinking is aware of a subject that exists and an object that exists. With this existence comes an emotional relationship between the subject and the object. **Experiential thinking** looks only at the process of perception that creates the subject and the object, and therefore sees no real existing subject or object. When there is no real subject or object, there is **no emotional relationship**, and therefore there is **no suffering** experienced. One is then **absent in the world of emotional existence**, and therefore **one does not really exist**, even though the body is seen to exist. If one does not emotionally exist, how can there be sorrow or death? This is the **Awakening from the dream of existence** (sammā sambodhi). This was how Bahiya Dharuciriya became an “emancipator” or a “Bond Breaker” (Arahat) immediately after listening to the Buddha.*

It is important to note that the **Seven Steps to Awakening** begins with **introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) and ends with **apperception** (*upekkhā*). This term *upekkhā* is generally translated as “**equanimity**,” but the more precise translation is “**apperception**.” The reason for this is that the term *upekkhā* originates from *upa* + *ikkhati* (*upa* = inside + *ikkhati* = seeing).

This means, “**seeing the inside.**” This we understand as **looking at the process** of perception, **instead** of looking at the **object** perceived. To **perceive** is to see the **object**, and to **apperceive** is to see the **process** of perception. So instead of **perceiving**, we **apperceive**. The **Mūlapariyāya Sutta** supports this idea, when it says: “The emancipated individual, and even the Buddha super-perceives a solid (*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhijānāti*)”. This super-perception involves a paradigm shift from existential thinking to experiential thinking. It is because the emancipated individual and Buddha **super-perceives** (*abhijānāti*) that they do not conclude that **the solid exists** (*paṭhavito na maññati*). This is explained further in our discussion of the Mūlapariyāya Sutta, later in this booklet.

# Chapter III

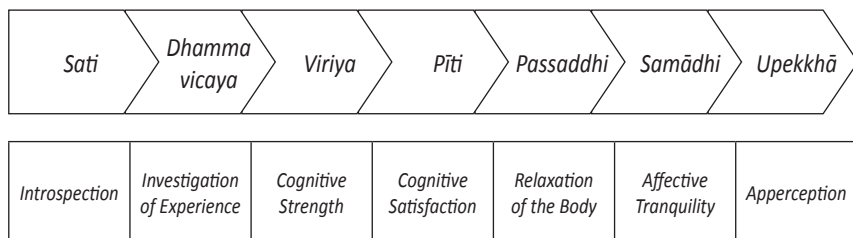
## Practice of Meditation Level III

### ***Cultivation of the Seven Steps to Awakening (Satta Bojjhanga)***

Having explained the WHY and the HOW of our system of meditation, at the third, the advanced, and the final level, we now get on to a discussion of the WHAT of the system. As we said earlier **what we do** is the cultivation of the **Seven Steps to Awakening** that ends up in **Awakening from the Dream of Existence**.

The **Seven Steps to Awakening** are as follows:

- (1) Systematic Introspection – (*Satipaṭṭhāna*)
- (2) Investigation of Experience – (*Dhammavicaya*)
- (3) Cognitive Strength – (*Viriya*)
- (4) Cognitive Satisfaction – (*Pīti*)
- (5) Physical Relaxation – (*Passaddhi*)
- (6) Affective Tranquility – (*Samādhi*)
- (7) Apperception – (*Upekkhā*)



## 1) **Systematic Introspection** (*Satipaṭṭhāna*)

This **Systematic Introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) cannot be performed properly without completing the first and second levels of meditation practice given in the first and second booklets on meditation. This practice of the third level is only a continuation of the second level of meditation practice. This means these three levels of practice gradually flow from one to the other, because they are three parts of the Supernormal Eightfold Way. They are not separate practices.

This practice at the third level comes after the **Harmonious Exercise** (*sammā vāyāma*), which was practiced at the second level, and which included four parts as follows:

- (1) Prevention (*Samvara*)
- (2) Elimination (*Pahāna*)
- (3) Cultivation (*Bhāvanā*)
- (4) Maintenance (*Anurakkhaṇa*).

The two procedures in the first two stages of the fourfold practice is the withdrawal of attention from the external surroundings. The third and the fourth procedures is the Systematic Introspection, where the attention is focussed, not on objects perceived, but on the unconscious emotional reaction to those objects that go on within. This procedure of consciously focusing on the unconscious reactions to circumstances, stops the unconscious emotional reactions, because the unconscious reactions cannot continue consciously. They can continue only unconsciously. This procedure is somewhat similar to the psychoanalytic procedure of Sigmund Freud.

The practice of **systematic introspection** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) was the third stage in this fourfold practice. Without going through the first two stages, it is not possible to get into the third stage. The first two stages are:

- (1) Withdrawing attention from perceptual images (*indriya saṇvara*),
- (2) Withdrawing attention from memory images and imagination of the future (*pahāna*).

In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta the Buddha points out how the introspection should be practiced: “The attention that is normally focused on external surroundings, is withdrawn from surroundings and focused within” (*parimukan satin upaṭṭhapetva*). In other words, it is only by withdrawing attention from the objective surroundings that one can focus attention subjectively inwards. This focus of attention inwards is achieved in four ways:

- 1) Focusing on the movements of the body,
- 2) Focusing on the feelings in the body,
- 3) Focusing on the emotional state or mood, and
- 4) Focusing on the thoughts in the mind.

In practicing this introspective attention, one becomes aware of one’s emotional reaction to external sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches in the present, as well as emotional reactions to memories of the past, and to imaginations about the future. When the **attention is focused within** in this way, the reaction is noticed **in four ways**. Therefore this practice of Systematic Introspection (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is divided into four practices as follows:

- (1) *Kāyānupassanā* – Observing the physical manifestation of the reaction in the body, as movements or tensions in the body.
- (2) *Vedanānupassanā* – Observing the manifestation as feelings in the body: pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.



- (3) *Cittānupassanā* – Observing the manifestation in the form of emotional excitements, or calmness of temperament.
- (4) *Dhammānupassana* – Observing the manifestation in the form of thoughts in the mind, which are interpretations of circumstances past, present, and future.

Thus the emotional reaction is observed in four different ways: as two physical manifestations and two mental manifestations. As one becomes more and more aware of these reactions, they begin to stop because the unconscious process cannot go on when it has become conscious. The consequence is relaxation of the body and calmness of the temperament. In other words, all emotional disturbances disappear, and one begins to enter a state of mental tranquility and physical relaxation. In other words one enters a state of mental and physical equilibrium (*samādhi*). To achieve this state of mental equilibrium, it is essential to maintain the Systematic Introspection throughout the day, without interruption, while walking, standing, sitting, or even lying down.

## ***2) Investigation of the Experience within (Dhammavicaya)***

This Systematic Introspection when properly practiced ends up in entering the **second step** to Awakening. This second step (*dhammavicaya*) is to **closely examine** the emotional reaction to external stimulation by the environment. This helps one recognize that it is the **interpretation of circumstances**, by the cognitive process that **aroused the emotions** that made one react emotionally to the circumstances (*mano pubbangamā dhammā*).

Our interpretations are based on the way we categorize what we perceive. We recognize an object by placing it in a category. For example if a mother carries a baby in her arms and the baby sees a dog, the mother says “dog” and the baby says “dog” too. Next moment the baby sees another dog and the baby says “dog.” The mother is happy that the baby recognized the dog. The next moment the baby sees a cat and says “dog.” Then the mother says, “not dog,” “say cat.” Then the baby recognizes the difference between a dog and a cat. The baby develops two categories of animals: the dog and the cat. Next moment the baby sees a dog, baby can identify a dog by placing the animal in the category called dog. This placing things in categories to identify things is what the Buddha called *papanca*. We expand our knowledge by placing percepts in categories (*papanca saññā sankā*). Most kinds of education places percepts in categories (*saññā* = percept; *sankā* = category; *papanca* = placing in a category or categorization). This is why the Buddha says: People are fond of categorization but a Thathāgata does not categorize. (*papanca abhirata paja, nippapanca* Thathāgata). We create objects by categorization. *Nibbāna* is to stop creating or bringing objects into existence (*bhava nirodho nibbānan*). *Bhava* = bringing into existence by categorization.

This knowledge makes one realize that most interpretations are categorizations of our past experiences in childhood. Some interpretations are influenced by categorizations of the culture we are born into, while others are conditioned by the nature of the categorizations we grew up with. Whatever circumstances we face today are interpretations based on past categorizations. Our present worries, feelings of inadequacy, frustrations, fears and fantasies about the future are therefore only mere concepts based on past experiences. To take them seriously is to create further emotional disturbances

(*dukkha*). This is how people are carried away by interpretations based on categories of sensations and perceptions (*tato nidānam purisam papanca saññā sankā samudā caranti*).

When this is understood with a tranquil mind, it helps one realize that most interpretations are not necessarily facts. When this is realized, the strength of the interpretation is diminished. Then even the validity of the interpretation is doubted, resulting in the total eradication of the interpretations as well as the self-centered emotions.

Thus the practice of Systematic Introspection resulted in the investigation of the cognitive interpretation. This helped one realize that the emotions were aroused depending on the interpretation of circumstances. This helped in understanding that by changing the interpretation, it was possible to eliminate the emotional agitations.

It is interesting to compare this with modern psychology because this is similar to what happened in the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, even though Freud thought emotions were instincts that could not be eliminated. It was only quite recently that Western psychologists began to realize the importance of the cognitive process in controlling the emotions. This fact is now used in cognitive psychotherapy. Yet it was the Buddha who made use of this knowledge to the fullest extent, more than twenty-five centuries ago, when he eradicated all emotions without leaving even a trace of it, and became a Buddha by Awakening from the dream existence. In the well-known Buddhist book of verses called the Dhammapada the first verse points out clearly that the cognitive process precedes the affective and therefore it is possible to eliminate emotions by right thinking.

*Mano pubbangamā dhammā,  
Mano seṭṭhā, manomayā  
Manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā karoti vā  
Tato nam dukkhaman veti, cakkhan va vahato padam*

**Cognition precedes the affective experience,**

It dominates, and even creates it  
With wrong cognition if one speaks or acts  
Pain shall follow as the wheel the drawer

*Mano pubbangamā dhammā  
Mano seṭṭhā manomayā  
Manasā ce pasannena bhāsati vā karoti vā  
Tatho nam sukhamanveti, chāyāva anapāyini*

**Cognition precedes the affective experience,**

It predominates, and even creates it  
With wrong cognition if one speaks or acts  
Joy follows one, as the shadow the runner

**-- Buddha**

Another well-known statement of the Buddha is as follows: “The affective (citta), Oh disciples, is naturally immaculate. Foreign pollutants do pollute it. The uneducated are ignorant of this fact. Therefore they remain impure.” (*Pabassaramidaṇ bhikkhave cittaṇ āgantukehi upakkhilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṇ*).

The Buddha has pointed out that the desire for something pleasant arises depending on the way one describes the object. If one described it as something pleasant a desire arises. To overcome the desire one must reflect on its unpleasantness. In the same way, if we hate taking a bitter medicine, we can think of its health giving properties. By thinking of its pleasantness in this way, we can tolerate the distaste. Similarly, the Buddha taught the reflection on the threefold nature of all things

(*tilakkhana*): instability (*anicca*), painfulness (*dukkha*), and impersonality (*anatta*), in order to overcome one's attachment to things of the world. Some critics call this pessimism without knowing its therapeutic value.

### ***The divided mind (Citta/Mano)***

The Buddha drew attention to the fact that there is no entity called mind, or soul separate from the body, which can even leave the body and travel to other places or even die and be reborn (Mahātanhasankhaya Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya).

What we commonly refer to as the mind are only two activities of the body. They are cognition (*mano*) and affection (*citta*). Cognition is rational and affection is emotional. Often these two activities come in conflict. When they are in conflict the emotional affective often tend to win. Generally people are dominated by their affective emotions, rather than their cognitive reason. The reasoning cognitive faculty of the human being tends to become the slave of the emotional affective faculty. This is why even though the rational faculty of the human being is far more advanced today, with all the modern scientific technology, crime has not ceased in the world, and war has not come to an end. Modern science has created the nuclear bomb that arouses in people the fear of an imminent nuclear holocaust. Though the modern world is dreaming of love, peace, and happiness, it is in reality full of crime, war, and terrorism, today. This is because the emotions dominate the world.

Therefore the Buddha said:

Emotions dominate the world. Emotions create distress  
Emotion is that one thing, to which all stand spellbound

*Cittena nīyati loko, cittena parikassati*  
*Cittassa eka dhammassa, sabbeva vasamanvagu*

**– Buddha**

The teaching of the Buddha is an effort to teach people how to make the cognitive faculty (*mano*) dominate the mind rather than the affective faculty (*citta*). This is also the meaning of maturity of mind, according to the teachings of the Buddha.

Even Sigmund Freud recognized this sense of maturity when he said: "In place of the id there shall be the *ego*." This is also the reason why Freud called the cognitive faculty the *ego* and the affective faculty the *id*. *Ego* is the Latin form of "self" and *id* is the Latin form of "it" the neuter gender. This means, according to Freud, one should not personalize the emotional *id*, and instead one should personalize the rational *ego*. If one personalized the ego, one would act according to reason rather than to emotions. It is when one personalizes emotions that one is carried away by emotions. Emotions are not what we do consciously, they only happen to us unconsciously, depending on the necessary conditions. This is why they say, "love is blind." In fact, even anger is blind, and so is worry. Often emotions put us into difficulty, quite unconsciously. This is what Daniel Goleman called emotional hijacking. To overcome this power of the unconscious emotions over us, we must stop personalizing the emotions. Instead we should personalize reason and act rationally rather than emotionally.

Daniel Goleman, the author of the famous book "*Emotional Intelligence*" repeats the same idea when he defines emotional intelligence as: knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships" (page 46 - 47). In other words, emotional intelligence is not being carried away by emotions but using emotions intelligently. This can be done, according to Freud, only by personalizing the *ego*, and not the *id*. This was why Freud used the term *ego* to refer to the cognitive and the term *id* to refer to the affective.

### **3) Strength of the Cognitive over the Affective (Viriya)**

The realization that the cognitive process (*mano*) precedes the affective process (*citta*) gives strength to the cognitive process to overcome the emotions. The cognitive process has only to change the interpretation of circumstances and the emotional excitement stops.

Self-centered emotions have been useful for the lower animals for the preservation of life, but they can also be very destructive, especially in the case of the human being who can use his intelligence to make it brutally destructive. When the thinking cognitive process (*mano*) begins to realize the need to control emotions, and the **power** it has to control the emotions (*virīya*), it experiences a degree of freedom from emotions or **cognitive satisfaction** (*pīti*).

Here again the flow of events occurred in the seven steps to awakening. The systematic introspection flowed into investigation of the experience within. The experience within was the emotional reaction to stimulation of the senses by the environment. By examining this experience the cognitive process realized that the emotional excitement arose only due to the way it interpreted the incident in the environment. This flowed into awakening the **strength of the cognitive process** (*virīya*). When this strength was recognized the cognitive process was free from disturbances by emotions, which we call **cognitive satisfaction** (*pīti*). This way the examination of experience (*dharmā vicaya*) gradually flows into cognitive satisfaction, in the seven steps to Awakening.

### **4) Cognitive Satisfaction (Pīti)**

When the cognitive process was able to gain control over the blind and powerful affective process, the affective process

became free from emotional disturbances, guilt and remorse. When the cognitive process was free and clear, the cognitive process experienced an inner peace that is free of emotional disturbances, a **cognitive satisfaction** (*pīti*). With the experience of this cognitive satisfaction the muscles in the body relaxes (*pīti manassa kāyaṇ passambhati*). Thus is the gradual flow of events, as one treads through the seven steps to awakening.

### **5) Relaxation of the Body (Passaddhi)**

When the body is relaxed the body feels comfortable (*passaddha kāyo sukhaṇ vediyati*). With this cognitive satisfaction, physical comfort and the mind becomes free of all five hindrances (*pañca nīvarana*) that disturb the mind. So the affective process becomes stilled (*sukhino cittaṇ samādhīyati*) and enters a state of equilibrium. This too is the natural flow of events in the process of awakening. When the cognitive process experiences an inner peace through cognitive satisfaction, the body relaxes and the affective process becomes calm, tranquil, and still, and so experiences a state of equilibrium, which is called *samādhi*.

### **6) Tranquility of Temperament (Samādhi)**

When the mind is free of the five hindrances, the five constituents of ecstasy (*jhāna*) are experienced: Conceptual thinking in two parts: 1) inference (*vitakka*), and 2) inquiry (*vicāra*), 3) cognitive satisfaction (*pīti*), 4) Physical comfort (*sukha*) due to relaxation of the body, and 5) the unification of mind (*ekaggatā*). The mind becomes unified due to absence of emotional disturbances or absence of cognitive dissonance (*vicikicca*). This means, one has entered the **first ecstasy** (*paṭhamajjhāna*). This is the sixth step in the seven stepped process of awakening. Cognitive satisfaction flows into Physical



relaxation, which flows into tranquility of the affective process, resulting in the first ecstasy. Thus is the gradual flow of events in the process of awakening leading to stillness of mind, or mental equilibrium (*samādhi*).

## 7) Apperception (*Upekkhā*)

Once in the first ecstasy, the process gradually flows into the second, the third, and the fourth ecstasy. At the fourth ecstasy the mind is unified and focused within on the process of perception (*upekkhā-ekaggatā*).

The Seven Steps to Awakening began with introspection (*satipaṭṭhāna*) and ended in apperception (*upekkhā*). This results in a paradigm shift from existence to experience (*abhiññā*). As we mentioned earlier, introspection (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is **looking within**, and apperception (*upekkhā*) is **seeing what is within**. What is within is not the **object perceived** but the **process of perception**. This **focus of attention on the process of perception** instead of the object perceived is what we call **apperception**. **Apperception** is a shift from an awareness of the **object perceived**, to an awareness of the **process of perception**. It is a withdrawal of attention from the external object perceived, and focusing attention on the internal process of perception. It is this change in focus **apperception** that results in the paradigm shift called *abhiññā*, which is also called **attainment of freedom from existence** (*nirodha samāpatti*).

Once the attention was focused on the process of perception, a **paradigm shift** occurred. This **paradigm shift** was started by apperception, but ended in **Super-perception** (*abhiññā*). The **paradigm shift** is a shift from an **awareness of existence** to an **awareness of experience**. This paradigm shift is also known as the **Release from Existence** (*bhava nirodha*).

The experience of this **paradigm shift** makes one a spiritually emancipated **Breaker of Bonds** (*Arahat*).

### ***The paradigm shift (nirodha samāpatti)***

To **focus on the object perceived** is to become aware of the object perceived as **existing**, while the **subject** that perceives the object is also seen to **exist**. The subject is **personalized** as “mine,” thus creating a sense of “I” or “self” (*etaṃ mama, eso hamasmi, eso me attati*). This way of thinking is what we call **existential thinking**.

Instead of thinking existentially this way, if one focuses **attention on the process of perception** and not on the object perceived, then one sees that **it is the process of perception that creates the object** as well as the subject. The existence of the subject and the object is seen as an **appearance and not a reality**. It then is an **illusion** or a **delusion**; an illusion being a perceptual fallacy, while a delusion is a conceptual fallacy. This kind of thinking where the **focus is on the experience of perception**, rather than the subject or object, is called **experiential thinking**.

This is why the Buddha points out in the Mūlapariyāya Sutta, that the **normal putujjana** perceives a solid as a solid and **concludes there is a solid**. The **emancipated Arahat Superperceives** (*abhiññāti*) a solid and **does not conclude that a solid exists**. This is the difference between **perception** (*saññā*) and **Superperception** (*abhiññā*).

This change from **existential thinking** to **experiential thinking** is the **relieving paradigm shift** (*nirodha samāpatti*). It means one is relieved from the **sense of existence** (*bhava nirodha*) and **existence disappears**. When existence is no more,

birth, ageing and death are no more. This is the **end of all grief, lamentation, pain, distress and exhaustion**. It is in this way that the **great mass of suffering** comes to an end (*eva metassa kevalassa dukkhakkandassa nirodho hoti*).

This was why the Buddha said: “When the mind is fully tranquilized Dhamma appears (*samāhite citte dhammaṃ pātubhāvo*), and also one gains the understanding of how things come to be” (*samāhite citte yathābhūtam pajānāti*).

To clarify this point further it is helpful to make use of an **analogy**. Suppose we keep a bird in front of a mirror, the bird begins to peck at the figure in the mirror, backed by the assumption that the figure in the mirror is another bird behind the mirror. If, on the other hand, we place a human face in front of the mirror, the human being knows that the figure in the mirror is a reflection of one’s own face. Here the human being is aware of the process, by which the image in the mirror is seen, and therefore knows that there is no human being behind the mirror.

In a similar way, the emancipated *Arahat* is aware of the process by which the object is seen, and therefore does not come to the conclusion that the object really exists. This is what we called **Super-perception**, as distinct from the **ordinary perception** of the normal human being. When an object is perceived normally, the object is seen to exist outside, while the process of perception is seen to exist inside. In other words, both subject and object are seen as existing. This way of thinking is existential thinking. What is experienced objectively is seen as external physical matter, and what is experienced subjectively is seen as mental and personal. In other words, we personalize the subjective and alienate the objective. What is personalized becomes the personality or “self” that is supposed to exist

inside. What is alienated becomes the “world” that exists outside. This personalization of the subjective is what is called upādāna. This is why we do not translate the term upādāna as “grasping” or “clinging.” (*upa*=inside; *ādāna*=taking). To take inside is to incorporate or **personalize**.

