

CETOVIMUTTI PANNAVIMUTTI AND UBHATOBHAGAVIMUTTI

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An attempt is made in this paper** to study the concepts of *cetovimutti*, *paññāvimutti* and *ubhatobhāgavimutti* as represented in early Buddhism. *Cetovimutti* is generally translated as freedom of the mind or heart, *paññāvimutti* is translated as freedom by understanding or through intuitive wisdom, while *ubhatobhāgavimutti* is translated as freedom in both ways. In this paper synonyms such as freedom, liberation, release and emancipation are used with hardly any discrimination in translating the word *vimutti*. For the purpose of studying these concepts it seems desirable to start with a brief account of the nature of the untrained wordly mind as explained in early Buddhist texts.

Puthujjana—The Untutored Wordly Man

The untutored wordly man is always described as working under the influence of *lobha* 'greed',¹ *dosa* 'ill-will',² and *moha* 'delusion'. The *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta* (M I 266) explains that reactions by way of attachment or hatred are caused by pleasant and unpleasant sense data respectively (*piyarūpe rūpe sārajati appiyarūpe rūpe byāpajjati*). A person reacting thus, does so because he is not mindful of his own physical activities. As a result, his mind gets circumscribed or limited in scope (*parittacetaso*). Possessed of attachment and hatred towards sense data he experiences feelings, he revels in these feelings, entertains them and gets overwhelmed by them. As a result of this process, passionate delight (*nandi*) arises in him which itself becomes the basis or fuel (*upādāna*) for his continued existence through birth, decay, death and all accompanying misery.

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** All Pali works referred to in this paper are editions of the Pali Text Society, London. All Roman figures denote volume numbers and the Arabic figures denote page numbers. The following abbreviations are used:

A	Anguttaranikāya
AA	Anguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī)
D	Dīghanikāya
DA	Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sumanigalavilāśini)
Dhp	Dhammapada
M	Majjhimanikāya
S	Samyuttanikāya
Sn	Suttanipāta
Vin	Vinaya Piṭaka

1. Sometimes given as *abhijjhā* 'coveteousness', or *rāga* 'lust'.

2. Sometimes given as *vyāpāda* 'malevolence', or *paṭigha* 'aggressiveness'.

It is relevant to emphasise that the mind of one who is thus wallowing in a world of his own sense experience gets necessarily circumscribed and limited in scope. When the mind is constantly bombarded by sense data and it ceaselessly reacts by way of attachment towards the pleasant, by way of repugnance towards the unpleasant and by way of ignorance towards the neutral sense data,³ the mind gets pegged on to sense objects so tenaciously that it calls for the greatest sustained human effort to free it from the entanglements of this cramped world.⁴ This tenacious binding aspect of sense data is variously emphasised in the Pali Canon by way of similes,⁵ metaphors⁶ and psychological terminology.⁷ Mental phenomena generated by the interplay of sense organs and sense objects show surprising variations. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (214-5) enumerates a lengthy list of emotions which spring from the root causes of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

A discourse in the *Ānguttaranikāya* (A I 268) analyses the state of the worldling from another point of view. According to this he is beset by *sīlavipatti*, *cittavipatti* and *dīṭṭhivipatti*, 'moral, emotional and intellectual perversions'. The Buddha teaches a course of training whereby the mind is emancipated from these perversions and the limitations imposed by sense experience, a course whereby it could be developed into infinite glory and absolute freedom.

Salient Features of the Course of Training

This course of training is gradual and systematic, and it has to be ceaselessly applied. Just as a carpenter's adze gets gradually worn out through constant use, even though the rate of its wearing off itself cannot be measured, the adept progresses gradually, eliminating defilements step by step but the rate of progress itself cannot be strictly determined (S III 154-5; A IV 127). At the culmination of this course of training which consists of *adhisīlasikkhā*, *adhicittasikkhā* and *adhipaññāsikkhā*, training in higher morality, concentration and understanding respectively, the adept is able to acquire, by an act of deliberation,⁸ wisdom and insight (*ñāṇadassanāya cittam abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* 'he directs and inclines his mind to get wisdom and insight', D I 76, 147, etc., etc.). When understanding is complete the mind gets liberated from the obsessions (*evam jānato evam passato āsavehi cittam vimuccatī*—A I 165; M III 30-2,

3. M I 303.

4. M I 111-112, 449-451.

5. *māluvālatā*—the fast growing *māluvā* creeper.

6. *cetokhila*—pegs or stumps of the mind.

7. *samyojana*—yoke or fetter; *bandhana*—bond.

8. Rune E. A. Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana* George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, p. 88.

etc.), as an automatic result of the course of training. The adept has no power to determine when his mind should attain emancipation. A farmer may plough the field, sow the seeds, and supply water in a great hurry, but he cannot accelerate growth and maturity of the crop. It is the natural result of a conditioned process, and so is *vimutti* 'emancipation', the natural result of a controlled process (A I 239-40).