It is interesting to note that when we think of ourselves, we are thinking of an image in our mind, not a real existing object that can be seen. This image can even change in different circumstances. When someone takes a picture of me and shows it to me, I begin to think it cannot be my real “self,” because it is different from the picture I have in my mind. This proves that what I call my “self” is only a series of pictures in my mind that changes from time to time, and a series of sensations in my body that also changes from time to time. In other words, what I call my “self” is only a collection of cinematographic pictures and sensations stored in my memory, which I can replay whenever I need. This was why the Buddha called it the fivefold mass of personalized constituents of personality (*pancupādānakkhandā*).

Existential thinking brings about a relationship between the “self” that exists, and the “object” perceived as existing. The relationship is filled with emotions in the form of likes and dislikes. Therefore it creates a **paradigm of emotional existence**. We normally live in this paradigm, which is a mass of suffering. It is this paradigm that the Buddha called **Being** (*bhava*). This paradigm of **being** is the **paradigm of insecurity and suffering** (*dukkha*) because it is filled with **emotional disturbances**.

When we begin to become **aware of the process of perception** this way, we begin to realize that suffering is involved with this way of thinking and we begin to think in a different way. The **object perceived** is only a **creation** of the **process of**

**perception.** When we focus our attention on the process of perception we are aware that what we see is not a real object outside but a mental image, which is inside our head. In other words, both subject and object are not seen as existing as in existential thinking. Whatever is seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched, is only a sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch but the **object** is understood to be only a **product** constructed by the process of perception.

In other words, the object perceived is not a **reality** but an **illusion or delusion**. An illusion is a **perceptual fallacy**, and a delusion is a **conceptual fallacy**. The object perceived is seen as a mental image (*rūpa*), like a picture taken by a camera. The mental image is formed by the process of construction (*sankhāra*) the colours seen are the sensations (*saññā*), which are felt as pleasant or unpleasant (*vedanā*). The images are identified (*viññāna*) as objects by giving them names (*nāma*).

This **transformation of thinking** is the **paradigm shift** from **existential** thinking to **experiential** thinking. Then there is neither subject nor object nor emotional relationship with its insecurity and suffering. There is only the process of perception, tranquility and peace of mind. This is how one **Awakens from the dream of existence**. In so doing all suffering comes to an end.

The famous statement on Nirvana found in the Udāna:

‘There is, O monks, an Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded. If there were not this Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded, then there would be no deliverance here visible from that which is born, become, made, compounded. But since there is this Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded, therefore a deliverance is visible from that which is born, become, made, compounded’.

## Chapter IV

# Awakening from the Dream of Existence

### *A gradual reduction of experience*

The dream of existence is a mental process. The mental process creates the dream. Therefore to awaken is to become aware of this mental process. To become aware of the mental process we must stand out of the mental process. This standing out is a gradual reduction of experience.

We have already pointed out that the meaning of the term “ecstasy,” as we use it, means standing out (*ec* = out; *stasy* = standing). It is through a process of standing out that a gradual reduction of experience takes place. To reduce experience is to stop mental activity. So in other words, what we are doing is a gradual stopping of mental activity. When one enters the first ecstasy, with the elimination of the five hindrances, and the appearance of the five Constituents of Ecstasy (*jhānāṅga*), one has come out of the “world of emotional activity” (*kāma loka*) and entered a state of tranquillity, which is the first ecstasy (*paṭhamañ jhānaṇ*) or standing out, or reduction of experience, or stopping of mental activity.

From there on, one can proceed further, by a gradual reduction of experience, into the other levels of ecstasy. Progress on the path depends on a gradual abandoning or standing out of the former level. **What is called *samādhī* is a gradual reduction of experience.** It is like climbing a flight of steps, where at every step forward, we abandon the former step. The first four ecstasies, or standing out, is a gradual reduction of the affective experience.

Following is an enumeration of this gradual reduction of the constituents of experience, as one passes through the four ecstasies:

- (1) First ecstasy (*jhāna*) includes:– inference (*vitakka*), inquiry (*vicāra*) (= conceptual thinking), cognitive satisfaction (*pīti*), comfort (*sukha*), stillness (*ekaggatā*)
- (2) Second ecstasy (*jhāna*) includes:– cognitive satisfaction, comfort, stillness.
- (3) Third ecstasy (*jhāna*) includes: – comfort, stillness
- (4) Fourth ecstasy (*jhāna*) includes: – stillness, apperception (*upekkhā*) – (no breathing but respiration).

### ***Apperception is non-perception***

It is important to understand that at the fourth ecstasy, a change in the focus occurs: Instead of the focus being directed towards the **object perceived**, the focus is directed towards the **process of perception**. The result is called **apperception**, which means becoming aware of the **process of perception**, instead of the **object perceived**. It is at this point that one becomes aware of the **five constituents of the process of perception**, which are today translated as the **“five aggregates.”** These **constituents of the process of perception** (*pancakkhanda*) when **personalized** (*upādāna*) becomes the **personality** or **“self.”** In other words, **personalization** produces the **personality** or **self**.

It is at this stage that a distinction is made between the **self** and the **not self**. Personalizing (*upādāna*) the **subjective process** makes it **“mine,”** and **alienating** the object makes it **“not mine.”** In other words, what is **personalized** (*upādāna*)

turns it into the personality (*upādāna paccayā bhavo*).” What is alienated becomes the external object. It is the external object that we may fall in love with or begin to hate. To fall in love is to want to make the “**not mine**” object “**mine**.”

### ***Reduction of the cognitive experience***

If one **continues** the reduction of experience beyond this point, the **gradual reduction** of the **cognitive experience** begins. This reduction of the cognitive experience is also a case of **letting go of the former** level of cognition. Each progressive level is a letting go, or an absence of the former level of experience, or a stopping of mental activity. This **cognitive reduction** also takes four steps as follows:

- (1) **The realm of infinite space** (*akāśanantāyatana*) – the objects perceived (*rūpa*) are absent.
- (2) **The realm of infinite perception** (*viññānañcāyatana*) – attention is focused on the process of perception.
- (3) **The realm of nothing** (*akincāññāyatana*) – the attention is withdrawn from the process of perception and focused on nothing.
- (4) **The realm of neither sensation nor no sensation** (*neva saññā nāsaññāyatana*) – the attention is withdrawn even from the awareness of nothing. Therefore the attention is not focused on any sensation, though not remaining totally unconscious. This is being at the threshold of consciousness.

The above four levels of experience are levels of cognitive reduction. The two teachers of the *Bodhisatta*, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Rama Putta, had both reached only the realm of nothing (*akincāññāyatana*). It was Uddaka Rama, the teacher



of the second teacher, who had entered the realm of **neither sensation nor no sensation** (*neva saññā na asaññāyatana*). The *Bodhisatta* learned from the second teacher how to reach that state and did reach that state himself. Yet he wanted to go further but there was no one to teach him how.

This was why the *Bodhisatta* decided to join the five ascetics and practice asceticism. He practiced asceticism to the ultimate level. He fasted till he became almost a skeleton, and even tried to stop breathing until he fell unconscious and people thought he was dead.

### ***Success through self-reliance***

He woke up, however, and it was then that he began to think: “All these days I have been trying to learn from others, and do what other people do. I had ignored my own qualifications (*pāramitā*) that I had earned, through the infinite sacrifices I had made, during my journey through the endless **chain of births and deaths** (*saṃsāra*). Thinking this way, he recalled how he entered the **first ecstasy** (*jhāna*) as a child, not by learning from another but by an inborn tendency. Then he thought: “Now I will begin to follow my **natural inclination to let go of everything**.” So he let go of all his lust, hate, and delusions, and automatically entered the first ecstasy (*jhāna*), then by gradually letting go in degrees he entered the second ecstasy, then the third, then the fourth, then the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite perception, the realm of nothingness, the realm of neither sensation nor no sensation, and then **the cessation of all sensation and feeling**.

This last stage called **cessation of sensation and feeling** (*saññā vedayita nirodha*) was the **ultimate level** in the reduction of the cognitive experience. There was no level further than this. This is the **complete disappearance** of the cognitive experience.

It is **the absence of all experience**. This level is the level of **absolute unconsciousness** (*avijjā*). At this level the **physical activity of metabolism** (*āyu sankhāra*) is present, along with the **temperature** of the body (*ushna*), but **no mental activity of any kind** is present. It is **similar to** the state called **hibernation** that is found in the lives of some animals like the bear. These animals remain in a dormant state, alive but unconscious, during the cold winter, but wake up from that state during the spring.

This **state** which is called the **cessation of sensation and feeling** (*saññā vedayita nirodha*), which is **similar to the state called hibernation**, is often **misunderstood** as the **experience of Nirvana** (*Nibbāna*). This is a **common misunderstanding**. The real meaning of the **experience of Nirvana** (*Nibbāna*) will be explained in due course.

### ***The mind is understood***

This stopping of experience, called **cessation of sensation and feeling** (*saññā vedayita nirodha*) indicates, however, that what we call the **mind** is **not** another **entity separate from the body**. It is only an **activity of the body**, which can be started or stopped at will, just like breathing. Modern scientific research on the brain seems to confirm this fact.

Mind and body seems to be the same activity viewed from two different angles. When this activity called mind is **observed objectively**, it is seen as an **activity of the body**. When this same activity is **observed subjectively**, it is seen as a **mental activity**. This makes it clear that what we call the **body** is an objective experience, while what we call the **mind** is a subjective experience. The Buddha has pointed out that what we commonly refer to as **mind** are merely **three such activities**, which are today known scientifically as **activities of**

**the nervous system.** They are: **perception** (*viññāṇa*), **cognition** (*mano*), and **affection** (*citta*). Modern scientific findings point out that **Perception** is the reaction of **the senses** to stimulation by the environment. **Cognition** is the activity of the **cerebral cortex** of the human brain, and **affection** is the activity of the **endocrine system** of the body, dependent on the limbic system of the brain.

There is also evidence to show that there is a part of the brain called the Reticular Activating System (RAS) that can toggle between cognitive activities of *mano* and the affective activities of *citta* so that a person can at one time be emotionally activated ignoring the principles of behaviour recognized by the *mano*, and at another time begin to be calm and composed following good principles of behaviour and good manners. The story of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde reminds us of this kind of toggling behaviour. This kind of toggling is also displayed in some people who get drunk by ingesting alcohol. This also happens to all of us sometimes when in a fit of anger or sexual obsession. This is why this introspective awareness is so important in our lives. It can stop this unconscious activity and begin to act consciously and rationally.

**CONSCIOUS, RELAXED,  
& ALERT STATE**

- ✓ Freedom from tension
- ✓ Relaxed Body
- ✓ Calm Mind
- ✓ Conscious Alertness
- ✓ Focused Attention
- ✓ Selective Thoughts

"Dr Jekyll"



"Mr Hyde"

**EMOTIONALLY REACTIVE  
& STRESSED**

- ❖ High bio-chemical activity
- ❖ Tension in the body
- ❖ Disturbance of the mind
- ❖ Unconsciously reactive
- ❖ Irrational/Erratic thoughts
- ❖ Delusive Thinking

## ***Awakening from the dream of existence***

The *Bodhisatta* did not remain forever in this unconscious or hibernated state called **cessation of sensation and feeling** (*saññā vedayita nirodha*). One might remain in this state, if needed, for not more than one week. **When one awakens** from this state, however, one is able to witness how the mental process creates the **“world,”** and even the **“self”** quite unconsciously. This means, the **“world”** that we are aware of is a product of the unconscious process of perception and conception, and so is the **“self”** that we believe “exists in the world.” The **“world”** is perceived **as an objective experience**, and the **“self”** is perceived as a **subjective experience**. It is the **cognitive process** that creates the **objective “world,”** and it is the **affective process** that creates the **subjective “self.”** In other words, when one awakens from this state of **absolute stillness of mind**, one begins to become **consciously aware of the process** by which **perception** and **conception** takes place, culminating in the **“world”** and the **“self”** coming into being.

## ***Genesis revealed by the Buddha***

Although critics imagine that the Buddha was ignorant of how the world has come into being, it is in this explanation called ***paṭicca samuppāda*** that he reveals how the world is created by each individual by oneself and for oneself. In short, we are living in a world of our own creation. Each one’s world is separate from that of others, although we think we live in an external world common to all, created by an external agent. All human beings are the creators of their own world. Each one creates one’s own world. The world they create is a similar world because of the similar structure of their body, and they are able to communicate with others through language and share their experience with others because of this. The **result** of this unconscious process of creation of a **world** and a **self**,

through the process of **cognition** and **affection**, is that it creates **“The Problem of Existence”**, which is the miserable **“Insecurity of Life.”**

Thus **“The Problem of Existence”**, comes into being, **depending on the necessary conditions**, following the **“Natural Law of Determinism”**. This natural law is that every natural occurrence in the world is determined by the presence of the necessary conditions. It is the law on which all modern scientific technology is based. This law came to be known in the West only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when science began. Therefore people in the West call this period **the age of enlightenment**. They used this law to conquer nature and gratify their desire for comfort, convenience, security, and even to kill their enemies.

It was this same law, however, that was introduced to the world by the Buddha in India more than twenty five centuries earlier. He did not use this law to conquer objective external nature. He used this same law to transform the subjective mental nature and solve the problem of existence. He called this law **the Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) described as: “When conditions are present it comes into being, but when conditions are absent it ceases to be” (*hetuṇ paṭicca sambhūtaṇ hetu bhaṅgā nirujjati*).

This **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) described by the Buddha is more than mere **determinism**, which points to the fact that things happen only due the presence of the necessary conditions. **Concurrence of Antecedents**, on the other hand, is also a description of how things come to be, including how the **world** as well as the self come to be based on a **series of antecedents**, which are **subjective mental processes**. This process brings about an awareness of a **“world”** and a **“self.”** This means, the world that we are aware of is the product of a subjective mental process rather than an independent

existence of an objective reality. In existential terminology, it is an **existence** without an **essence**, where existence denotes **that it is**, and essence denotes **what it is**. In Kantian terminology, the world and self are **phenomena** without a **noumenon**. In still another way of speaking, the **world** and **self** are **appearances** and **not realities**.

Therefore what is called the **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) is a natural mental process by which the “world” and the “self” come into being, along with the “**miserable insecurity of life**.” This is a **series of logical antecedents** that **takes place simultaneously**, all at the same time. This is why it is called **The Concurrence of Antecedents**.

### ***The Cognitive and the Affective***

It is essential to understand that there are two main processes that constitute experience. They are, the Cognitive and the Affective. It is the Cognitive Process that perceives and conceives and so makes sense of the sensory experience. We become conscious of a “world” through the Cognitive Process. It is the Affective Process that becomes conscious of a “self” and gets involved in an emotional relationship between the “self” and the “world,” resulting in the arising of the **great problem of existence**.

This **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) is a continuous mental process that goes on unconsciously, throughout our lives, producing a new “world” and a new “self” every moment. This continuous **dynamic** process of **change** gives rise to a **false sense** of permanent **static** existence. In other words, it is a continuous process of transformation (*nānattatā*) or **becoming**, and not a **static** existence or **being** (*bhava*). From birth to death, it is a process of **change** or **becoming**, and not a **static** presence or **being**.

The fact is that we erroneously think of ourselves as **static beings**, while we are also aware of our **birth, ageing, and impending death**. We spend our entire life making an effort to prevent, or at least **delay**, this **eventuality**, but **without success**. The obvious **solution** is to **realize** that we are **not blessed** with a **static existence**. Our existence is **only an appearance**, and not a **reality**. If **we do not really exist**, then **why worry** about this **inevitable death of a body** which is not “me?”

### ***The ultimate consequence***

If the **gradual reduction of experience**, or the **cognitive ecstasy**, as described above is practiced seriously and conscientiously, it is possible for the meditator to become **at least a Non-returner** (*Anāgami*) if not a **Breaker of Bonds** (*Arahat*). In other words, if the meditation is **practiced as described** above, it is possible to **Awaken from the dream of existence**, and reach the state of **Awakening** (*Sammā Sambodhi*) as the Buddha did. Yet it is **also possible to Become Awakened without** going through this process of **Absolute Stopping of the Mind** (*saññā vedayita nirodha*). It is **to make things easier** that the Buddha pointed out the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**.

The individual who follows the Supernormal Eightfold Way, and is emancipated by Awakening at the fourth affective ecstasy (*jhāna*), is called a **ceto vimutti**. The individual who goes through the cognitive ecstasies, and absolutely stops the mind, and Awakens by observing the process of creation is called **paññā vimutti**. A person who **Awakens in both ways** is called the **ubhato bhāga vimutti**. The chief disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Moggallana, are among those who had gone through this “double awakening” (*ubhato bhāga vimutti*). We shall go into a discussion of this **natural law** in more detail subsequently.

## Chapter V

### Concurrence of Logical Antecedents (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*)

#### *Our regret*

It is unfortunate that since the first century after the Buddha, the pure teachings of the Buddha were lost due to pollution by foreign concepts. Since then, the followers began to lay emphasis on “*kamma and rebirth*” rather than the **Fourfold Supernormal Reality** (*Cattāri Ariya Saccāni*). This degeneration of the teachings have been foretold by the Buddha himself when he said: “In the future my followers will begin to speak about my lower level teachings rather than my higher teachings like emptiness (*suññatā*).” This idea of emptiness was taken over by the Mahayanists but they were unable to fully comprehend the meaning of emptiness (*suññatā*). Two well-known thinkers attempted to explain *suññatā* but they differed. They were *Nagarjuna* the analyst and *Asangha* the idealist.

In the Sabbāsava Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya the Buddha points out that if a person begins to think in terms of kamma and rebirth he will never be able to attain *Nibbāna* because by doing so he/she confirms the idea of “self” as (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). The follower of the Buddha *Ariya Sāvaka*, on the other hand thinks only of suffering, its cause, its end, and the way to its end. This directs him straight to *Nibbāna*.

What appears today in the modern world as Buddhism: whether Theravada, Mahayana, Vajirayana, Pure-land, or Zen are adulterated forms of original Buddhism. The original Buddhism is not completely lost, however. It is available at least in written form in the Sutta Pitaka preserved by the Theravadins, though



not fully comprehended by them. An intelligent person, who is educated in modern science, philosophy, and psychology, who studies the suttas in theory and practice, may be able to comprehend at least to a workable degree, the profound teachings of the Buddha.

*Buddha = Dhamma = Paṭicca Samuppāda*

The Buddha has often said: “He who sees me sees the *Dhamma*, and he who sees the *Dhamma* sees me.” As he has also said: “He who sees the *Dhamma* sees the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*,” and He who sees the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* sees the *Dhamma*,” We may therefore conclude that **he who sees the Buddha sees the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and vice versa**. This means, if we have never seen the **Buddha**, we could see the Buddha if we see the ***Paṭicca Samuppāda***. This could be far better than looking at a golden image of the Buddha, or even one made of a precious stone or marble. What is great about the Buddha is not his body but his mind. *Paṭicca Samuppada* represents his mind. What this means is that **the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is the foundation on which the entire teaching of the Buddha** and the Buddha himself stands.

We are equipped today with the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the words of the Buddha, but few scholars have understood the real meaning of those words. Today there are many versions of the explanation. There is the traditional explanation of the Theravada Buddhists, as well as the traditional explanation of the Mahayana and the Vajirayana Buddhists. There is also a popular version given by a Western scholar Ñanaweera. There are other interpretations of scholars well known or unknown. Those who are interested could go into a comparative study of these different explanations of the words of the Buddha.

What we offer in this booklet, however, is only the explanation that we use in our meditation system which is meaningful to us. This is not something to be blindly believed in, but something the meditator will discover by oneself as one meditates.

It is important to note that ***Paṭicca Samuppāda*** or the **Concurrence of logical Antecedents** is a description of the experience of the Buddha after his **Awakening from the Dream of Existence** (*nirodha samāpatti*). It is also a description of **how the mental process creates the “world,” the “self,” and the Problem of Existence** (*bhava dukkha*).

It is not a description of how rebirth takes place, as the traditional commentators (*aṭṭuvāchariya*) make us believe. The tradition holds that our real problem is **rebirth** (*jāti*) but the Sutta Pitaka points out that the problem is **existence** (*bhava*). Nirvana has been described by the Buddha not as the **ending of rebirth** (*jāti nirodho*), but as the **ending of existence** (*bhava nirodho Nibbānaṃ*). This will be explained further in due course.

### ***Concurrence of Logical Antecedents (Paṭicca Samuppāda)***

This **Concurrence of Logical Antecedents** is an extraordinary explanation of how the “world” and the “self” came into being through a simultaneously occurring series of subjective mental processes, which are logical antecedents. The **physical world** we are aware of is a **product** of a **mental process** going on within us. According to this explanation, we are constantly watching a moving cinema throughout our lives. All that we know is known through this cinematography, which is a subjective mental process of experiencing.

What we call an experience is a mental process of perception and conception that begins at the five sense bases and is carried to the brain as the sixth sense through nerve impulses. Though we call it a mental process it is really a physical activity. Experience as understood normally is of two kinds: 1) subjective experience and 2) objective experience. The world that we are aware of is normally understood to be an objective experience, and the mind we are aware of is a subjective experience. What the Buddha points out is that the objectively experienced world is really a subjective experience because the eye works like a camera. The picture is inside the camera and not outside. All that is experienced through the senses is inside and not outside.

This process of perception and conception is a series of antecedents, one coming after the other. An antecedent is an incident that comes before another incident. In speaking of "the concurrence of antecedents," we are referring to a series of antecedents occurring at the same time. Of course then a question arises: "If it is a series of incidents one coming before the other, how can they occur at the same time?"

In order to answer this question, we have to point out that there are three kinds of antecedents: spatial, temporal, and logical.

- (1) If we speak of a row of pillars that come one after another, that is a series of spatial antecedents.
- (2) If we speak of the ringing of a bell where a series of sounds come one after another, that is a series of temporal antecedents.

- (3) If we simply count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, we are referring to a series of logical antecedents. They are not in space or time. Logically 1 comes before 2, and 2 comes before 3, and so on.

This means when we speak of our **“concurrency of logical antecedents,”** we are really speaking of a **series of logical antecedents that occur at the same time.** This is why it is called the **concurrency of logical antecedents.**

*DHAMMA*, the teaching of the Buddha, is called *ākalika*, which means “not-temporal” because it is **independent of time and space.** *Dhamma* is an **explanation of how time and space come into being.** Therefore *Dhamma* is the foundation of time and space. **Time and space are dependent on the Dhamma,** not vice versa.

*Dhamma* really means **“experience,”** or even better, it is the process of experiencing. In more detail, experience is the perceptual and conceptual **process** of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking and feeling. The **concept** “existence” is a **product** of the process of experiencing, and therefore **experience precedes existence.** To **exist** is to occupy space and time. Therefore **space and time are products** of experience.

Experience is dichotomous. It is divided into two parts subjective and objective. The subjective part we tend to personalize as “mine” and the objective part is alienated as “other.” Personalization creates a personal “self” or personality, which is separate from the alienated external “world.” This dichotomy becomes the foundation for an emotional relationship between the subjective “self” and the objective “other.”

What we call matter is an objective experience. What we call mind is a subjective experience. What I call “I,” “me,” “mine,” or “self,” are subjective experiences. What I call world, matter, energy, people, animals, plants, or inanimate objects are objective experiences.

What we call the **concurrence of logical antecedents** is therefore nothing but an account of the process by which we experience the **objective world** and the **subjective self**. It is how the Buddha saw the **genesis** of the **common reality** perceived by mankind. It is the process of experiencing the “**world**” and the “**self**” and the resulting “**suffering**” (*Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkandassa samudayo hoti*). It also points the **way out** of suffering (*Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkandassa nirodo hoti*).

It also points out that the **world** we are aware of, as well as the “**self**” we are aware of is only a **dream**. We **can awaken** from this dream, and thereby both “**self**” and the “**world**” can **disappear**. What we experience **then** will be only the **experience** – **DHAMMA**. Therefore the Buddha said:

**Non-manifest perception, limitless, and all clear**

No solid, liquid, heat or motion is cognized

Not even a trace of an image or name met

When perception is stopped, all objects disappear

**Anidassana viññānaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabaṇaṃ**

*Etta paṭhavi ca apo ca tejo vayo nagādati*

*Etta nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesāṇ uparujjati*

*Viññānassa nirodena etta etaṇ uparujjati*

Once a *deva* (celestial being) visited the Buddha and asked a question. “If a person could travel in space at an extremely high speed, can he reach the end of the world?”

“No,” was the Buddha’s answer.

“Yet, without reaching the end of the world, one cannot bring suffering to an end,” continued the Buddha.

Then, he said further: “The world, the beginning of the world, the end of the world, and the way leading to the end of the world is in this fathom long body itself, along with its perceptions and conceptions (*saññimhi samānake*). In other words, this “**world**” and the “**self**” are **products** of the process **of perception** and **cognition**, which are activities of the body.

Immediately after his awakening, the Buddha is supposed to have said:

Numerous lives in saṃsāra,  
I ran in pursuit of the Creator;  
And never did I ever meet him,  
So painful is repeated birth.

**O! Creator now I saw you,**  
No more will you create again;  
Your supports are all destroyed,  
Your structure is fully dismantled;  
My mind has stopped creating  
the emotional urge has ceased.

Comment: In other words his mind was the creator.

### ***Concurrence of Antecedents (Paṭicca Samuppāda)***

This **subjective mental process** described by the Buddha explains how the **world, self, and suffering** came into being through a series of **logical antecedents**. It is this description that is called the **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*). This **Concurrence of Antecedents** is based on a natural law on which all natural events, both physical and mental, are based. This law is recognized today in the Western

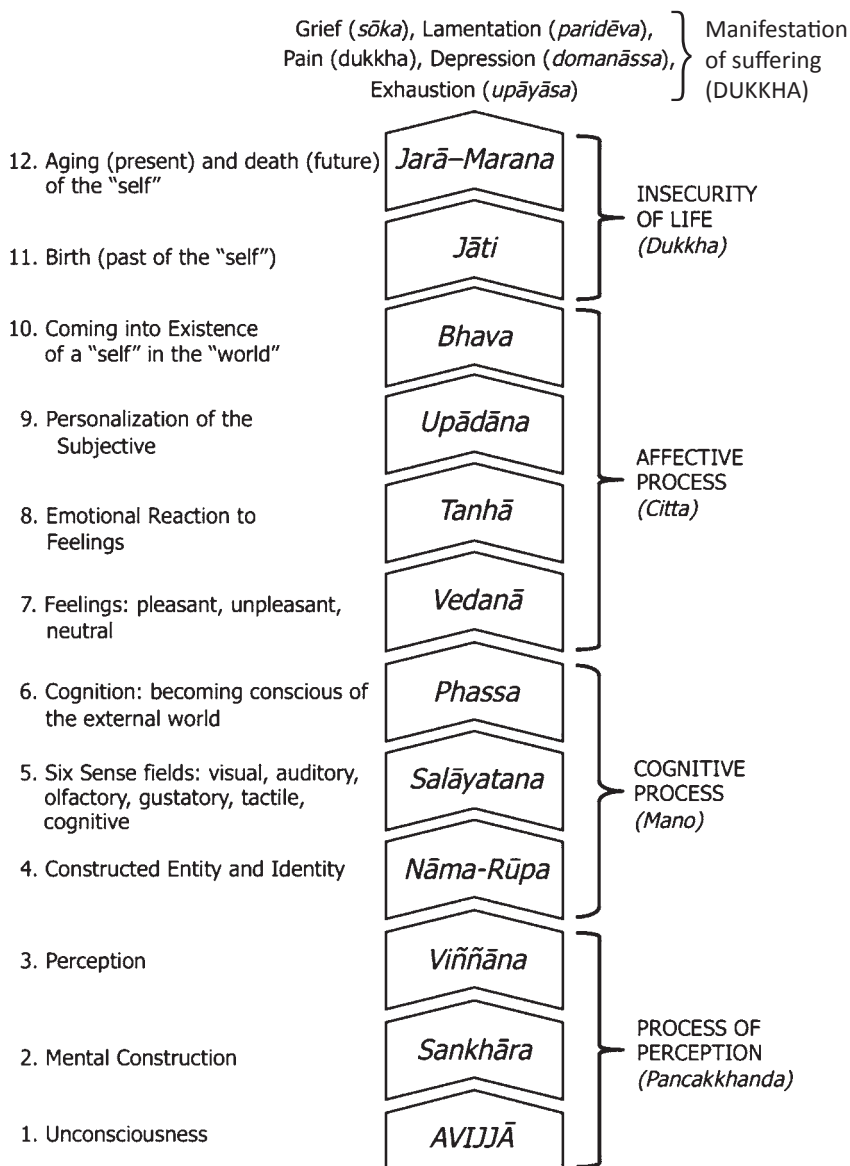
world as **Determinism**, which is the basis of all modern scientific technology. This law was recognized in the West only during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when science began. This period is today called the **Age of Enlightenment**. Before this period Western thought was governed by the **religious dogma** that every natural event occurred only due to the power of God, the supernatural Creator of the world. When this law of determinism was recognized educated people lost faith in the religious dogmas. As a result many revolutions took place such as the French revolution and the Marxist revolution.

This law of Determinism was used in the West to conquer nature, and transform the natural environment to suit the needs of hungry humanity. In the East it was used by the Buddha to solve the **problem of existence**, by transforming the human mind, which was dominated by the affective faculty or emotions.

### ***The Buddhist Concept of Genesis***

In discussing genesis, origin of the world, the Buddha was not referring to an objective physical world. He was referring to a subjective experience, which we call the objective world.

## The words of the Buddha are stated as follows:





The problem of existence is **the insecurity of life** created by a **conflict between human reason** and **human emotion**. It is **human reason** that recognizes the **reality of external circumstances**, while human emotions being unaware of reality are blindly concerned about **human emotional needs**. It is this conflict that Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis pointed to as **neurosis**. It is also what the modern existential philosophers have referred to as, **fear and trembling**, or **anguish**. They have, however, been unable to find an adequate solution to this problem, other than to take the **leap of faith** as Kierkegaard did or **resort to Marxism** as Sartre did. It was the Buddha who solved the problem in the East, **not** by **changing** the external circumstances, but by changing the **mind** of man. He solved it by understanding that the **objective world** and the **subjective self**, are only a creation of the **process of perception and feeling**, and therefore **existence** that the **existentialists harped** on was not even a **rational concept** but was only an **emotional feeling** based on **imagination**.

This means, what we observe as the **world** and **self** are not **realities** but **appearances**. Both our **subjective** and the **objective** experiences are **really subjective**, and **therefore a delusion**. Even the **conflict** between **emotion** and **external circumstances** is really a conflict between **emotion** and **reason**. **Suffering** is understood to be based on the **delusion** or **dream of existence**. It is **only by awakening from this dream of existence** that the **problem is solved**.

**Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) is a description of a process that begins with an unconscious state (*avijjā*). The modern theory of evolution confirms this idea when it states that life began as an unconscious electrochemical process that began as the process of evolution that ended in producing a human brain that became conscious of a world and

a self. In other words, matter was not conscious till the human being evolved. This awakening into a world with a self is an opening into an awareness of **objective sensations** (*saññā*) and **subjective feelings** (*vedanā*).

**Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) therefore consists of two sequential processes: the **cognitive** and the **affective**. It starts with the **Cognitive process** that begins with **construction** (*sankhāra*) and ends with **cognition** (*phassa*). This is followed by the **Affective process** that begins with **feeling** (*vedanā*) and ends with **ageing** and **death** (*jarā maraṇa*).

### ***Concurrence of Logical Antecedents in more detail***

#### ***The process of perception***

1. **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*), the process that **mistakenly creates an existence** of a **subject** and an object begins from a state of **Absolute Unconsciousness** (*Avijjā*).
2. From this state of **Absolute unconsciousness**, mental **Construction** (*Sankhāra*) begins.
3. The building materials used for construction are the **subjective feelings** (*Vedanā*) and the **objective sensations** (*Saññā*).
4. **Objective Sensations** (*Saññā*) become the building material for the **Cognitive Process** that builds the **world**.
5. **Subjective Feelings** (*Vedanā*) become the building material for the **Affective Process** that builds the **self**.
6. First arises the **cognitive process of construction**, which is **Perception** (*Viññāṇa*), the rudimentary awareness that distinguishes between one object and another.

7. When perception is completed, the five constituents of perception comes into being:
- a) Mental Image (*rūpa*)
  - b) Feeling (*vedanā*)
  - c) Sensation (*saññā*)
  - d) Construction (*sankhāra*)
  - e) Perception (*viññāna*).

The continuation of these constitutes of perception is not a static existence of an entity but the continuity of a process of activity that continues without end like the continuity of a flame that is dependent on the necessary conditions. This activity can stop only when the necessary conditions are absent.

### ***Perception develops into Cognition (phassa)***

8. What is perceived through the **five senses** (*pañca indriya*) is brought to the thinking brain or **cerebral cortex** (*mano*), which uses rational thought and memory to give meaning to what was perceived. This way a **percept** (*viññāna*) is transformed into a **concept** (*dhamma*). Through this process of conception an **entity** in the form of an **image** (*rūpa*) is created with an **identity** in the form of a **name** (*nāma*). This way a world made of **Six Sensual Realms** (*salāyatana*): of **vision, sound, smell, taste, touch, and concepts** (*dhamma*) comes into being.
9. With the coming of the world of Sensual Realms, cognition (*phassa*) is completed and a **world consciousness** arises.
10. Cognition (*phassa*) is completed by **being Conscious** of an **external world**.

### ***Beginning of the Affective Process (citta)***

11. Once the consciousness of the **world of six realms** occurs due to the completion of the process of Cognition, an **emotional reaction** starts, in relation to perceived **feelings** (*vedanā*).
12. This **emotional reaction** brings about a **dichotomy** of the experience into: a **subjective** and an **objective**.
13. Then the **subjective experience** is **personalized** as “mine” and the **objective experience** is **alienated** as “not mine,” or “other.”
14. This **personalization** of the subjective process results in the **notion of “I”** and the **notion of a “self”** (*etaṃ mama, eso haṃasmī, eso me attati*).
15. Once the “self” has come into being through **personalization** (*upādāna*), that “self” is only a **feeling**, and not a visible object.
16. Then the **question** arises: **what is the object** that can be referred to as the “self”? The answer naturally obtained is the **Body**, because only the **body** is seen to occupy **space** and **time**.
17. The body then becomes the “self” (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). Even others begin to refer to the body, as “my self,” and so do “I.”
18. If the **body** that exists in space and time is “my self,” then this **body**, that occupies time, has a **past, present, and future**, which means “I” have a **past present and future**.
19. That means, the **past of the body** becomes **my past**, which is **birth** (*jāti*). The **future of the body** becomes **my future**, which is **death** (*marana*). The **present of the body** becomes **my present**, which is **ageing** (*jarā*).

20. This means, **by making the body “my self,”** I have **become subject to birth, ageing and death.** Along with this **identification with the body** comes **grief (*sōka*), lamentation (*paridēva*), pain (*dukkha*), distress (*domanassa*), and exhaustion (*upāyāsa*).**
21. If the **body** was **not “my self,”** there would be **no birth, ageing, and death** for me; **no grief, lamentation, pain, distress, or despair.**

***How did the body become my self (sakkāya diṭṭhi)?***

22. The **body** became **“my self”** because I identified the **body** as **“my self.”**
23. I identified the **body** as **“my self”** because there was **no object** to identify as **“my self,”** other than the **“feeling of self.”**
24. The **“feeling of self”** was the **result of personalization** of the **emotional reaction.**
25. It was only the **subjective experience** of perception and emotion that I **personalized,** not the **body.**
26. This **personalization** as **“mine”** lead to a **“feeling of self,”** which needed an identity as an **object.**
27. The only object I found as **identity** was the **body,** but this body that I refer to is only a **collection of mental images.**
28. I not only see a collection of **mental images** as the **body** and **“self,”** I also **feel a sensation** as the **body** and **“self.”**
  - (1) Although **the body** is **seen** as an **objective experience.**
  - (2) The **body** is **felt** as a **subjective experience.**

- (3) It is the **feeling** of “self” that makes me **feel** the presence of “**my self.**”
29. The **image** that I am aware of as the **body** or “self” is **constructed** using **feelings**, and **sensations**. In other words what we call the body is only a **mental construct** created by the **process of perception**.
30. My “self” or “**personality**” therefore is the **result of personalizing** the **subjective experience of perception**, represented in the form of the **five constituents** of the **process of perception**.
31. Therefore in short, suffering is not the suffering of a true “self” but the suffering of **five constituents of perception** (body, feelings, sensations, construction, and perception) that are mistakenly personalized as “self” (*sankhitthena pancupādānakkhandā dukkhā*).

## Chapter VI

# Elucidation of Fundamentals

### *Foundation*

The comprehension of **the Concurrence of Logical Antecedents** results in the recognition of the **fundamentals**. This recognition brings about the **paradigm shift** from existence to experience. This means **Experience is all that we can talk about**. All other things originate from experience. Experience is the foundation of all. (Sabba Sutta – Samyutta Nikaya). Therefore the most fundamental.

People normally think: the world existed first and then I came into being. Then “‘I’ met the ‘**world,**’ and I saw the **world.**” People also think wrongly that after death the world will continue while I have disappeared.

The fact, however, is: **seeing arises first** and it is only **from the seeing** (or perception) that the ‘I’ and the ‘**world**’ come into being. This was why the Buddha said: “In the seeing, there is only the **seeing** (*Ditṭhe ditṭha mattaṃ bhavissati*), there is neither the **seer** nor the **seen**. In other words there is only the experience of seeing. The subject and object are products of the experience. In other words, **experience precedes existence**. Existence does not come before experience as it is commonly thought. Existence is only a product of the process of perception, which is experience. Experience produces the subject and the object that are supposed to exist. It is this experience that the Buddha analysed into the **five constituents of the process of perception** (*pancakkhandā*), which when **personalized becomes the five personalized constituents of personalization**. It is this personalization that produces the

personality or self. This personality stands out in the form of the body and its properties.

### ***Modern scientific research***

Modern research on the brain has indicated that this process called experience is the activity of a part of the brain called the cerebral cortex that does the thinking. The brain of course is a part of the body. Therefore it is the body that does the thinking and not the mind. The term “mind” refers only to three activities of the body: **thinking, feeling and perception**. Thinking and feeling are technically called cognition and affection. The Buddha had three terms for these activities: perception (*viññāna*), cognition (*mano*) and affection (*citta*).

It is with cognition (*mano*) that we make meaning out of what we perceive. Perception is only the reaction of the organism to stimulation by the environment. We are organisms in an environment. We have five senses that can be stimulated by the environment. The organism reacts to this stimulus and so perception takes place. What is perceived is brought to the brain by nerves and the cerebral cortex gives meaning to what is perceived. This giving meaning to what is perceived is called cognition. According to the meaning given by cognition an emotion is aroused. This arousal of emotion is called affection. The emotion aroused is expressed in action. This action is called karma (in Sanskrit), or kamma (in Pali). The action may be to obtain what we desire, to get rid of what we hate, or run away from what we fear.

This arousal of emotion is what is called **stress** today. Stress is a disturbance of the body and mind, if continued too long it can be damaging not only to the body and mind but also to others around and society in general. All crimes in the world,



all wars, murders, and every problematic human disturbance is a result of emotions. These emotions are blind and unconsciously carried out but dependent on the necessary conditions.

### ***Importance of Cognition***

It is only the cognitive faculty that is sensible. It is the cognitive faculty that should dominate our mind, and not the emotions, but very often it is the emotional or affective faculty that dominates our mind. This is what makes a human being an animal. What is special about the human being is the cognitive faculty. The glorious aim of the Buddha was to make the normal half human being a supernormal fully human being.

Feeding, sleeping, fear and sex  
Is common to both man and beast  
Cognition does make man very special  
When low in cognition man is a beast

*Āhara nidra bhaya maitunanca*  
*Samanya me tad pasubih narānām*  
*Dharmohi tesa madiko viseso*  
*Dharmena hinah pasubih sanānāh*

### ***The role of Meditation***

This illustrates the grave need of man to practice meditation. What meditation does is to make the cognitive faculty of man dominate his mind rather than the affective. This involves a change in the way we think, so that the emotions will stop dominating our mind.

The importance of changing our thinking to stop the unconscious and irrational emotional behaviour has been recognized only recently in Western psychology. This fact

was fully understood and used by the Buddha to transform personality by radically eliminating all self-centered emotions. This was the meaning of becoming a spiritually Awakened Buddha or an emancipated *Arahat*.

It is in the sermon called the Mūlapariyāya Sutta that the Buddha explains the difference between the thinking of the emancipated individual and the normal person. In other words, this explains the meaning of the paradigm shift from existence to experience (*nirodha samāpatti*).

### ***The Buddha's elucidation of the Fundamentals***

The Buddha says in his Discourse on Fundamentals (Mūlapariyāya Sutta):

- (1) The ordinary human being perceives a solid as a solid (*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito sanjānati*).
- (2) The Emancipated One (*Arahat*) **apperceives** a solid as a solid (*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhijānāti*).
- (3) The ordinary human being having perceived the solid comes to the conclusion the solid exists (*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito saññatvā paṭhaviṃ maññati*).
- (4) The *Arahat* having **apperceived** the solid does not come to the conclusion the solid exists (*paṭhaviṃ paṭhavito abhiññatva paṭhaviṃ namaññati*).

This difference in conception between the ordinary person and the *Arahat* is similar to the difference between the bird and the human being in front of a mirror, as described earlier.

## ***Existence and Essence***

The Mūlapariyāya Sutta goes further:

- (1) The ordinary person concludes that the solid exists and also of what it is made (*paṭhavito maññati paṭhaviyā maññati*).
- (2) The Arahāt does not conclude that it exists or of what it is made (*paṭhavito namaññati paṭhaviyā namaññati*).

It is useful to compare this statement with the statement of existential philosophers who distinguish between existence and essence. Existence is expressed by the statement, “that it is” and the essence expressed by the statement, “what it is.” For example, if there is a cup made of clay its existence is expressed by the statement, “there is a cup.” Its essence is expressed by the statement, “it is made of clay.” This is how Jean-Paul Sartre made the statement, “existence precedes essence,” for something must exist before we can talk of what it is made. Sartre considered this to be the essential premise on which existential philosophy stands.

## ***Experience precedes Existence***

From the Buddhist perspective, however, “experience precedes existence.” This is because **existence** is a concept that arose from experience, which is the mental process of perception. In other words, our paradigm has shifted from existential thinking to experiential thinking. Existential philosophers drew attention to the problem of existence, which is that every human being is aware of his own existence and also aware of his own death, which brings about anguish: anxiety, worry, fear and trembling. The existential philosophers could not, however, solve the problem other than to take the leap

of faith in God, or wait till human intelligence grows or evolves to a capable level. It was the Buddha who offered the ultimate solution through a paradigm shift. **According to the Buddha, the problem was created by existential thinking. Therefore it can be solved only through a paradigm shift from existential thinking to experiential thinking.** This is why **existence** (*bhava*), according to the Buddha, is a **delusion**, or a **dream**, from which **mankind must Awaken** by switching on to experiential thinking. Entering into experiential thinking is what is called ***nirodha samāpatti***.

### ***Error of Personalization***

The Mūlapariyāya Sutta goes further:

- (1) The ordinary person personalizes the solid as “mine” (*paṭhaviṃ meti maññati*).
- (2) The Arahāt does not personalize the solid as “mine” (*paṭhaviṃ meti namaññati*).
- (3) The ordinary person takes delight in the solid (*paṭhaviṃ abhinandati*).
- (4) The Arahāt does not take delight in the solid (*paṭhaviṃ na abhinandati*).
- (5) Referring to the ordinary person the Buddha asks, “why does he do so?” (*tankissa hetu*). And answers, “because he does not comprehend” (*apariññattassati*).
- (6) Referring to the Arahāt the Buddha asks, “why does he do so?” (*tankissa hetu*). And answers, “because he comprehends” (*pariññattassati*).

This is the essence of the Mūlapariyāya Sutta, which discusses the differences between the ordinary person and the Awakened One (*Arahat*) in relation to everything experienced, including *Nibbāna*.

The paradigm shift (*nirodha samāpatti*) where the meditator withdraws from the paradigm of existence (*bhava*) and gets established in the paradigm of experience (*nirodha*), brings about the freedom or liberation (*vimutti*) from emotional excitements (*tanhā*) and accompanying suffering (*dukkha*), ending in the imperturbable serenity, *Nibbāna*. This means the mind that was purified will never become polluted again.

### ***The uninterrupted Samādhi***

To come out of *samādhi* is to pollute the mind. He/she can move from one level of *samādhi* to another, but he/she has to remain at least in the first *jhāna*. In the first *jhāna*, it is possible to think and reason out and even discuss the *Dhamma*, but not be engaged in emotional thoughts. This fact is indicated in the fifth verse in the Ratana Sutta: “The Buddha has greatly extolled the uninterrupted *Samādhi*, which is equal to no other” (*yambuddhasetto parivannayi suciṇ samādhimanantarikaññamahu samādhina tena samo navijjatthi*).

When we say that the emancipator can never be out of *samādhi*, a question may arise: “Does it mean that the emancipator is always in the experiential mode?” The answer is “no.”

Although the attention is withdrawn from the existential paradigm during the paradigm shift (*Nirodhasamāpatti*), it does not mean that the paradigm of existence is given up forever. When it becomes necessary to communicate with ordinary

people, the Awakened One returns to the existential paradigm for that purpose, and goes back again to the experiential paradigm. These two modes can be changed from time to time, and are seen as two kinds of *Nibbāna*:

### ***Two kinds of Nibbāna***

- (1) *Saupadisesa Nibbāna* – experienced when the Arahāt is in the existential mode.
- (2) *Anupadisesa Nibbāna* – experienced when the Arahāt is in the experiential mode.

Although this is so, today the Theravada tradition explains these two kinds of *Nibbāna* in a different way. They explain it as follows:

- (1) *Saupadisesa Nibbāna* – experienced when the Arahāt is alive.
- (2) *Anupadisesa Nibbāna* – experienced after the death of the Arahāt.

This point is clarified in a Nibbānadhātu Sutta #44 in the Itivuttaka:

Monks, there are two modes of *Nibbāna*  
(*Dve'me bhikkhave nibbāna dhātuyo*).

What are the two?  
(*Katamā dve*).

The personal mode, and the impersonal mode  
(*saupādisesa ca anupādisesa ca nibbāna dhātu*).

What monks is the personal mode of *Nibbāna*?  
(*Katamā ca bhikkhave saupādisesa nibbāna dhātu*).

In this case monks, a monk is an emancipator, free of influences, has actualized the potential, accomplished the task, laid down the burden, realized the ideal, broken the bonds to being, liberated through tranquility and insight.

*(Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu arahan hoti, khīnāsavo, vusitavā, katakaranīyo, ohitabhāro, anuppattasadattho, parikkhina bhavasaññojano, sammadañña vimutti).*

While in this mode, the five senses are active, and able to experience the pleasant and unpleasant sensations, and therefore experiences pleasure and pain.

*(Tassa tiṭṭhanteva pancindriyāni, yesa avighātattā, manāpā amanāpā paccānubhoti, sukhadukkhaṇ paṭisaṇvedeti).*

Yet he is free from lust, hate, and delusion.

*(Tassa yo rāgakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo).*

This, monks, is the personal mode of *Nibbāna*.

*(Ayaṇ vuccati bhikkhave saupādisesa nibbāna dhātu).*

What, monks, is the impersonal mode of *Nibbāna*?

*(Katamā ca bhikkhave anupādisesa nibbānadhātu).*

In this case monks, a monk is an emancipator, free of influences, has actualized the potential, accomplished the task, laid down the burden, realized the ideal, broken the bonds to being, liberated through tranquility and insight.

*(Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu arahan hoti khīnāsavo vusitavā katakaranīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhinabhavasaññojano sammadañña vumutto).*

**In this very life, monks, he remains experiencing no sensations, insentient.**

**(Tassa idheva bhikkhave sabbavedayitāni  
anabhinanditāni sītī bhavissanti).**

This monks is the impersonal mode of *Nibbāna*.  
(*Ayaṇ vuccati bhikkhave anupādisesa nibbānadhātu*).

These two did the seer expound.  
(*"Dve imā cakkhumatā pakāsitā*).

The unconditioned state of *Nibbāna*.  
(*Nibbānadhātu anissitena tādina*).

One is the state to be experienced here and now.  
(*Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā*).

With personality but existence ceased.  
(*Saupādisesa bhavanettisankhayā*).

Other without personality and without existence.  
(*Anupādisesa pana samparāyikā*).

Where existence of every kind ceases.  
(*Yamhi nirujjhanti bhavāni sabbaso*).

The experience of apperception without construction.  
(*Ye etadaññāya padaṇ asankhataṇ*).

The emancipated mind has ceased to exist.  
(*Vimuttacittā bhavanettisankhayā*).

Has realized the embodiment of *Dhamma*.  
(*te dhammasārādhigamā khaye ratā*).

Brought all states of existence to an end.  
(*Pahaṇsu te sabbabhavāni tādino'ti*).

Thus did the Lord proclaim.  
(*Ayampi tho vutto bhagavatā*).



This means *Anupadisesa Nibbāna* is not the experience of the *Arahat* after death of the physical body but the *Nirodha Samāpatti*.

### ***What is Truth?***

Being in these two modes breaks up the idea of truth into existential truth (*sammuti sacca*) and experiential truth (*paramattha sacca*). This means there is no such thing as an absolute truth. To hold one idea as truth is to become narrow minded, and to ignore the validity of its opposite. This fact is expressed by the Buddha in the analogy of the elephant and the blind men. The Buddha points out this fact also in the Cula-viyuha Sutta, in the Sutta Nipatha, in verse form as follows:

If truth is one, and no second exists  
Debates will never arise among folk  
A variety of truths they themselves do form  
Gurus therefore never speak of one truth

*Ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutiyamatthi  
Yasmiṃ pajā no vivade pajānaṃ,  
Nānā te saccāni sayam thunanti  
Tasmā na ekaṃ samanā vadanti*

Never was there a variety of truths  
Other than sensations always in the world  
Creating views using speculative logic  
They speak of a duality: falsehood and truth

*Na heva saccāni bahunī nānā  
Aññatra saññāya niccāni loke,  
Takkañca diṭṭhisu kapappayitvā  
Saccaṃ musāti dvayadhammamāhu*

In the Alagaddupama Sutta the Buddha points out that the Four-fold Supernormal Reality (*cattāri ariya saccāni*) is only a solution to a problem, and not a truth to be believed. It is compared to a boat used to cross over the river. It is not to be carried away after crossing the river, but left behind for others to use. Therefore the Four-fold Supernormal Reality (*cattāri ariya saccāni*) is not a dogma to be believed on blind faith, but only a solution to a problem, which can be used by anyone to solve one's problem. The Buddha takes a pragmatic point of view regarding truth.

About The Four-fold Supernormal Reality, the Buddha states:

- (1) **The first truth** is not to be believed, but **to be comprehended** (*pariññeyyaṇ*).
- (2) **The second truth** is not to be believed, but **to be eliminated** (*pahātabbaṇ*).
- (3) **The third truth** is not to be believed, but **to be realized** (*sacchikātabbaṇ*).
- (4) **The fourth truth** is not to be believed, but **to be cultivated** (*bhāvetabbaṇ*).

## Chapter VII

# The Fourfold Supernormal Reality

*The First Reality :*

*The problem of existence*

Out of all the animals in the world it is the human animal that is aware of its own existence and also aware of its unpredictable but certain impending death. Anyone's entire life is devoted to a futile struggle to avoid this unavoidable death. Everyone celebrates births and laments and moans about death. They fail to realize that birth and death are the two ends of the same continuum called life. They live their lives as if they were going to live forever. Death is certain and life is uncertain. This is the insecurity of life.

From the time a baby is born it is suffering, this is why the baby cries. The baby soon begins to realize the insecurity and weakness of life and hopes to be secure and strong when grown up. After growing up one begins to realize that the insecurity becomes even worse.

As an adult one struggles to make ends meet, all one's life, till ageing and sickness set in. Things get even worse then. The struggle to survive continues till death.

The first reality that the Buddha pointed to was this **insecurity of life**. Life is insecure because of the impending, unpredictable death that can come to any individual young or old at any age, at any time. This insecurity is seen very clearly when we look at the animal world. Each animal lives by making other animals their food. Even the herbivorous animals eat living plants. Human beings do the same not only in eating but even in the normal ways of earning a living by competition

and exploitation. If the nature of life is this, there is sufficient room to question the common belief that a loving God was the Creator of this life.

Even modern existential philosophers have pointed to this insecurity of life that brings about anxiety, worry, fear, and all the kinds of anguish. All religions that hope to receive eternal life and eternal happiness in Heaven after death are ultimately attempting to solve this same **problem of existence**.

This pursuit of Heaven, which can be verified only after death, is based on the assumption that death is the opposite of life and not a part of life. Some have pointed out, however, that birth and death are merely the two ends of the same stick called life. This means death is a part of life and not the opposite of life.

Mankind has from the beginning of history made an effort to remain alive without dying, despite the obvious fact of death. This struggle to exist was an impossible struggle. It was not only futile, it was also painful, and it was also based on the **delusion of eternal existence**.

Another attempt to escape from this ever impending death and **insecurity of life** is to forget about death, and to devote one's life to enjoying the pleasures of life. We even think that it is pessimistic to think of death. We try to hide from the fact of death in many ways, and attempt to carry on life, enjoying the pleasures of the senses. Some people do not like to keep a dead body in their home. They keep it in a special place hidden from the public. They even try to prevent children from looking at a dead body. They also try to stop children speak about death. It is only recently that people have begun to speak about death, or even write books on death.

It was quite recently that Elisabeth Kübler-Ross wrote her book on *Death and Dying*, where she describes five stages of grief:

1. **Denial** — Because of the difficulty in facing a loss, the first reaction is Denial. The person tries to shut out the reality or magnitude of the situation, and develops a false reality that is preferable.
2. **Anger** — “Why me? It's not fair!”; “How can this happen to me?”; “Who is to blame? At the second stage, the individual recognizes that denial cannot continue, and therefore becomes angry. Misplaced feelings of rage appear. Anger can manifest itself in different ways such as: anger with themselves, with others, and especially with close ones. It is important to remain nonjudgmental when dealing with such a person.
3. **Bargaining** — "I'll do anything for a few more years..." or "I will give my life savings if..."

At the third stage a hope arises that the individual can somehow undo or avoid the cause of grief. Psychologically, the individual is saying, "I understand I will die, but if I could just do something to buy more time..." People facing a less serious trauma can bargain. For example: "Can we still be friends?" when facing a break-up. Bargaining rarely provides a sustainable solution, especially if it is a matter of life or death.

4. **Depression** — During the fourth stage, the grieving person begins to understand the certainty of death. "I'm so sad, why bother with anything?"; "I'm going to die soon so what's the point?"; Because of this,

the individual may become silent, refuse visitors and spend much of the time crying and being sullen and gloomy. This process allows the grieving person to disconnect from things of love and affection, possibly in an attempt to avoid further trauma. It is a kind of acceptance with emotional attachment. It is natural to feel sadness, regret, fear, and uncertainty when going through this stage. Feeling those emotions shows that the person has begun to accept the situation. Often times, this is the ideal path to take, to find closure and make their way to the fifth step, Acceptance.

5. **Acceptance** —In this last stage, individuals begin to come to terms with their mortality or inevitable future. "It's going to be okay." "I can't fight it, I may as well prepare for it." This stage varies according to the person's situation. This typically comes with a calm, retrospective view for the individual, and a stable mindset.

Kübler-Ross originally developed this model based on her observations of people suffering from terminal illnesses.

She later expanded her theory to apply to any form of catastrophic personal loss, such as the death of a loved one, the loss of a job or income, major rejection, the end of a relationship or divorce, drug addiction, incarceration, the onset of a disease or chronic illness, an infertility diagnosis, as well as many tragedies and disasters (and even minor losses).

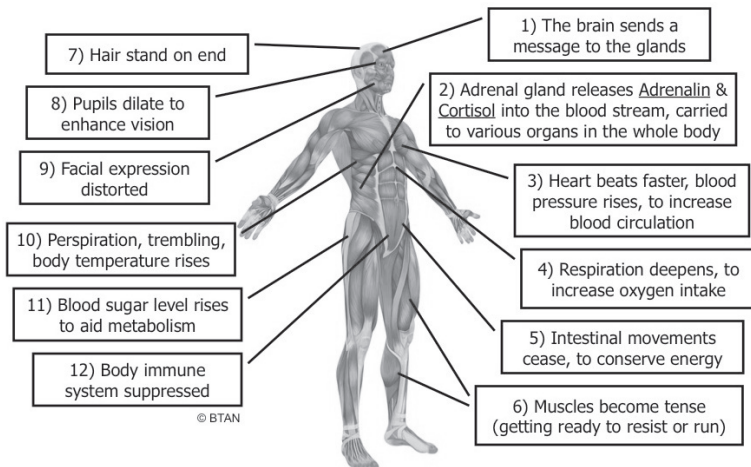
Supporting her theory, many (both sufferers and therapists) have reported the usefulness of the Kübler-Ross Model in a wide variety of situations where people were experiencing a significant loss. The application of the theory is

intended to help the sufferer to fully resolve each stage, then help them transit to the next – at the appropriate time – rather than getting stuck in a particular phase or continually bouncing around from one unresolved phase to another.

It was also quite recently that Hans Selye began to write about stress and stress management. The **stress** of life was presented by Hans Selye as the **General Adaptation Syndrome**, which consisted of three stages:

- (1) Alarm reaction = Grief (*sōka*),  
Lamentation (*paridēva*)
- (2) Stage of resistance = Pain (*dukkha*),  
Distress (*domanassa*)
- (3) Stage of exhaustion = Exhaustion (*upāyāsa*)

It is wonderful to note that the Buddha described the same stages in the **General Adaptation Syndrome** in the form of **grief** (*sōka*), **lamentation** (*paridēva*), **pain** (*dukkha*), **distress** (*domanassa*), and **exhaustion** (*upāyāsa*).



Stress is understood today as a complete disturbance of the body as well as mind where the body begins to change behaviour from normal to an abnormal state, which if continued too long makes the body sick leading ultimately even to death. This disturbance goes through the three stages as indicated above.

The Buddha explains the three ways in which this emotional reaction occurs:

- (1) Meeting the unpleasant (*appiyehi sampayogo*)
- (2) Parting from the pleasant (*piyehi vippayogo*)
- (3) Frustration or failure to gratify desires (*yampicchanalabhati tampi dukkhan*).

The Buddha explains further the insecurity of life by pointing out that life is not a static entity but a dynamic process of activity that begins at birth and ends at death. This activity even goes beyond death to rebirth continuing the alternation of birth and death:

Birth ( <i>jāti</i> )	Ageing
Ageing ( <i>jarā</i> )	Birth ----- Death
Death ( <i>marana</i> )	

It is important to note that the *Bodhisatta* who became the Buddha renounced his princely life and became an ascetic to solve this same problem of existence, which he came to recognize when he saw an old man, sick man and a dead corpse.

The ***Bodhisatta*** set out to solve the problem, not by seeking help in supernatural powers, or hoping to extend life to eternity. His method was to solve the problem using natural



human intelligence. He wanted to solve it by understanding the problem and its cause, and to solve it by removing the cause, which were his emotions. He also realized that he had to find the way to remove the emotions that caused the problem.

The **Buddha** did solve the problem finally by **stopping this futile and painful emotional struggle to exist** on realizing that **existence is a delusion**, which normal people are suffering from. He saw that **the human being needs to awaken** from this **dream of existence**. He discovered the **way to awaken** from this dream and showed the world the way.

### ***The Second Reality :***

#### ***The cause of suffering, which is to be eliminated***

We have already recognized that **suffering** is expressed as **grief, lamentation, pain, distress and exhaustion**. This suffering was experienced due to meeting the unpleasant **birth, ageing, sickness, and death**; parting from the pleasant **youth, health, and life**; and the inability to obtain what we desire, which is **permanent youth, permanent health, and permanent life** of the body.

**Suffering** is **birth, ageing and death** of the “self.” It is **parting** from **youth, health and life** and **meeting** of **old age, ill-health and death**. It is the **inability to have what we want**, which is **eternal youth, health and life**. We know this is possible only in the **fantasy** of **Heaven**. In addition, the inability to have what we want includes all the daily frustrations and disappointments that we experience throughout our lives.

What then is the **cause** of this **suffering**? Is it because we have a “self” that grows **old**, falls sick, and **dies**?

What is the “self” that really grows **old**, falls **sick** and **dies**?

Is it the **body** that is the “**self**” that grows, **old**, falls **sick** and **dies**?

How did this **body** become the “**self**” that grows, **old**, falls **sick** and **dies**?

Because I **personalized** the body, thinking “**this body is mine**,” it is **my “self”** (*upādāna* ).

If I did **not personalize** the body, this body will “**not be me**.”

Then the **ageing, sickness, and death** of the **body** would not be **my suffering**.

Included in the **body** are the **feelings, sensations, concepts, and perceptions**.

It is important to understand that the personalized constituents of perception are the foundation of the insecurity of life (*sankhittena pancupādānakkhanda dukkhā*). In other words, it is the notion of “self.” (*sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *mana*). The ageing, sickness, and death become a suffering only because it is connected to the self, and not otherwise. 2. Suffering also occurs when the Self is in emotional relationship with the world in the form of lust, hate, fear, and worry. 3. Suffering also arises due to insatiable desire for material gains, variety, sensual pleasure, fame, power, conflict with others, comparison with others, etc that cause suffering.

If suffering was the **sense of self** produced by **personalization** of the **impersonal emotional reaction** together with the **cognitive process of perception**, the **blind emotions** that personalize the impersonal processes **are the cause of suffering**.

Therefore it becomes easy to recognize that the root of suffering is the **emotion**. This emotion is the cause of suffering

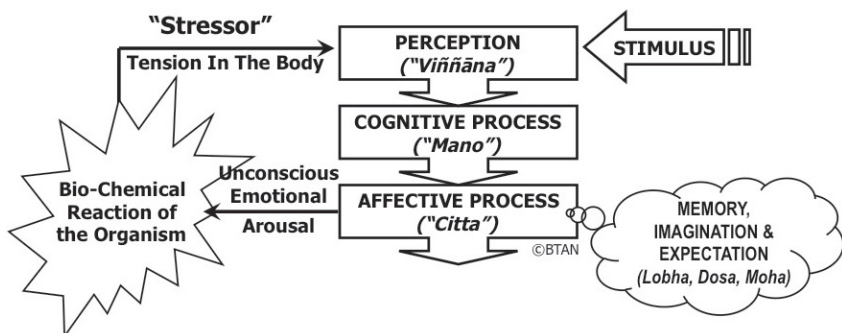
pointed out by the Buddha. The common translation of the Pali term *tanhā* as **craving** does not convey this meaning. This is why we translate *tanhā* as **emotion**.

Emotion is the **reaction of the organism to feelings** that are pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. It is when the environment **stimulates** the **senses** that these feelings arise. The data received through the five senses are carried to the **brain where thinking occurs**, resulting in the **interpretation** of circumstances. This interpretation results in the **arousal of emotions**. The emotions aroused depend on the **interpretation**. This interpretation creates a **subjective “self”** and an **objective “other,”** and an **emotional relationship** occurs between the “self” and the “other.” This emotional relationship creates an **emotional bond of existence** in relationship. This starts the **struggle to keep on existing forever**, quite **ignorant of the futility** and **painfulness** of the struggle. This **blind desire** for existence **clashes** with the **reality of non-existence**, resulting in **suffering**.

It is the **blind struggle for existence** (*bhava-tanhā*) that is the cause of suffering. **Only a struggle continues** but there is no real existence. What exists is only an **emotional delusion of existence**.

**Blind Emotions** (*tanhā*) are of three types:

- (1) Desire for pleasant sensations (*lobha*) – (*kāma-tanhā*)
- (2) Hatred of unpleasant sensations (*dosa*) – (*vibhava-tanhā*)
- (3) The notion of existence of neutral sensations (*moha*) – (*bhava-tanhā*).



Emotional Chain Reaction

The emotional reaction **dichotomizes** the experience into two distinct parts: the **subjective** and the **objective**. The subjective is **personalized as "mine,"** the **objective** is **alienated** and regarded as part of an **external world**. The subjective is personalized as "This is **mine**, this is **me**, this is **I**, and this is **myself**" (*etam mama, eso'hamasmi, eso me attāti*). This brings about the concept "**I**," that **becomes** the "**self**." But this "**self**" has to be an **existing entity**. Then the question arises, "**what entity** do we refer to as the "**I**" or "**self**?" Then it is the **body** that **occupies space and time** that is identified as the "**self**." It is also the **body** that **perceives** an **object**, and reacts emotionally to it. The **body** then becomes the "**self**" (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*). It is the **body** that other people can see as "**me**," and call my **name**, and even take the **photograph as the image of "me"**.

To personalize the body is to personalize the cognitive and affective processes, which begins quite unconsciously and this begins the **suffering** and **insecurity of life**. In short, the personalization of the process of perception is suffering (*sankhittena pancupādānakkhanda dukkhā*).

When the **body** has become the “**self**,” the “self” (*atta*) **occupies space and time** and **exists**. If it occupies time it has a **past, present, and future**.

Then the **past** of the body is the **birth** (*jāti*) of the body, the **future** of the body is the **death** (*marana*) of the body, and the **present** of the body is **ageing** (*jarā*) of the body. This means “I” am **born, age, and die**. In other words, when I come into **existence**, I **suffer**. I **suffer** because I come into **existence**. In other words, to **exist** is to **suffer**.

When I realize, however, that I **do not really exist** all **suffering comes to an end**.

### ***The Third Reality : Realization of the end of suffering***

If suffering **began unconsciously**, it can **end** only by **becoming conscious** of the process of cognition and affection. That is by **becoming conscious of the Antecedental Concurrence** (*paṭicca samuppāda*). The **process of cognition and affection creates the “world” and the “self.”** This “world” and the “self” are **unstable**. What is unstable is **insecure**. What is insecure is not as I want. What is not as I want is **not under my power**. What is **not under my power** is **not mine**. What is **not mine** cannot be **me**. What cannot be **me** cannot be my **self**. “What is **not mine**, is **not me, not my self**” (*netam mama, neso'hamasmi, neso me attāti*). What is not mine **should be discarded**.

This realization brings about the paradigm shift from existence to experience, which results in **dispassion**. Dispassion results in **emancipation** or **freedom from suffering** (*vimutti*). This results in the **imperturbable serenity** of mind (*Nibbāna*).

When the cognitive and affective processes are fully comprehended and the paradigm shift has occurred both intellectually as well as emotionally, **suffering comes to an end.**

This is **eradication** of the **delusion of self**, or **Awakening** from the **Dream of Existence.**

This means, the **emotional reaction** was the cause of suffering. The way to end suffering was the **removal of the cause.** The way to **remove** the **emotional reaction** was to **change** the **way we interpret our circumstances.** How do we change this **cognitive interpretation of circumstances?** It is to change from **existential thinking** to **experiential thinking.** **Existential thinking** carries a **subjective “I”** and an **objective “other”** resulting in an **emotional relationship** between the **“I”** and the **“other,”** ending in **suffering.** The **solution** is a **paradigm shift** from **existential thinking** to **experiential thinking.** **Experiential thinking** is to **realize** that there is **no real subject or object** but only an **impersonal experience.**

### ***The Fourth Reality :***

#### ***Developing the Supernormal Eight-fold Way***

This is the **medial path** between **expressing** the emotions and **suppressing** or **repressing** the emotions. Every emotional arousal involves a disturbance of the body and mind. The body becomes tensed and uncomfortable while the mind is unhappy. It is to overcome this discomfort and unhappiness that we unconsciously begin to release the tension in action to obtain what is desired, to get rid of what is hated or to run away from what is feared. What the Buddha points out is that **it is possible to learn to consciously relax the tension, instead of unconsciously releasing the tension in action.** This is the **medial way** that eliminates the discomfort and unhappiness **without**

**suppression or repression.** This **avoids** the **two extremes** of **expression** and **suppression** by means of the **medial path** of **relaxation of body** and **calmness of mind**.

This medial path begins with the proper **understanding** of **the problem and its solution** which is the **Harmonious Perspective**. Having understood the need for the elimination of emotions through the Harmonious Perspective one begins a **reorientation** of one's life by **changing the goal** of life to **tranquility of mind**. This results in calmness of behaviour, expressed in speech, actions and life style. Having done so, one **begins to purify the mind** through the **Harmonious Exercise**, which ends in beginning to tread the Seven Steps to Awakening. This **results in the paradigm shift** that **awakens one from the dream of existence**. Thus **the mind** is liberated (*vimutti*) from all emotional disturbances and suffering, resulting in the **imperturbable serenity**, *NIBBĀNA*. This medial path, therefore, is the **Supernormal Eightfold Way**.

The far reaching need to focus on the **Fourfold Supernormal Reality** (*Cattāri Ariya Saccāni*) is very clearly pointed out in the Sabbasava Sutta:

“The ordinary person uneducated in the *Dhamma* thinks, ‘Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? In what form did I exist in the past? From what form to what form did I change in the past? Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? In what form will I exist in the future? From what form to what form will I change in the future? Do I exist now? In what form do I exist now? From what form did I come to this form? To what form will I go from this form? By thinking in this way, one arrives at one of six views:

- (1) I have a “self.”
- (2) I have no “self.”
- (3) I perceive a “self” with “Self.”

- (4) I perceive “not self” with “Self.”
- (5) I perceive “Self” with “not self.”
- (6) It is this “self” of mine that thinks, feels, speaks, acts, and experiences the consequences of good and bad acts. This “self” of mine is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, it will endure as long as eternity.

This set of speculative views is called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views. Fettered by this fetter of views, the uneducated ordinary person is not freed from birth, ageing, death, grief, lamentation, pain, depression, and exhaustion. He is not freed from suffering I say.

The supernormal individual who is well educated and skilled in the *Dhamma* and discipline understands how to think, what to think, and what not to think, and so he thinks:

- (1) This is suffering
- (2) This is the cause of suffering
- (3) This is the cessation of suffering
- (4) This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

When he begins to think wisely in this way, three fetters are broken in him:

- (1) Personality perspective (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*)
- (2) Cognitive dissonance (*vicikiccā*)
- (3) Heteronomous morality (*sīlabbata parāmāsa*).

The modern traditional way of explaining the **Antecedental Concurrence** (*paṭicca samuppāda*) is based on the notion of “**karma and rebirth,**” and it appears to be an explanation of **how rebirth takes place, and how it can be stopped.** This is because the main problem for the modern day Buddhist is: “**How can we stop this process of rebirth?**” In other



words, rebirth is the problem. **Rebirth is suffering** and **end of rebirth** is the **end of suffering**. Thus it is claimed that **Nirvana** is the **stopping of rebirth**.

The fact that this is not the problem is indicated in the following quotation from the Buddha:

Numerous lives in saṃsāra,  
I ran in pursuit of the Creator;

*Anekajātisansāraṇ –  
sandhāvissaṇ anibbisaṇ*

And never did I ever meet him,  
So painful is repeated birth.

*Gahakārakaṇ gavesanto –  
dukkha jāti punappunaṇ.*

O! Creator now I saw you,  
No more will you create again;

*Gahakāraka diṭṭho' si –  
puna gehaṇ na kāhasi*

Your supports are all destroyed,  
Your structure is fully dismantled;

*Sabbe te phāsukā bhaggā –  
gahakūṭaṇ visaṅkhitaṇ*

My mind has stopped creating  
the emotional urge has ceased.

*Visaṅkhāragataṇ cittaṇ –  
tanhānaṇ khayamajjhati.*

**(Dhammapada verses 153 & 154)**

The first verse is a description of his experience before awakening from the **dream of existence**. He was thinking in an **existential** way, searching for the Creator. Then he got into **experiential thinking** and saw how his own mental process of perception was the creator of the world. In other words, he saw the **Antecedental Concurrence** (*paṭicca samuppāda*). When he saw from this different angle of vision, he was free from all suffering. This was the **paradigm shift**.

## CHAPTER VIII

# Life is an Unforeseen Error of Nature

### *Beginning of life*

From a modern scientific point of view, what we call **life** is only an **unconscious electro-chemical activity** that begins due to the presence of the necessary conditions, and ends due to the absence of the necessary conditions. Each necessary condition is also dependent on other necessary conditions without an ultimate beginning.

This dynamic process of electrochemical activity follows the **natural law of determinism**, which means that every activity is determined by the presence of the necessary conditions. Life began when a special kind of molecule came into being due to presence of the necessary conditions. This molecule had a special ability to absorb atoms from the surroundings and produce molecules of its own kind. This **self-replicating molecule** was not the product of a Supernatural Creator either God or Devil. It came into being only due to the presence of the necessary conditions.

This means, that the electrochemical process called **life** began automatically, based on the natural law of determinism. New molecules thus formed, however, began to break down when some necessary conditions were absent. Therefore two processes continued at the same time: a building up process (anabolism) and a breaking down process (catabolism), collectively known as “metabolism.” When the building up process was faster than the breaking down process, the net result was growth. When the breaking down process was faster than the building up process, the net result was decay, leading ultimately to death. The continuity of these two processes

of growth and decay, is what we call **life**. It was this process of growth and decay that appeared to Charles Darwin as an unconscious **struggle for existence**.

As conditions in the environment changed, however, the environment itself likewise changed, and was no longer favourable for this struggle to continue. Though most molecules were destroyed, a few molecules somehow were able to survive at least for some time, despite the hardships. This survival became possible only through an adaptation to the changing environment, in some way. This was what made Darwin speak of the **survival of the fittest**, though it was only a temporary survival, because every integration was subject to disintegration when even one necessary condition was absent. All these facts however boil down to one single fact that this unconscious struggle was a **mission impossible**. It was a struggle to exist where **existence was not possible**, because life is only a **dynamic process of activity**, rather than a **static "existence."** **Existence** is a **static concept** in a **dynamic reality**.

Among the early scientific theories of how the first self-replicating molecule came into existence was the "primordial soup," where simple molecules mixed together in a broth that was regularly energised by ultraviolet light and electric storms. Scientists have long believed RNA molecules were more likely to be the origin of life than DNA. Now they think there must have been a simpler molecule that spawned RNA.

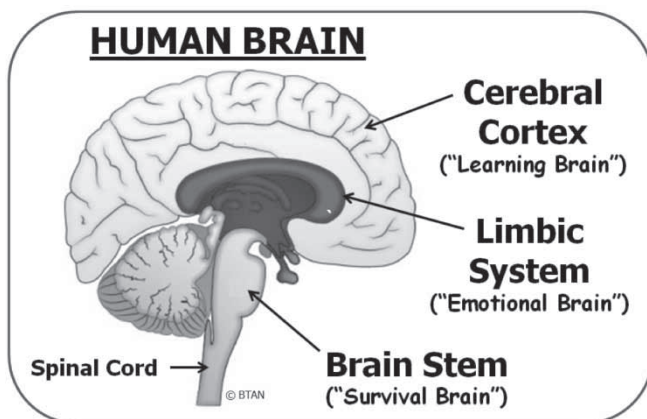
This **unconscious chemical activity** called **life**, though it started with one self-replicating molecule, began to produce several molecules of the same kind, and each new molecule began to create a series of other molecules, and many such series or chains of molecules came into being. Then these molecules began to combine to form cells, and cells combined to form tissues, tissues combined to form organs, organs

combined to form systems, and systems combined to form organisms. That was how the molecules evolved to produce organisms such as plants and animals. It was this unconscious electro-chemical activity that developed into what is today called the **biochemical** process of **evolution**. Charles Darwin saw this unconscious biological activity as a struggle for existence. This struggle though unconscious, and not wilfully done, was a **mission impossible**. It was a **futile struggle** because **real existence** was not a **possibility**. Existence was a **static concept** in a **dynamic reality**. In other words, existence is a **conceptual fallacy** or a **delusion**.

### ***Evolution of the human brain***

When this impossible struggle for existence continued, the environment was not always favourable to this struggle. When the environmental conditions changed, many organisms died but a few were able to survive by adapting to the environmental conditions. Because the adaptation was some kind of change in the organism, the organisms began to change in structure and function in adapting to environmental conditions. This changing evolutionary process therefore began to develop organisms with differences in structure and function. As a result of this adaptation many different species of organisms evolved, with a variety of structures and functions befitting a variety of environmental conditions. They also began to develop what are called systems, where several organs combined to deal with a problem in the environment. As conditions in the environment became more and more challenging, the systems became correspondingly more and more complex. As systems became complex, they began to develop **cardiovascular systems** that circulated blood, and even **nervous systems** that carried messages like telephone wires. As the nervous systems began

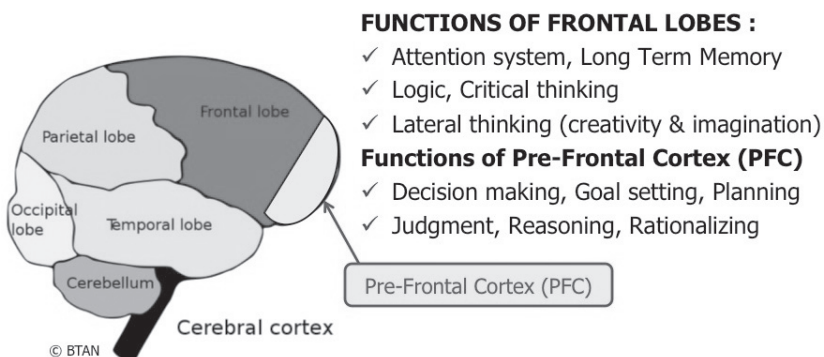
to develop more complex structures and functions, it led to the development of a **brain**. The brain began to develop from a primitive structure called the **brain stem** which regulates basic life functions such as respiration, digestion, blood circulation, and metabolism – these are the autonomous functions that kept the organism alive and healthy.



As conditions in the environment became more and more challenging, the brain gradually began to evolve further and so aid the survival of the species. This resulted in the development of another part of the brain called the **limbic system** that helped in starting an emotional reaction in response to stimulation by the environment. It is this reaction that we now call **emotional arousal**. The Limbic System is the **emotional command center** of the organism, which is responsible for regulating differences in the mood or temper such as calmness and excitement. Within the **Limbic System** is a structure known as the **Amygdala** which is responsible for scanning the environment through the sense organs, to detect signs of potential threats and danger to the organism. When aroused, the Amygdala triggers the **fight or flight reaction**, to protect the organism from harm.

It is this reaction that is commonly called **stress** today, which if prolonged can develop into the **general adaptation syndrome**, which turns **stress** into **distress**.

As the brain evolved further, higher forms of organisms such as mammals evolved, with the formation of the **Cerebrum** which contained the **Cerebral Cortex**, or **Neo-cortex** that is responsible for **thinking**. As evolution progressed further the Cerebrum developed into two hemispheres: left and right. Within these two hemispheres of the Cerebral Cortex came four major pairs of lobes: frontal lobes, temporal lobes, occipital lobes, and parietal lobes. In this way the human brain developed with a **Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC)** in the frontal lobes, which equipped the human being with highly advanced and sophisticated cognitive functions such as planning, goal setting, decision making, judgment, reasoning, rationalization and speech.



### ***Paradoxical Roles of the Amygdala***

While the Amygdala evolved to protect the organism from threats and danger by triggering the fight or flight reaction, recent research from neuroscience revealed that the Amygdala is also similarly aroused and reactive when the organism reacts

emotionally to sensual pleasures and pain. Therefore the Amygdala holds the paradoxical roles of the “body guard” as well as the “terrorist” in the brain. When the Amygdala is aroused, it shuts down the judgment areas of the brain, the Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC), rendering the organism incapable of voluntarily regulating emotions and emotional reactions to sensual pleasures and pain. According to Dr. Joseph Ledoux, the leading neuroscientist in research on the Amygdala, the present level of evolution of the human brain is such that there are very strong neural connections from the Amygdala leading to the PFC, whereas the neural connections from the PFC going back to the Amygdala are weak and inadequate. This means humans are naturally weak in voluntary regulation of emotional reactions.

### ***The impersonality of consciousness***

With the development of these special parts of the brain came the activity called **consciousness**. Thus came into being the species of organism called the **Human Being**, the most advanced and sophisticated species that has the most advanced cognitive capacity and functions. It is this species that became aware of an environment called the “**world**,” and also became aware of a “**self**” that **exists** in the world.

In other words, it is this **impersonal** electrochemical activity called **consciousness** that has given rise to an awareness of an **objective “world,”** and a **subjective “self.”** It is this **consciousness** that has given rise to an **experience** which has two parts: a **subjective** and an **objective**. The “**world**” that we are aware of is an **objective experience**. The “**self**” that we are aware of is a **subjective experience**. The **self** is the result of **personalization** of the subjective experience.



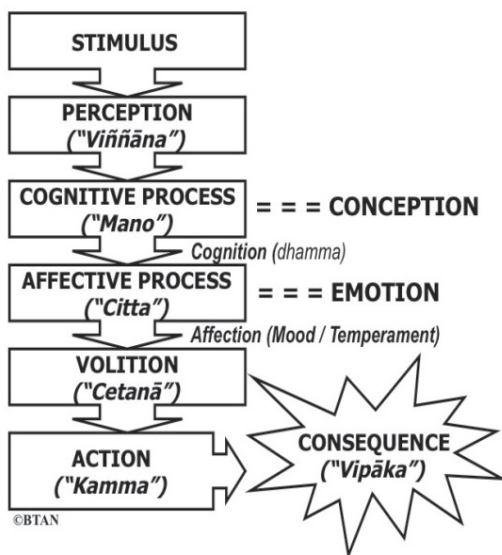
This means the “**self**,” being a product of the subjective process called consciousness, does not **exist** apart from the process of consciousness. Therefore it is an appearance rather than a reality. The **world** that we are aware of is also a product of the process of consciousness. It too is a mere appearance. In other words, both the **world** and the **self** are subjective **experiences** rather than objective **existences** that stand apart from **the subjective experience**. In other words, the “**self**” and the “**world**,” though they are supposed to **exist**, do not really exist by themselves. If this is so, the **self** and the **world** are mere **delusions**.

If this process called Life began as an **unconscious electrochemical activity** of a self-replicating **molecule**, it is this unconscious electrochemical activity that produced the **consciousness**. It is this **consciousness** that produced the **self** and the **world** that we are aware of. If this **self** and the **world** do not **exist** apart from consciousness, it means neither the **self**, nor the **world** has a real objective **existence**.

Although our **thinking faculty** (cognition = *mano*) may be aware of this fallacy, our emotions (**affective** = *citta*) are unaware. It is our blind emotions that desire existence, but our reason is aware that this blind desire clashes with the reality of non-existence. This **clash** between **blind desire** and **reality** leads to **frustration**. It is this frustration that we call **suffering**, or the **insecurity of life**.

### ***The five constituents of personality (Pancupādānakkhanda)***

The Pali term *upādāna* is translated here as **personalization** and not as **clinging** or **grasping** because the meaning conveyed by the term *upādāna* is **personalization**, which is to regard something as **mine, me, or myself** (*etaṃ mama, eso hamasmī, eso me attāti*).



The personality is created by personalizing the constituents (*khanda*) as “mine” or “myself.”

The term *khanda* is translated as **constituent** and not as **aggregate** because the term *khanda* refers to the **constituents** that constitutes the **personality**.

An effort has been made here to convey the meaning of the **statement** in relation to the meaning of the **words**.

**Personality** is the product of personalization of the constituents of personality. The constituents of the personality, however, are **not the constituents of the body** as some tend to think. It is the **constituents of the subjective process of perception** that we tend to personalize and regard as “**my self**.” It is the **process of perception** that the Buddha analysed as **mental image** (*rūpa*), **feeling** (*vedanā*), **sensation** (*saññā*), **construction** (*sankhāra*) and **perception** (*viññāna*). Therefore it is the constituents of the process of perception, which are personalized to form the personality, or “self.” To explain this further, we need to go into a discussion of what is called an experience.

## ***What is experience?***

First let us see ourselves as organisms in an environment. The organism is a biophysical energy system very much like a machine. There are five senses in the body consisting of the eyes, ears, the nose, tongue and the entire body. When this organism is placed in an environment, the senses are stimulated by the environment, and the organism reacts to the stimulus. **Perception** is the reaction of the organism to stimulation of the senses, by the environment. An **experience** is a product of this process of perception.

The reaction of the organism is a **chain reaction** that takes the form of **a series of reactions**. The first reaction is **perception** such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. What is perceived is carried to the brain by nerves, and the thinking part of the brain, called the cerebral cortex, or neocortex, gives meaning to what is perceived by the senses. This meaning is a **concept** about the **percept**. This giving meaning or **conception** is called **cognition**.

According to the meaning given by the **process of cognition**, an **emotion** is aroused, which is a reaction of the organism to the **cognition**, in the form of a desire, hatred, fear, or worry. According to the emotion aroused, an **action** results: to obtain what is desired, to get rid of what is hated, to run away from what is feared, etc. This **action** along with the **emotion** aroused is called *kamma*. Before this **action** (*kamma*) takes place, the human being has the ability to delay this action, to get sufficient time to decide what to do in this given situation, and is able to stop the emotional action or go on with it. It is this decision that is called *cetanā* which is the real *kamma*. If the decision is to act emotionally, it becomes a **bad action** (*akusala kamma*), but if the decision is to act rationally, it becomes a **good action** (*kusala kamma*). This decision to act rationally is

due the **interference** of the **emotional** or **affective** process by the **rational** or **cognitive** process.

### ***Mind, what it is***

What we call the mind is not an entity separate from the body, but an activity of the body. Therefore this chain reaction, consisting of perception, conception, emotion, and action are such activities of the body, and not separate entities. Although they are activities of the body, there is a tendency to experience these activities as activities of a subjective entity called the **mind** or **self** that exists apart from the body. What is subjectively experienced, is personalized as “mine” or “myself.” What is objectively experienced is regarded as a thing that exists outside us. What is commonly regarded as “myself” therefore is not an entity separate from the body, but only an activity of the body.

It is this chain reaction or process of perception, conception, and emotion that we personalize as “mine” or “myself.” This is how we build the concept of “self.” This “self” building process, however, is not purely rational but rather to a great extent emotional.

When one becomes aware of the process of perception through **apperception**, however, one becomes aware of how the process of perception takes place. This means one becomes aware of the **five constituents of the process of perception**. These five constituents in the process of perception have been described by the Buddha as *pancupādānakkhanda*, which means the **five constituents of personality**.

The term *khanda* is generally translated as aggregate, which does not carry the necessary meaning, which is constituent. The term *upādāna* (*upa* = inside *ādāna* = taking) is

to regard as “mine,” or to **personalize**. Because our eyes work like a movie camera continuously taking a series of pictures, the five stages in the process of perception are a series of activities constituting the process of perception.

This is why they are called the five constituents of the Process of Perception. These five constituents are as follows:

- (1) Mental Image (*rūpa*)
- (2) Feeling (*vedanā*)
- (3) Sensation (*saññā*)
- (4) Construction (*sankhāra*)
- (5) Perception (*viññāna*)

In speaking of the sense of sight, the Buddha spoke of the **image** (*rūpa*) perceived first. Then he spoke of the **building blocks** of the image as the **feelings** (*vedanā*) and the **sensations** (*saññā*). Next he spoke of the process of **construction** (*sankhāra*). Finally he spoke of the **completion** of the five stages in the process as **perception** (*viññāna*) in which we **distinguish** between one object and another and their **relationship**.

It is when these constituents of the process of perception are **personalized** (*upādāna*) that the idea of “self” comes into being. To personalize is to say “**this is mine.**” All that is personalized as “mine” becomes the “self.” **Personality** therefore is the product of personalization of the constituents of perception. This personality however is not a rational concept but an emotional feeling.

Take for instance the sense of sight. If we see something, we say “I see,” but where is the “I” that sees? Is it the process of perception that we refer to as “I”? The “I” is a feeling rather than an actual object perceived. If we look for an object, the only object to be seen is the **body** that occupies space and time. This is the meaning of **My Body Perspective** (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*).

The process of perception takes the form of the **body**. The body is personalized as, “**this is mine**” or “**I perceive.**” Yet the body is not something we objectively see, other than just the visible hands, legs, abdomen or image in a mirror. The body that we think of is only a mental image constructed in the mind. The body that we see as “**my self**” is only a mental image, very different from what other people see as “**me.**” This is why when “I” see a picture of “myself” taken by someone, it looks very different from what “I” think “I am.” It is by personalizing the **body** in the form of a **mental image** that the **notion of personality** or “**self**” comes into being.

It is interesting to note that Sigmund Freud divided the personality into three parts: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *super ego*. The *id* referred to the emotions, and the *ego* referred to reason. The *super ego* was the conscience. He found the *id* coming in conflict with the *ego*, and even with the *super ego*. He found it difficult to resolve the conflict between blind emotions and the rational intellect. The emotional *id* could not be eradicated, Freud thought, because they were instincts that were built into the system. Therefore his partial solution was through sublimation, which was to redirect the energy of the emotions along socially acceptable channels. He also spoke of the discontent of civilization, because to be civilized is to consciously suppress lust and hate, which is to experience frustration and disappointment.

The Buddha was aware of this conflict, although he did not use the same terminology. It is important to know that the Buddha pointed out that the difficulty in resolving the conflict was due to **personalization of the *id*, *ego*, and *super ego***. He spoke of **four kinds of personalization** (*upādāna*).

- (1) personalization of **emotion** (*kāma upādāna*) = **id**
- (2) personalization of **reasoning** (*diṭṭhi upādāna*) = **ego**
- (3) personalization of **morals** (*sīlabbata upādāna*) = **super ego**
- (4) personalization of **notion of self** (*attavāda upādāna*) = **personality**.

The Buddha pointed out that the conflict can be resolved only by undoing the personalization (*anupādāna*) of the emotion (*id*), the reasoning (*ego*), and the morals (*super ego*). The Buddha took these activities to be impersonal processes dependent on conditions, while Freud took them to be parts of the personality. It is due to personalization that the resolution of the conflict became difficult for Freud. It was by un-personalization (*anupādāna*) that the Buddha was able to resolve the conflict. It is important to distinguish this **un-personalization** from the depersonalization disorder or neurosis referred to in psychiatry.

## CHAPTER IX

# Wonderful Achievement of the Buddha Awakening from the dream of existence

### *The beginning*

This brings us to a discussion of how the Buddha awakened from the dream of existence. He started as a *Bodhisatta* learning to sacrifice everything he thought he had, including his own body and mind. In one lifetime he saw a tigress trying to eat her cubs out of hunger. He sacrificed his own body to the tigress and



thus saved the cubs. Another time he was born as a king and he sacrificed all his property, his palace, his children and even his wife, and went into the forest to live there. Finally he was born in the Heaven of Contentment (*Tusita*) as the King of that Heaven (*Santutthi*) waiting till the time was ready for him to become a Buddha.

When the time was ripe, he was born into a royal family as Prince Siddhatta. From the time he was born he was pampered by the attendants till one day during a ploughing ceremony he experienced the first solitude, when the attendants were busy attending to the ceremony. That was the time he entered the first ecstasy (*jhāna*) in this new life as a Prince. We have explained what an ecstasy was. It was standing out of the sensual world. When he reached the age of 16 his father got him married against his wishes. After his marriage he was not



interested in the common sensual pleasures of married life. So he lived married for 13 years till the age of 29, till he decided to renounce the worldly (mundane) life and enter a spiritual (supra mundane) life.

### ***The Great Renunciation***

His decision to renounce occurred when he saw an old man, a sick man and a corpse. He became aware of the realities of life. He realized that every plant, animal, and human being that is born must grow old, fall sick and die. Everything in the world, even inanimate things, must grow old, fall sick, and die. Attachment to them is the cause of all suffering. Normal human beings, though aware of this fact, still keep seeking these evanescent things and suffer. When he saw a renounced person, he thought: “Here is one man who does the opposite. That is the right thing to do. I will do the same.” So he gave up his princely life, his loving father and his loving aunt who mothered him, his beautiful wife, his newly born child, and even his future as a king or emperor, and withdrew into the forest, to live an ascetic life, learning meditation from well-known meditation masters of the time. Before he left the family, however, he did produce a child, because he didn’t want to leave the wife alone and unhappy.

His main purpose in life was to **conquer the blind emotions** and solve **the problem of existence**, which is **death or mortality** itself. We are caught up in a trap, where blind emotions are carrying us unconsciously towards an inevitable, unpredictable death that is hanging over our head, like the sword of Damocles, liable to fall and crush us into pieces at any time. It is this same problem that all religions (monotheistic, polytheistic or humanistic) are attempting to solve in their own way.

Most religions appear to be escapes from reality into a fantasy, but Prince Siddhatta gave up the theistic approach and took up a humanistic approach to solve the problem, using human intelligence. He saw that the obstacle that prevented him from using the human intelligence was human emotions. So he removed all emotional disturbances from his system by learning to practice tranquillity by letting go. This helped him to change his thinking.

### ***Asceticism***

He practiced tranquillity to the highest level possible. At first he learned this from his meditation teachers but he could not reach the highest point, because the teachers had not reached the highest point. So he decided to practice asceticism with five ascetics. He even stopped eating till he became like a skeleton. Then he tried to stop breathing. This resulted in his fainting, when some thought he was dead. When, however, he woke up, he thought: "All these days I have been trying to learn from others and do what other people did. Now I will go my own way."

He started to eat to strengthen his body and mind. He recalled how as a child he had entered the first ecstasy automatically by letting go of everything. He thought: "This is what I will do now. I will let go, give up everything." This way he gave up all the five hindrances, lust, hate, lethargy, worry, and indecision.

This resulted in the appearance of the five constituents of ecstasy:

### Entering Ecstasy

- (1) The first ecstasy: with inquiry, inference, cognitive satisfaction, comfort, and stillness of mind.
- (2) Then the second ecstasy: with cognitive satisfaction, comfort, and stillness of mind.
- (3) Then the third ecstasy: with comfort and stillness of mind.
- (4) Then the fourth ecstasy: with stillness of mind leading to apperception (*upekkhā*).

The four jhānas lead to the tranquility of the affective and the cognitive processes.

1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Jhāna</i>	Inference ( <i>vitakka</i> )	Inquiry ( <i>vicāra</i> )	Cognitive Satisfaction ( <i>pīti</i> )	Comfort ( <i>sukha</i> )	Stillness of Mind ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>Jhāna</i>	→	↓	Cognitive Satisfaction ( <i>pīti</i> )	Comfort ( <i>sukha</i> )	Stillness of Mind ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Jhāna</i>			→	Comfort ( <i>sukha</i> )	Stillness of Mind ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>Jhāna</i>			↓	→	Stillness of Mind ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )

Then he began to enter the deepened cognitive ecstasies:

- (1) The realm of infinite space
- (2) The realm of infinite perception
- (3) The realm of nothingness
- (4) The realm of neither sensation nor no sensation
- (5) The cessation of sensation and feeling.

This last state was the absolute unconsciousness (*avijjā*), where the consciousness was absent though the body was alive. It was when he woke up from this state that he began to become aware of the mental process by which the “world” that we are aware of, the “self” we are aware of, and the “suffering” we are aware of, came into being. All this came out of the process of perception, conception, cognition, and affection. These psychophysical activities did not arise due to the commandments of a supernatural Creator, but only because of the presence of the necessary conditions.

This experience made him realize that the mind is not an entity separate from the body, but an activity of the body, which when perceived subjectively appears to be mental and when observed objectively appears to be physical. In other words, experience is dichotomized into a subjective and an objective. He also saw that the cognitive process creates the objective “world,” and the affective emotional process creates the subjective “self,” and the resulting suffering.

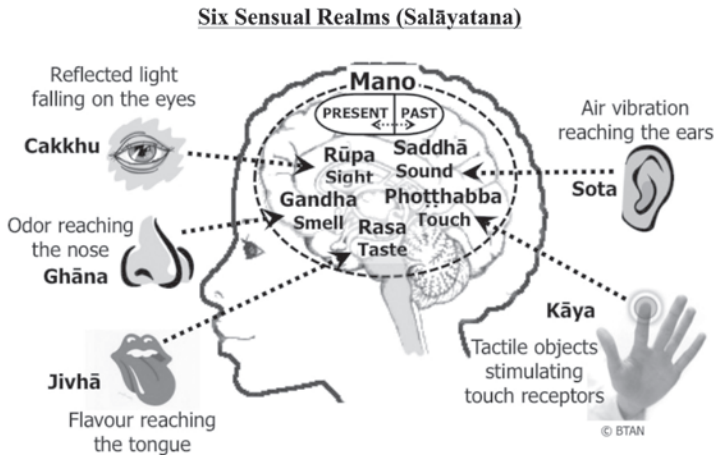
### ***How the objective process creates the world***

Environmental activities stimulate the five sense organs in the following manner:

We start with the assumption: **organism (A)** is in the **environment (B)**. Yet the organism and environment are products of the process of perception, which needs A & B to start with. The organism contains the **body**, the **five senses**, and the **brain**.

- EYE: is stimulated by light in the environment coming in the form of electromagnetic waves
- EAR: is stimulated by sound waves coming in the form of movements in the air

- NOSE: is stimulated by odorant molecules touching the olfactory bulb inside the nose
- TONGUE: is stimulated by flavour molecules touching gustatory receptors in the taste buds
- BODY: is stimulated by Touch: as pressure, temperature, and vibration of tactile objects



If we consider the sense of sight, what is perceived by the eye is only a visual image (*rūpa*). The image is produced when the body reacts to the stimulus and so experiences a feeling (*vedanā*) and a sensation (*saññā*). Sensation (*saññā*) refers to the “colour,” and feeling (*vedanā*) refers to the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the colour.

In the case of hearing, sensation (*saññā*) refers to the nature of the sound, and feeling (*vedanā*) refers to the pleasantness or unpleasantness felt in the ear.

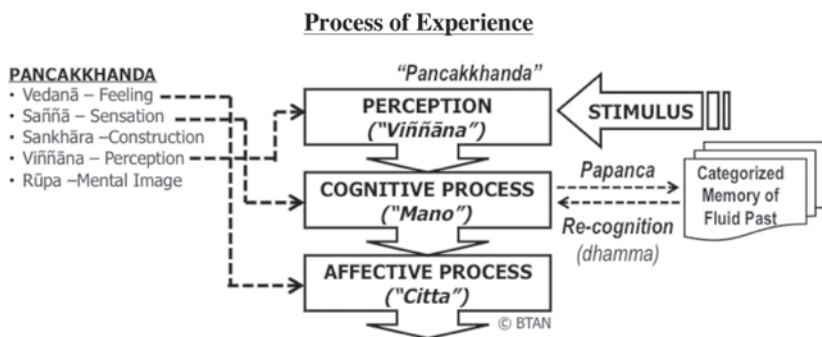
Sensation (*saññā*) is always accompanied by feeling (*vedanā*) and so they are inseparable. Sensation and the feeling are reactions of the organism to stimulation by the environment.

Sensation and feeling become the raw material used for the construction of mental images by the thinking part of the brain.

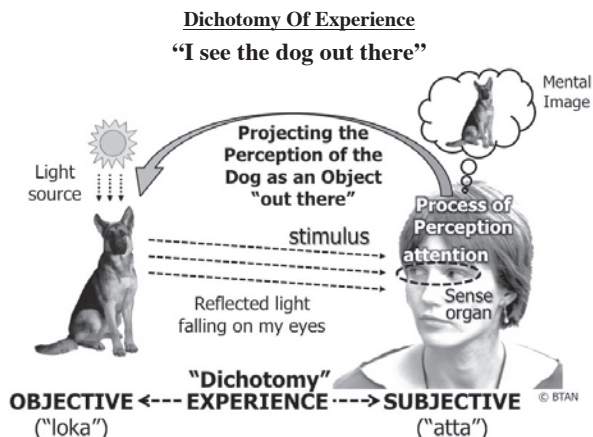
This construction process (*sankhāra*) is a mental activity. The result of this activity of construction is the formation of the mental images, which are perceived (*viññāna*). From moment to moment, every mental image (*rūpa*) that arises fades away to be replaced by another mental image that arises. This happens in a continuous manner, making us feel the continuity to be seen as a static existence.

Since a multiplicity of objects are present in a complex mental image, a **differentiation** between one object and another becomes necessary in the process of **perception** (*viññāna*).

All sense organs continuously feed mental images to the brain and the brain makes use of these images and forms concepts about the environment. In the formation of concepts, the brain uses past experiences. In doing so it puts images into categories (*papañceti*), and that is how we recognize and identify objects. We react emotionally according to the way we identify objects.



It is this reaction that dichotomizes the experience perceived into a subjective and objective. The subjective is personalized and the objective is alienated, giving rise to the notion of being **Self** (*atta*) in the **World** (*loka*) – “**Existential Thinking**” (*Bhava*).



This is how we create the **world** that we are aware of and the **self** that lives in the world. Then an **emotional relationship** develops between the self and the world. This relationship begins the **suffering** due to meeting and parting.

When we examine the formula laid down by the Buddha as the Concurrence of Antecedents, we find that it begins with **unconsciousness**. This means the mental process of creation of objects begins from a state of unconsciousness as experienced by the Buddha. The Building process begins with **feeling and sensation** (*vedanā* and *saññā*). As one goes through the cognitive ecstasies backwards, one comes to the fourth affective ecstasy and from there to (the third affective ecstasy where **breathing** begins. It is only at the first ecstasy that **conceptual thinking** (*vitakka vicāra*) begins. The Buddha pointed out that construction is of three kinds:

- (1) Mental Construction (*Citta Sankhāra*): feeling and sensation (*vedanā-saññā*)
- (2) Verbal Construction (*Vacī Sankhāra*): inquiry and inference (*vitakka-vicāra*)
- (3) Physical Construction (*Kāya Sankhāra*): breathing in and out (*assāsa-passāsa*).

Mental objects are constructed by these three processes. The feelings and sensations are like the bricks that build a wall. The object is built using questions and answers such as: What is this? This is a tree, or this is a dog, or this is a man. The physical energy for this activity of construction is obtained from the breathing. The construction ends up in **perception** (*viññāna*).

#### **PANCAKKHANDA**

The 5 Constituents of the Process of Perception

1. Vedanā – Feeling
2. Saññā – Sensation
3. Sankhāra – Mental Construction
4. Viññāna – Perception
5. Rūpa – Mental Image



What is perceived is the object in the form of an **image** (*rūpa*), and the **name** (*nāma*) that identifies the object. In this same way the five senses go into action individually and collectively to form images with identities. Whatever information is obtained through sensory perception is transferred to the brain where thinking occurs to give meaning to what is perceived. Thus the **sensory world** (*salāyatana*) is created. With the creation of the sensory world, the process of **cognition** (*phassa*) is completed.



## ***How the affective process creates the “self”***

From here on the affective process begins. Once the cognitive process gets started, the feelings become ready for action. The three kinds of **feelings** (*vedanā*): pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral, become targets to which **emotional reactions** (*tanhā*) are fired. At the beginning during the cognitive process the experience was only objective and single. Now with the coming of the **emotional reaction** (*tanhā*), the experience of perception is dichotomized into a **subjective** and an **objective**. The object perceived becomes the objective, and the emotional reaction and the process of perception becomes the subjective.

When this happens the subjective part is **personalized** (*upādāna*) as “mine.” What is personalized turns into the personality, the “self.” The personality is created by the **emotional reaction** (*tanhā*). The object is externalized as “other.” When the question arises: What are we referring to as the “self?” The only answer is the **body** that occupies space and time. Thus begins the **“I am the body’ perspective”** (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*).

When the body has become the “self,” I have a past, present and future. The past of the body is **birth**, the future of the body is **death**. The present of the body is **ageing**. With this comes meeting the unpleasant **ageing, sickness, and death**, and parting from the pleasant **youth, health, and life**. Not getting what one desires: eternal youth, health, life. This ends with **grief, lamentation, pain, distress, and exhaustion**.

## ***Awakening***

Here ends the **Concurrence of Antecedents** (*paṭicca samuppāda*). When this is reflected on, one begins **to see how things come to be**. This way of thinking is called **thinking genetically** (*yoniso manasikāra*). This thinking brings about the **paradigm shift** from **personal existence** to **impersonal experience**. This results in **awakening** from the **dream of existence**, ending in the **imperturbable serenity – NIRVANA**.

## CHAPTER X

### A Symbolic Presentation of Buddha

Hinduism has not totally rejected Buddhism. It has absorbed Buddhism while preserving their favourite dogmas. It was Shankaracharya who became a Buddhist monk to study Buddhism and then gave up robes to write commentaries to the Vedas using Buddhist concepts. This was how he obtained the name **The Buddhist in disguise** (*Pracchanna Bhauddha*) by the Brahmins themselves. The other Brahmin Patanjali who wrote the Patanjali Yoga Sasthra formulated his meditation system in imitation of the Supernormal Eightfold Path of the Buddha and called it the path taught by the Rishi Kapila who lived before the Buddha. Yet Kapila is believed to have taught the Sankya Yoga Sastra and not the Atthanga Yoga of Patanjali.

The interesting point, however, is the relationship between Buddhism and the Three Murthi: Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. These three names do not refer to three gods. These three words refer to the three forms of one God: Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. These three forms of God are recognized even in Christianity. It is generally believed by Hindus that the Buddha is an incarnation of Vishnu, which means that the Buddha is a preserver. But the fact is, however, that it is more meaningful to consider the Buddha as an incarnation of Siva. This means that the Buddha is a destroyer rather than a preserver. It would even be more meaningful to think of Siva as a symbolic representation of the Buddha. Why?

The reason is that from the original Buddhist point of view, the Buddha is the destroyer of the world. He destroyed the world by Awakening from the **Dream of Existence of a world with a “self” in it.**

The well-known verses already mentioned, makes this clear:

Numerous lives in saṅsāra,  
I ran in pursuit of the Creator;

*Anekajātisansāraṇ –  
sandhāvissaṇ anibbisaṇ*

And never did I ever meet him,  
So painful is repeated birth.

*Gahakārakaṇ gavesanto –  
dukkha jāti punappunaṇ.*

O! Creator now I saw you,  
No more will you create again;

*Gahakāraka diṭṭho' si –  
puna gehaṇ na kāhasi*

Your supports are all destroyed,  
Your structure is fully dismantled;

*Sabbe te phāsukā bhaggā –  
gahakūṭaṇ visaṅkhitaṇ*

My mind has stopped creating  
the emotional urge has ceased.

*Visaṅkhāragataṇ cittaṇ –  
tanhānaṇ khayamajjhati.*

***(Dhammapada verses 153 & 154)***

These two verses represent the **paradigm shift** from existential thinking to experiential thinking. The first verse depicts the **existential paradigm**, and the second verse depicts the **experiential paradigm**. In the existential paradigm the **objective world** and the **subjective self** exists. In the experiential paradigm they **do not exist**.

There is more to the relationship between Buddhism and Siva. Every person who goes into meditation begins to feel as if one has gone out of one's normal life, and is spending some time on vacation. As one progresses in meditation, the time comes when one begins to feel that the hours of meditation is the real home and the time one is not meditating is the vacation.

Here we begin to experience a paradigm shift. The **time in meditation** is spent in the **paradigm of experience** and the **time in ordinary life** is the time spent in the **paradigm of existence**. It is possible to **toggle between the two paradigms** the existential and the experiential, as we have mentioned earlier.

It is interesting to note that Siva is seen in two forms: Siva in meditation, and Siva in dance. These **two forms of Siva** can be seen as the two paradigms: the **Siva in dance** is the existential paradigm, and **Siva in meditation** is the experiential paradigm.



We have already spoken of the **two forms** of **Nibbāna** (Nirvana): (1) *Saupādisesa* and (2) *Anupādisesa* (*Itivuttaka* 44 – p38):

- (1) ***Saupādisesa Nibbāna*** (Nirvana) = the existential mode
- (2) ***Anupādisesa Nibbāna*** (Nirvana) = the experiential mode



These two terms are defined quite differently in the traditional Theravada school of thought today. It is as follows:

- (1) *Saupadisesa Nibbāna* (Nirvana) = Experience of the Buddha or emancipator, while living.
- (2) *Anupadisesa Nibbāna* (Nirvana)= Experience of the Buddha or emancipator, after death.

This interpretation of the modern Theravada school of Buddhism is similar to the Hindu idea of *Jeevan mukta* and *Videha mukta*.

(1) Jeevan mukta – (*saupadisesa*)

(2) Videha mukta – (*anupadisesa*)

This is probably an influence or intermixture of Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Buddha has always stated that ***Nibbāna*** (Nirvana) is **the Cessation of Existence** (*bhava nirodho Nibbānan*). **Nirvana is not the destruction of an existing object** but a **paradigm shift** from existential thinking to experiential thinking. The emancipator can toggle between these two paradigms occasionally, but most of the time he or she remains in the experiential mode (*Nirodha samāpatti*). Only occasionally, for a purpose like going on the alms round (*pindapāta*), or discussing the *Dhamma* (*dhammīvā kathā*) does he or she enter the existential mode.

The well-known statement of the Buddha “**Speak on the *Dhamma* or maintain the Ariya silence** (*dhammīvā kathā ariyo vā tunhībhāvo*)” refers to the same toggle. **The Ariya silence** (*ariyo vā tunhībhāvo*) is really the **experiential mode** (*Nirodha samāpatti*), and discussing the *Dhamma* is the existential mode.

It is interesting to note that modern scientific research refers to a toggle switch in the brain called the Reticular Activating System (RAS), which can toggle between the cognitive and affective modes. It is **probably the same RAS** that the **emancipator uses** to toggle between the existential and experiential paradigms.

## CHAPTER XI

### Concept of God

The Buddha did have a concept of **God** though the definition of God was not theistic but **humanistic**. For the Buddha, **God** is only a **human concept**. It is the concept of perfection, in knowledge, power, and goodness; symbolized in monotheistic religion as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence. These are the ultimate values that human beings seek, because they are born ignorant, powerless, and with a tendency to selfishness, which is evil.

Although these values are attributed to the Creator in monotheistic religion, humanistic philosophers have always questioned how such a Good Creator could create a world full of suffering and evil, or allow such things to remain in this world. Biblical religions do provide a reason for this, however, by turning the blame on the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the first humans. Yet that does not answer why there is death for other animals, or even plants and inanimate matter.

Buddhists of course do not believe in the Creation of an all-loving God. Yet Buddhists do have the concept of an “All-powerful Killer” (*Vasavatti Māra*). The Pali term *vasavatti* means all-powerful, and the term *Māra* means “Killer.” The term *Māra* also symbolizes **evil**, in Buddhism. Therefore Mara represents the **Devil**, in Buddhism. “God” and “Devil” in Buddhism refers to the “good” and “evil” within human nature. This means, power, in Buddhism, belongs to the Devil, rather than to God. God, for the Buddhist, is the personification of goodness and Wisdom, but not power. This is why the Buddhist takes refuge in the wisdom and goodness of the Buddha, rather than his power. The term

“Buddha” refers to man become God (*Brahmabhūto*) which the actualization of the human potential to gain perfection.

Common man seeks Supernatural power to change his natural unpleasant circumstances, but the enlightened Buddhist seeks wisdom of the Buddha to change himself. The teaching of the Buddha is about changing our selves and not about changing our circumstances. Even biological evolution progressed by **adapting** to the environment, rather than attempting to **change** the environment.

“**God,**” for the Buddhist, is the human **ideal of perfection** that human beings conceive and struggle to realize through the practice of religion. **Religion**, therefore for the Buddhist, is the **human effort** to solve the **problem of existence** (which is death). The human being is able to transcend all human weaknesses (ignorance, powerlessness and the tendency to selfishness). From this Buddhist humanistic perspective, it was man who created God, in his own image, not vice versa.

Buddhists believe that this state of perfection is a **human potential** that is actualized from time to time when the human being becomes an **Awakened One (a Buddha)**, or **God become** (*Brahma bhūto*). This actualization of the human potential is the union with God, which all religions aspire to accomplish. To unite with God, for the Buddhist, is to become God. Just as a river enters the ocean and loses its identity, so a human being loses his identity in becoming God. This is not the deification of a human being, but the evolution of the human being to a Superhuman Divine level. Such a person who has **realized the ideal of perfection** becomes the **Anthropomorphic God** of the Buddhist.

To become God, however, is also to become fully human, by eliminating the animal nature within, which is the “self-centered emotions.” The difference between the human



being and the other animals is mainly in the brain. The human being is at a higher evolutionary level, because of his ability to think and reason out logically. The modern scientific discoveries and technology, which have brought so much comfort and conveniences to mankind is the result of this ability to think. Yet this special ability of the human being is mainly used to gratify human cravings and for destructive purposes like wars and crime.

The human being today is not fully evolved, and he is not fully conscious of the damage he is doing to himself and others, and the world at large. He is obstructing the very **peace** he is craving for. It is like a baby with unsafe toys or a child with dangerous weapons. The human being is still like the animal that is carried away by emotions. Emotions are dominating his mind. His reason is only used as a slave of the emotions to gratify the emotions.

This is what Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, saw in the child and the neurotic; they are both dominated by the pleasure principle (the *id*). The difference between neurosis and normality is only a matter of degree. “All normal people (*puthujjana*),” said the Buddha, “are insane.” This means they are either psychotic or neurotic to some degree. They are mainly following two extreme ways of living, according to the Buddha. They are devoted to sensual pleasure or practicing an ascetic way of life, suppressing the emotions, both being mentally sick. According to Sigmund Freud the healthy personality is dominated by the reality principle (the *ego*). The Buddha too pointed out that the healthy way of living is the medial path between emotional indulgence and self-mortification, which is the pursuit of the imperturbable serenity of mind and body.

This means, the healthy way of living for the human being is to maintain a tranquil mind and be dominated by reason and

not by emotion. All emotions are self-centered according to the Buddha, and so was it for Freud. Unselfish good behaviour is possible only when the mind is free of selfish emotions. Universal goodwill (*mettā*) is not an emotion. It comes from a mind free of the self-centered emotions. Emotion is a disturbance of the mind and body. It is a tranquil mind and a relaxed body that is free of self-centered emotions. It is such a mind that can become interested in the welfare of others for their sake. This selfless interest in the welfare of all beings (*mettā*) is genuine love. This means true love and mental health is the absence of self-centered emotions.

The rational faculty or the intellect is the special quality that distinguishes the human being from other animals. The development of this faculty and the mind being dominated by reason instead of emotion is the way to become fully human. Therefore gaining freedom from emotional domination and being dominated by reason is not only conducive to mental health, but it is also the way to become fully human. This also means, to realize the religious ideal of union with God is to become fully human. To become fully human is to transcend all human weaknesses and become superhuman. This fully human state is therefore supernormal or superhuman. It is divine because it is the realization of the ideal of perfection that human beings worship as God.

This is why Buddhism is a humanistic religion, which is a process of evolution of the human consciousness to the ultimate point in the evolutionary process. The human being transcends the ordinary imperfect human state and becomes fully human in reaching the state of perfection. In doing so the human being enters a Superhuman Divine state. This fully human state is no more human because it has transcended all human weaknesses and become united with God and become God.

This Transcendence or Awakening is called the defeat of Mara, the Killer (*Māra parājaya*), which is the embodiment of evil. Throughout human history, in every religion and every culture, this idea of a conflict between **God** and the **Devil** has been expressed. This conflict is in fact the conflict between **good** and **evil** within human nature. In Buddhist thinking the Buddha takes the place of God and Mara takes the place of the Devil. In modern psychology, Sigmund Freud recognized this conflict as the conflict between the *ego* and the *id*. Today it is expressed as the conflict between the **cognitive** and the **affective**. In common parlance it is seen as the conflict between the **head** and the **heart**. The aim of the Buddha was to resolve this conflict between emotion and reason. This resolution is achieved through the wisdom of the Buddha and not his power. It was achieved through a process of evolution of the human consciousness.

The defeat of Mara also means overcoming death. This means that the Buddha attained **immortality**. This immortality, however, is not eternal life. It does not mean that he became eternal. He simply **awoke from the dream of existence**. Existence is seen in Buddhism as a dream or delusion. The normal human being is only dreaming of existence. He “does not really exist.” In other words, the normal human being is not fully conscious. It is only when he has become fully conscious that he awakens from the dream. This awakening is a matter of growth or evolution. This process of evolution, however, is not an unconscious process, as in biological evolution. It is a conscious process of psychological evolution. It has to be achieved through a conscious wilful effort of each individual. “Each individual has to make the effort, a Buddha can only show the way” (*Dhammapada verse 276*).

Death is the main problem of life, according to the Buddha. Life itself is a continuous struggle against death. This is what Charles Darwin saw as the struggle for existence. This struggle for existence always ends in death. Every individual who is born must die. Everyone is defeated in this fight against death. Therefore this struggle against death is futile. Immortality is seen as an unrealistic goal. The natural law is that everything that is integrated is subject to disintegration. This is the law of determinism, on which scientific discovery and invention is based. This law is that every occurrence in the world is determined by the presence of the necessary conditions.

This means the entire process of life, which is the struggle for existence, is a mistake. It is an effort to become permanent in an impermanent world. This mistaken process of life, or struggle for existence, resulting in evolution, had to continue till the conscious human being evolved with an intelligence to reason out and realize that this struggle to exist was a mistake. It is only then that the human being consciously started the psychological process of evolution of consciousness itself and ultimately awoke from the dream of existence and stopped the struggle for existence, realizing that there is no real existence to struggle for. It is only when this has been achieved that the problem of existence is perfectly solved. This is also the perfect mental health. This mental health is not normal; it is supernormal and superhuman and therefore divine. This is the transcendence of human nature and man becoming God, the anthropomorphic God.

Even before the human being rises to that highest perfect level of evolution, if he turns his mind in that direction, and begins to move towards the goal of awakening he has entered the stream that flows into the ocean of "Awakening."

This entrance is a sublime (*ariya*) level, at which one begins to enjoy a happiness that ordinary people do not experience. Such a person is called one who has entered the stream (*sotāpanna*). Only such a person has become a true Buddhist. One does not become a Buddhist by birth or even conviction; one becomes a Buddhist only by beginning the conscious process of evolution of consciousness. This is a level of mental health where one is free from all neurosis and psychosis. At this stage one becomes mentally healthy in the normal sense, though the perfect mental health is gained only when one awakens fully from the dream of existence.

Existential philosophers pointed to the problem: “out of all animals it is the human being who is aware of his own existence and is also aware that he is going to die.” This creates anxiety, worry, fear, and anguish. Theistic existentialists attempted to solve the problem by taking the leap of faith. The atheistic existentialists attempted to solve it by using human potentials.

It is this same **problem of existence**, which is death and **unhappiness** that all religions **HOPE** to solve, sometimes through an escape from reality into a fantasy of eternal life.

It was the **Buddha**, however, who **solved the problem of existence** by means of a **paradigm shift** from **existential thinking** to **experiential thinking**. He **Awakened** from the **fantasy of eternal existence** into the **reality** of the **absence of existence**. This is why he is called the BUDDHA, the one who has **awakened from the dream of existence**.

## APPENDIX I

# **Meditation or Self-Hypnosis? From A Scientific Perspective**

*A Sharing By Bro. Billy Tan*

### Terms of Reference:


In this sharing, “yogi” refers to one practicing meditation, while “subject” refers to one under the influence of hypnosis.

### **Introduction**

The term “meditation” is today used loosely to mean some form of contemplative practice. There are scores of meditation philosophies and countless techniques how to meditate. Some of these philosophies lead the practitioner to a state of mind that resembles hypnosis. By “meditation”, the contributor here refers to the meditation philosophy taught by the Buddha as explained in this booklet, unless otherwise stated.

Very little separates the meditative state of mind and the hypnotic state of mind. If one is not attentive to one’s mental conditioning at the onset of meditation, one easily falls into the hypnotic state. When meditating, if the yogi exerts much effort to concentrate hard, such efforts tire the mind, and the yogi may experience “hypnagogia”, the mental experience that invariably leads to sleepiness. If allowed to continue, the yogi may fall into hypnosis or sleep.

## What Is Hypnosis

A black and white photograph of a man sitting in a modern, light-colored armchair. He is leaning back, with his head resting on the chair's backrest, his arms resting on the armrests, and his legs extended. He is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and trousers. The chair has a distinctive curved base and a footrest. The background is plain white.

Hypnosis refers to the state of consciousness when one focuses one's attention on one's memory, imagination, and expectation of mental objects, and experiences interactive engagement with the mental objects in response to suggestions and mental and physical pre-conditioning. Beginning with a fully rested body posture such as leaning back on an armchair, or lying down on a couch or bed, the subject (person experiencing hypnosis) first experiences relaxation by fully resting the head, neck, upper-back, and arms. Such a posture induces a state of sleepiness that is the characteristic of hypnosis. The term "hypnosis" is derived from the word "Hypnos", the name of the god of sleep in Greek mythology. Herein lies the first vital difference with meditation – whereby in meditation, the upper-back is kept straight and upright, whether sitting, standing, or walking, avoiding being fully rested on a comfortable surface. This is why the Buddha has always prescribed one to keep the back straight when meditating.

## Hypnotic Induction and The Hypnotic Effect

When the subject begins to pay attention to suggestions, either self-introduced (as in self-hypnosis) or introduced by a hypnotherapist (as in guided hypnosis), the suggestions induce unconscious conditioning of the mind that leads to unconscious arising of thoughts associated with the suggestions. By the subject allowing acceptance of the suggestions, there arises a high degree of susceptibility to the suggestions in the mind

of the subject, and this allows the suggestions to “sink in”, to develop and proliferate in the subject’s mind through mental visualization or self-talk or simply non-critical acceptance of the suggestions. This is most effective when the subject carries an attitude of positive expectancy to the suggestion. This process is called “hypnotic induction”, which leads the subject’s mind to bypass what is termed as the “critical factor”. (Explanation of “critical factor” will be discussed later).

Susceptibility to hypnotic induction leads the subject to experience the hypnotic effect, which is characterized by a combination of trance-like altered state of consciousness, concentrated focused attention on mental objects (from memory or imagination), imaginative role-enactment, or simply letting imaginative visualization takes its course. The state of mind of a hypnotized subject is said to be “lagging”, that is, following unconsciously arising thoughts. This is when the affective activity of mind takes control of subject’s thoughts. Herein lies the critical difference with meditation – whereby in meditation, it is the cognitive activity of mind which is in control, in a state of “leading” by either observing thoughts (sati) or investigating experiences (dhammavicaya).

Once the subject experiences the hypnotic effect, the affective process leads the lagging mind to uncharted territory, and may lead to hallucination and mental experiences that seem real to the subject. Reality is a subjective experience.

## **Hypnosis Is Not “Bad”**

Hypnosis is often witnessed in freak shows, television reality shows, entertainment circles, and show-business which lead to the impression that hypnosis is unwholesome. Just as a knife can be applied in a wholesome manner to cut fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry, or used in a conflict to



injure or threaten life, hypnosis likewise has wholesome and unwholesome applications.

It is necessary to debunk the misconception that hypnosis is “bad”. Purposeful self-hypnosis or guided hypnosis (hypnotherapy) has proven to heal people with emotional wounds, depressive moods, emotional hijacking, excessive wild imagination, phobias, and various forms of addictions. Hypnosis can quickly lead the subject into deep relaxation, temporarily relieving the subject of stressful physical and mental conditions, and it serves as a very helpful tool especially for people who otherwise have difficulty voluntarily regulating their emotional states. However, this is provided the use of hypnosis is purposeful and wholesome.

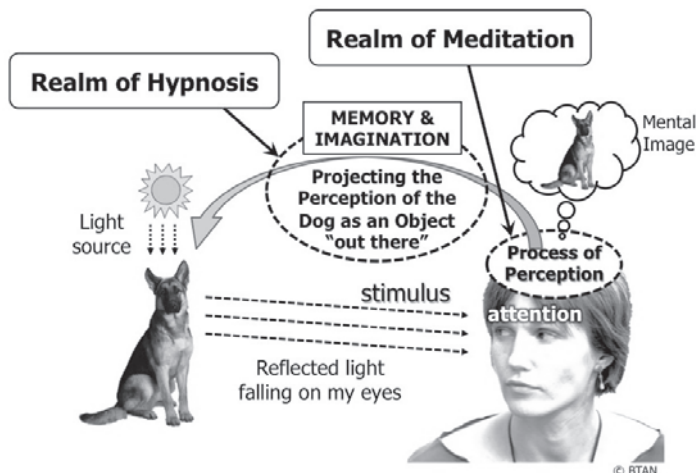
Wholesome applications of hypnosis include Self-Hypnosis, Guided Hypnosis, Clinical Hypnotherapy, and Hypnoanaesthetic.

## **Realms of Hypnosis and Meditation**

When we perceived objects through our sense organs, the object perceived is immediately encoded into memory, and the cognitive process projects the memory of mental objects as “objects out there”. This is the process of dichotomization of experiences that arise from personalization of our experiences.

Hypnosis operates on this process of mental projections, by letting the subject’s mind “follow” mental projections – hence the mind of the subject is said to be “lagging”. This mental projection arises with memory and imagination, leading to an altered state of consciousness (reality) and if unguarded, may lead to uncontrollable imagination and hallucination.

Meditation means that the yogi having turned his attention introspectively focused within, one is either introspectively observing the arising of thoughts or examining and investigating the process of perception. Investigating the process of perception is “apperception”.



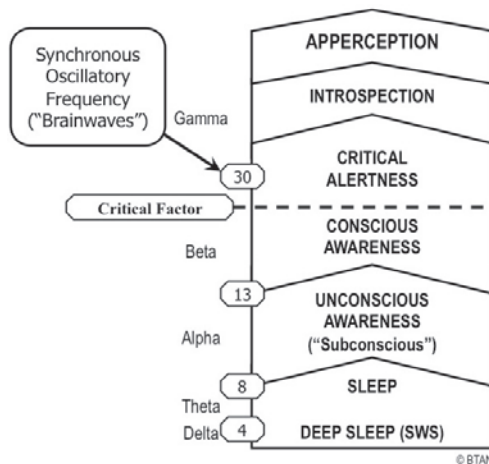
## How Mental Images Are Put Together

According to the research findings of pioneering neuroscientist Dr. Wolf Singer, Director emeritus at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research, when the brain receives inputs from the sense organs, hundreds of different brain regions are involved with processing these inputs in a distributed but synchronized manner. As explained by Dr. Wolf Singer:

- The brain is a highly distributed, dynamical system that lacks a singular convergence center;
- There is no coordinator, no observer, and no seat of the “self” in the brain.

- All the different regions of the brain synchronize distributed processing to form cohesive thoughts through the Synchronous Oscillatory Frequency (commonly called “brainwaves”) – and this frequency can be measured using Electroencephalography or EEG.

Research into the mechanics of this synchronization process is still on-going. Suffice to say, the higher the brainwave frequency, the more synchronized and cohesive the mental images that are formed. In brief, (a) higher brainwave frequency means more cohesive thoughts – vividness and sharpness of the mental images and alertness of attention; (b) lower brainwave frequency means less cohesive thoughts – blurry images and drowsiness of attention leading to sleep and unconscious states.



When we are consciously aware of objects in the environment, our brainwaves typically operate in the “beta” range, and when brainwaves slow down into the “alpha” range, we become drowsy and sleepy. Critical Factor refers to the level of consciousness which is critical alertness leading to heightened level of cognitive capacity.

From the research findings of pioneering neuroscientist investigating neurological effects of meditation, Dr. Richard

Davidson, Buddhist meditation raises the brainwave frequency to above the “gamma” range.

### **Samatha, Vidassana (Vipassana) and Metta Meditation**

According to the research findings presented at various proceedings of Mind And Life Institute by several research fellows, deep relaxation in Buddhist meditation is achieved through total tranquility of the Affective Process (regulation of the Limbic System in the brain) with deep introspection by raising the brainwave well into the “gamma” range, leading to total freedom from disturbance by limbic activity, and eventually to the mental state of Apperception.

### **Chanting and Mantra Based Meditation**

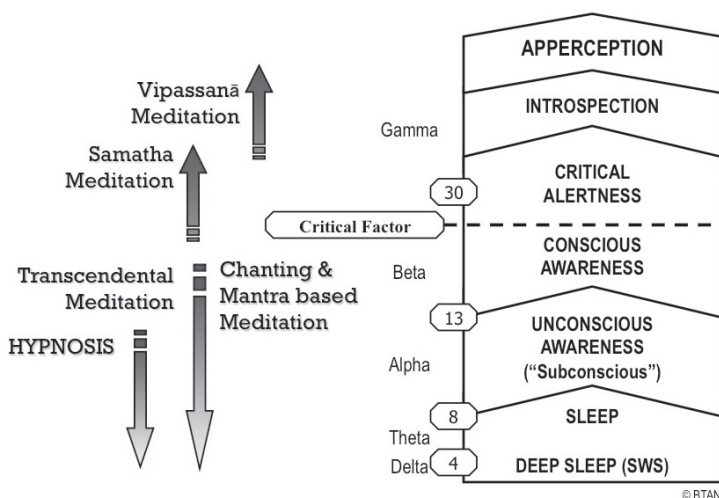
When the practitioner engages in chanting and mantra based meditation (including unconscious practice of “metta” chanting meditation), it has the tendency of slowing down brainwaves leading to a state resembling hypnosis.

In several live demonstrations conducted by the contributor (Bro. Billy Tan) during meditation retreats, it has been demonstrated that rhythmic and repetitive mental activity (including mental arithmetic exercise) leads the practitioner into a state of hypnosis which the contributor calls “rhythmic pattern hypnotic induction”.

Clearly, if one is not attentive to one’s meditation practice, even the simple activity of observing the breath (a repetitive and rhythmic activity) can easily lead one to fall into a hypnotic state through rhythmic pattern hypnotic induction.

## Other Forms Of Meditation

For comparison purpose, we look briefly at how Transcendental Meditation or TM works. According to Dr. Frederick Travis, Director of Center for Brain, Consciousness and Cognition at the Maharishi University of Management where TM is developed, taught and researched, TM lowers the brainwaves into the “theta” and “delta” range leading the subject into deep state of relaxation which they call “transcendence”, which is applied for treatment of mental illness such as chronic depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



## Caution When You Meditate

To avoid falling into hypnotic states, the practitioner should be aware of the following.

- ❖ Understand the purpose of meditation is cultivation of mind, not about entering into jhāna states or attaining Nirvana:

- Desire to experience jhāna gives rise to unconscious arousal that may arise in the midst of meditation leading to hallucination of jhānic experience;
- ❖ Have no expectation – especially seeing the “nimitta” or any form of pereption:
  - Expectation of seeing “nimitta” leads to unconscious arousal of imagination and hallucination – you may enter into hypnotic state or hallucinate seeing “nimitta”;
- ❖ Remain consciously attentive and introspective :
  - Lack of introspective attention allows Affective Process to arise and disturb the Cognitive Process during meditation, leading to emotional arousal, imagination, and hallucination.

## Signs Of Hypnotic State

Below are symptoms indicating one could be on the verge of entering into hypnotic state:

- Signs of prolonged drowsiness or sleepiness (may be minor or trivial at first);
- Any sign of emotional arousal or excitement, such as disgust, pleasure, displeasure, fear, anger, anxiety, frustration, etc;
- Any sign of physiological (hormonal) reactions such as heart beating faster, breathing becoming more rapid, perspiration, muscle tension in face, neck, shoulders, or arms;

- Engaging or interacting with the mental object – one has become part of the mental experience especially if one begins to experience what is being observed instead of simply just observing and being aware. Attention has now turned into experiencing.

## **Straightening The Back**

In several suttas in the Nikayas, the Buddha frequently reminds us to straighten our backs when we meditate. There is a scientific explanation for this advice. The brain is equipped with a set of very long neurons (the “reticular formation”) in the Brain Stem, making up the Reticular Activating System (RAS) that can toggle between cognitive activities of *mano* and the affective activities of *citta*. One of the primary functions of RAS is to sense feedback from bodily sensations and trigger brain activity that is sympathetic to the bodily activity.

When the body is stressed and agitated by aches and pains, it sends a signal to the RAS to trigger the fight or flight reaction – a stress reaction arousing the affective activities of *citta*.

When the body is tired and falling into a relaxation posture (such as leaning the upper back against a comfortable surface), it sends a signal to the RAS to trigger sleep state – and one begins falling asleep.

When one consciously straightens one’s back, it sends a signal to the RAS to alert the brain to remain consciously alert and consciously attentive.

So, always keep the back straight when meditating.

*This Appedix is contributed by Bro. Billy Tan (billy.tan@hotmail.com).*

## Conclusion

The system of meditation described in the three booklets in the form of three levels of meditative experience is nothing other than the Supernormal Eightfold Way (*ariya aṭṭhangika magga*).

We have translated the word “*ariya*” as the “Supernormal” because that is the meaning of the term “*ariya*.” The Buddha used another term *puthujjana* (normal) to emphasise the distinction between normal (*puthujjana*) and supernormal (*ariya*). Modern psychologists use the two terms normal and abnormal to indicate two levels of consciousness. The Buddha used these terms normal and supernormal to indicate two other levels of consciousness.

The three levels of meditative experience are nothing other than the well-known three levels of practice: purity of behaviour (*sīla*), emotional purity (*samādhī*), intellectual purity (*paññā*). These three levels of practice come under the Supernormal Eightfold Way, the true path of purity.

The first five steps in the Supernormal Eightfold Way cover the purity of behaviour (*sīla*). The sixth step covers the emotional purity (*samādhī*). The seventh and eighth steps cover the intellectual purity (*paññā*).

The completion of the Supernormal Eightfold Way involves a paradigm shift, which is not merely an intellectual transformation but also an emotional and behavioural one. In other words, it is a complete change in disposition, character, or personality. A self-centered individual is transformed into a selfless individual.



The transformed individual becomes a spiritually emancipated individual who has broken ten bonds or fetters.

This is because the self-centered individual is fettered by ten fetters to the existential mode. The ten fetters (*samyojanā*) are as follows:

- (1) Personal body perspective (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*).
- (2) Cognitive dissonance (*vicikiccā*)
- (3) Heteronomous morality (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*)
- (4) Avarice (*kāma-rāga*)
- (5) Aversion (*paṭigha*)
- (6) Visual lust (*rūpa-rāga*)
- (7) Lust for non-visual being (*arūpa-rāga*)
- (8) Egotism (*māna*)
- (9) Excitement (*uddhacca*)
- (10) Unconsciousness (*avijjā*).

The practice of the first five steps in the Supernormal Eightfold Way helps break the first three fetters. When these are broken the practitioner becomes one who has entered the stream. The stream is the Supernormal Eightfold Way that leads to **Nibbāna** (Nirvana). Just as a river falls into the ocean, ultimately, one who becomes a stream enterer ultimately enters **Nibbāna** (Nirvana), within seven lives. When one enters the stream one has also entered the Supernormal level, at least in terms of behaviour. One does not practice good behaviour only to satisfy others, or to gain some rewards. One behaves well because one has understood the need for good behaviour, especially in consideration for others as well as oneself. This is the meaning of **autonomous morality**.

The practice of the sixth step in the Supernormal Eightfold Way, which is the Harmonious Exercise (*sammā vāyāma*), helps to bring about emotional purity and tranquillity (*samādhī*),

at least to the level of the first ecstasy (*paṭhama jhāna*). If this emotional purity is accompanied by a certain level of intellectual purity (*paññā*), the fourth and fifth fetters (*kāmarāga paṭigha*) could be diminished to the extent of becoming a once returner (*sakadāgāmi*).

The practice of the seventh and eighth steps in the Supernormal Eightfold Way, which are the **Harmonious Attention** and the **Harmonious Equilibrium**, which in other words is the practice of the **Seven Steps to Awakening**, results in the **paradigm shift**, leading to **Awakening** from the “**dream of existence**,” and experiencing the **Imperturbable Serenity – Nibbāna** (Nirvana).

The teaching of the Buddha is a human discovery, and is dealing with a human problem and its solution, through a human technique. This is why it is neither theistic nor atheistic, but humanistic.

The Buddha offers a method of transcending normal human nature. This is why this method is called Supernormal. He deals with the basic problem of human existence, which is the **insecurity of life**. Insecurity is the constant impending death, like the sword of Damocles hanging down above the head, which can fall and kill one at any moment. Out of all the animals in the world it is the human being who is fully aware of its own existence and also aware of its own death. Yet the normal human being prefers to forget about death and enjoy life thinking: “Eat drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” That is what is commonly called optimism.

Of course some attempt to solve the problem by way of a flight from reality into fantasy. They attempt to step into another world by means of alcohol or hallucinogenic drugs. When the evil consequences of such practices are recognized,

however, they try out meditation, hoping it would carry one to another world, which is safer than the drug induced heaven.

Other helpers point to a more traditional and historic one. It is one that has stood the times, though the solution cannot be verified until one dies. It is taken without question, on blind faith. It is based on a **great hope** that after death the believer will have eternal life and eternal happiness. The non-believers are condemned unmercifully, to suffer eternal hellfire.

It is this same **problem of existence** that the Buddha set out to solve, but not through an escape into fantasy, but through a **psychological paradigm shift** that solves the problem here and now. It is the **Awakening** from the **dream of existence**.

This means the normal human being is not fully awake, but is **dreaming**, or suffering from a delusion, the **delusion of existence**. This was expressed by the Buddha in the words, “All normal human beings are insane” (*sabbe putujjanā ummattakā*). The **only solution** was to **awaken from this dream of existence**.

#### PLEASE NOTE

The three booklets on meditation that we have published contain information on the **ultimate solution** of the **problem of existence** – which is **birth, ageing, sickness, and death** – The **ever-threatening insecurity of life (*dukkha*)**.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Venerable Dr. Madawela Punnaaji Maha Thera, a Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka, has spent more than sixty years of research, to discover the original teachings of the Buddha, by making an in-depth intensive study of both the theory as well as the practice of Buddhism.



Venerable Punnaaji discovered that the original teachings were found in the Pali Nikayas preserved by the Theravadins, though not fully understood by them. Modern scholars were unable to get at the original teachings because they focused their attention on a later interpretation of the teachings called the *Abhidharma* and commentaries. There were several commentaries written by different schools of thought during the time of Emperor Asoka. What is today popular among the Theravada school is a collection of commentaries made by the Theravada school called *Vibhajjavāda*. Even reading the Theravada Suttas by learning Pali, the scriptural language, is not necessarily successful. This is because the interpretation of the Pali language itself is based on the later commentaries, which sometimes can be quite misleading. Moreover, the translations of the scriptures by Western scholars have introduced many interpretational errors due to language difficulties.

It takes a highly critical and intellectual person, with an excellent command of both Pali as well the English language, and who has a background of modern philosophy, modern psychology, and modern science as well as having tested and experienced advanced states of meditation to translate into English the deeper and profound teachings of the Buddha.

The author certainly is very well equipped for this task. Venerable Punnaji is well versed in Western fields of scientific knowledge, including medicine, and has a thorough understanding of comparative religions, modern philosophy and psychology. His interpretations of the original teachings of the Buddha have been much enriched by these forays beyond a mere study and practice of Buddhism. No modern scholar has so far taken the time and energy necessary to be able to identify the elusive original teachings of the Buddha.

His mission has been to disseminate his findings through publications, sermons, workshops, conference presentations, Internet postings, and meditation retreats to a world-wide audience. He is well known for his clear and accurate presentation of Buddhism and has grateful students the world over.

The three booklets – Ariyamagga Bhāvanā I, II, and III – is an effort to gradually introduce the essence of Buddhist meditation. It is both logical and comprehensive. A careful study of the contents will also expose the reader to many unknown or misunderstood teachings of the Buddha. This booklet also reveals how the Buddha solved the problem of existence, and how a serious practitioner could Awaken from the Dream of Existence – *Nibbāna*.

## THE 121 YEAR OLD BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA, BRICKFIELDS

The Buddhist Maha Vihara was founded in 1894 by the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society (SAWS), the oldest registered Buddhist Society in the Klang Valley.

From its very inception, the Vihara has been managed by the Sinhala Buddhist community but always financially supported by the Chinese and Indian communities. The first structure of the Vihara was the Main Shrine room, completed in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The donors for the Shrine Room, as recorded in the Selangor Government Gazette 1896, pg. 408 are clearly Chinese and Indian communities and among the main donors were:

*Kapitan Yeap Quang Seng, Towkay Loke Yew, K. Tambusamy Pillay, R. Doraisamy Pillay, Loke Chow Kit, San Peng and Son, Lim Tua Taw, etc...*

The Vihara was always the focal point to mobilize the Buddhist community. The large gathering to protest and stop the screening of the then controversial film “Light of Asia” in 1927 in Malaysia was also held at the Vihara, and so was the mass gathering and signature campaign in the 1950s to lobby the government to declare Wesak as a national holiday.

During the Emergency period of 1948-1960, monks from the Vihara made a massive impact reaching out to calm and educate the psychologically disoriented Chinese New Villagers who were evicted from their traditional lands and placed in new settlements by the Government which was fighting a communist insurgency.

Since the 1940s, the Vihara commenced a free Dhamma publications program as a Dhammadutta outreach to the masses which by the year 2012 was made available in 28 languages, with millions of

copies of books and CDs produced. The Vihara's Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School (BISDS), founded in 1929, is the oldest Sunday School in the country with an enrolment of more than 1200 students and continues to produce systematic books on Buddhist studies for children.

The Wesak procession organized by the Vihara since the 1890s is the oldest and largest religious procession in the country. The 3-day Wesak celebrations at the Vihara attracts about 100,000 people.

Many students or devotees who have studied and benefited from the BISDS, the Vihara's Free Publications, Dhamma programs, classes, talks, etc have gone on to set up new Buddhist societies and centers which help to spread Buddhism in the country far and wide.

The SAWS is also one of the founding members of the Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) formed in 1983, a Council which constructively engages the Government on matters affecting non-Muslims in the country. The MCCBCHST Administrative office is based at the Vihara.

In 2004, the Vihara was a major focal point in the country to collect relief aid to assist the South Asian Tsunami that killed almost 280,000 people. Several 40 forty foot container equivalents of relief aid were dispatched out by the Vihara to Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Myanmar and Thailand by air, sea and land.

Buddhists remain the country's largest organ donors, thanks to Cornea and Organ Donation Campaign carried out by the Vihara.

The Vihara continues to operate to deliver its obligation to the Buddhist community till this day and is governed and directed by its Vision, 4 Missions, 6 Strategic Objectives and 4 Ennoblers in tribute and gratitude to all our past and current Sangha, volunteers,

donors, friends, etc. We would be failing in our duty if we fail to mention the name of the foremost amongst them, our late Venerable Chief, ie. Ven Dr Kirinde Sri Dhammananda.

### ***Vision***

To be a leading international center for the Learning, Practice and Dissemination of the Buddha Dhamma

### ***Mission***

To provide a conducive environment to:

- promote scholarship and study of the Buddha Dhamma
- propagate the Buddha Dhamma
- be the focus of Buddhist activities for the larger community
- foster Theravada Buddhist cultural and traditional practices

### ***Six Strategic Objectives***

To be the Buddhist center of choice for:

1. Learning, Practicing and Realization of the Dhamma
2. Spreading the Dhamma
3. Buddhist Civilization
4. Synergy groupings to sustain the Buddha Sasana
5. Compassion in Action
6. Financial Accountability while delivering Cultural Obligations

### ***Four Ennoblers:***

1. Loving Kindness
2. Compassion
3. Altruistic Joy
4. Equanimity

### ***Motto***

Go forth, for the good, happiness and welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world.



## SERVICES AVAILABLE AT BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA

- Dana for Monks (at Vihara or Home) and Bana (Sermons)
- Blessing Services / Funeral Services by Monks
- Booking of Facilities for religious functions / events
- Marriage Registration
- Full Moon / New Moon Day Puja & Free Vegetarian Lunch
- Sunday Dhamma Classes for Children & Adults
- Buddhist & Pali University Diploma, Degree & Masters Program
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### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

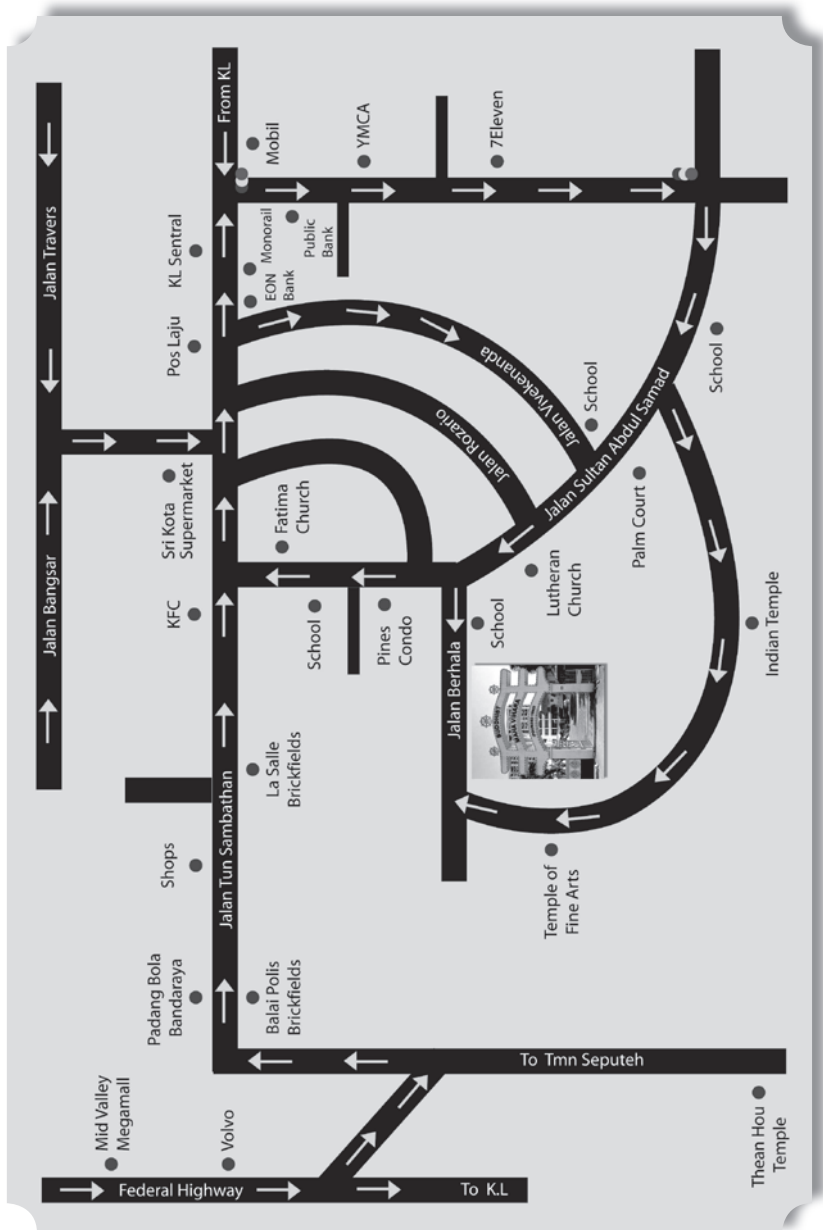
• Daily Puja		6.30a.m. & 7.30p.m.
• Choir Practice	Tuesday	8.00p.m.
• Special Talk	Friday	1.00p.m.
• Dhamma Talk	Friday	8.00p.m.
• Meditation	Mon, Wed & Thurs	8.00p.m.
• Bojjhanga Puja	Saturday	7.30p.m. - 8.30p.m.
• Puja & Talk	Sunday	8.30a.m.
• Dhamma School	Sunday	8.30a.m. & 11.00a.m.
• Dharma for the Deaf (fortnightly)	Sunday	2.00p.m.
• Feeding the Needy	Sunday	5.00p.m.
• Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic (twice a month)	Sunday	10.00a.m. - 2.00p.m.
• Sinhala Language Classes	Sunday	1.30p.m. - 3.00p.m.
• Sinhala Cultural Dance Classes	Sunday	3.00p.m. - 5.00p.m.
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- BISDS Building Fund - Classrooms, Meditation Pavilion, Lifts, Meeting and Counseling rooms
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- Education Fund
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- General Maintenance of the Buddhist Maha Vihara
- Utilities (Electricity, water, telephone, administration etc)
- Illumination (lighting) of the Main Shrine Hall
- Illumination (lighting) of the Awkana Buddha & Cakra
- Monks' Dana - Offering Monk Requisites of Food, Medicine, Lodging, Robes, etc
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**MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THE NOBLE TRIPLE GEM  
BE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**

## LOCATION MAP TO BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA



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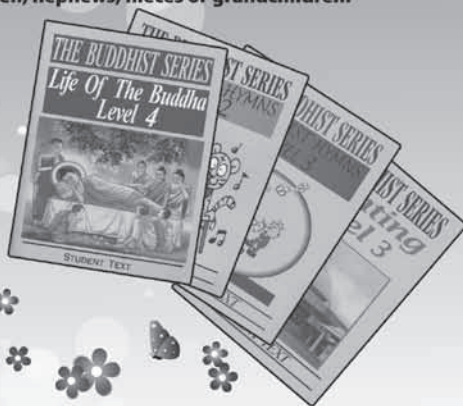
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