Favourable Conditions

Having observed the nature of the untrained mind and the important features of the process leading to emancipation, it is appropriate to inquire into the preliminary conditions conducive to the attainment of emancipation. While the Pali Canon abounds in information regarding this question, it would suffice if a typical relevant passage is cited. The *Ānguttaranikāya* (A IV 357) enumerates the following as favourable conditions conducive to maturity of *cetovimutti*: (a) virtuous companionship, (b) moral behaviour, (c) serious conversation pertaining to austere living, which opens up the mind (*yāyāñ kathā abhisallekhikā cetovivaraṇasappāyā*), (d) sustained application, and (e) intelligence. These conditions reveal the social impact on an individual's spiritual progress as well as personal responsibility and enthusiasm.

Types of Vimutti

Vimutti 'emancipation' is looked upon in Buddhism as the supreme goal of the higher life (*ariyā paramā vimutti*—D I 174). The *Sāmaññaphalasutta* which enumerates the advantages of recluseship in ascending order maintains that there is no higher or better reward than *vimutti* (D I 84-5). It is the very essence of all endeavour (*vimuttisārā sabbe dhamma*—A IV 339). It is the ultimate purpose, the essence and culmination of the noble life (*yā ca kho ayāñ bhikkhave akuppā cetovimutti, etad atthāñ idam bhikkhave brahmacariyam etam sāram etam pariyośānam*—M. I 197).

Nevertheless the word *vimutti* is sometimes used, especially in compounds, without the connotation of final emancipation. In the controlled process of mental culture the mind is successively purged of its impurities and contents, and the notable achievements made during this exercise are designated *cetovimutti*. Broadly speaking Pali literature makes reference to two types of *cetovimutti*, (a) temporary and pleasant (*sāmāyikam kantam*—A I 64; M III 110), (b) inviolable or permanent (*akuppā cetovimutti*—D III 273; S III 27; A I 259 etc.). When *cetovimutti* is used in conjunction with *paññāvimutti* (A I 108) emancipation is final and inviolable, and *akuppā cetovimutti* is also used in the same sense. Though *paññāvimutti* alone also refers to final emancipation (S II 121;

A IV 452) *cetovimutti* alone is hardly used in that sense. *Ubhatobhāgavimutti* is another expression meaning final emancipation (D II 71; M I 477; A IV 453).

The *vimutti* types that emerge from the texts can be tabulated as follows:-

i	<i>cetovimutti</i>	—temporary liberation
ii	<i>akuppe cetovimutti</i>	—final liberation
iii	<i>paññāvimutti</i>	—final liberation
iv	<i>paññāvimutti</i> and <i>cetovimutti</i>	—final liberation
v	<i>ubhatobhāgavimutti</i>	—final liberation

Cetovimutti is repeatedly said to be derived from *samatha* 'calm, tranquillity', while *paññāvimutti* is said to be the result of *vipassanā* 'introspection' (A I 61). It is also emphasised that *samatha* and *vipassanā* should be developed for the purpose of fully comprehending the nature of *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha* and their total destruction (A I 100). By the elimination of *rāga* 'sensuality' *cetovimutti* is gained, by the elimination of *avijjā* 'ignorance' *paññāvimutti* is gained (*rāgavirāgā cetovimutti avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti*—A I 61).

Cetovimutti—Temporary

The texts contain many references to temporary *cetovimutti* of different degrees and types. According to the *Ānguttaranikāya* (A V 139) even an immoral person (*dussilo*) might experience temporary release (*sāmāyikam pi vimuttim*) if he has studied the Dhamma. According to the *Mahāsuññotatasutta* (M III 110), a life of seclusion away from the crowds conduces to *cetovimutti* which is pleasant but temporary (*sāmāyikam vā kantam cetovimuttim*). The *Ānguttaranikāya* (A I 64) maintains that a monk with moral behaviour, who lives restrained according to monastic rules, endowed with suitable conduct in suitable habitat, seeing danger even in the slightest fault, training himself according to monastic discipline, may live having attained a certain pleasant state of *cetovimutti* (*so aññataram santam cetovimuttim upasampaja viharati*). If no further spiritual progress is made, at the dissolution of the body, he may be born in a celestial sphere, departing whence he may not return (*tato cuto onāgāmī hoti*). It could be summarised that solitude, moral behaviour, scrupulousness and monastic discipline promote temporary freedom of the mind which is a pleasant experience. According to the *Nivāpasutta* (M I 156) physical weakness causes deterioration of moral strength and the consequent loss of *cetovimutti* which has already been won. The *Samyuttanikaya* (S I 20) records that Godhika could not retain the *cetovimutti* which he won six times, and when he attained it on the seventh

attempt, he committed suicide. In the *Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta* (M I 351) Ānanda reasons out that *cetovimutti* is subject to conditions and therefore to change as well. Seeing the impermanent, unsatisfactory and substanceless nature of this *cetovimutti* one must develop intuition and eradicate obsessions (*āsavānam khayaṁ*) in order to gain final emancipation.

Types of Cetovimutti

The *Mahāvedallasutta* (M I 296-7; also S IV 296) records eight types of *cetovimutti* namely *adukkhamasukhāya cetovimutti*, four *appamāṇā cetovimutti*, *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti*, *suññata cetovimutti*, and *animitta cetovimutti*, and goes on to explain the factors which constitute them. It can be summarised that these different types of *cetovimutti* comprise the following meditational levels:- the *catutthajjhāna* ‘the fourth level of concentration’, the four *brahmavihāras* ‘sublime states’, the *ākiñcaññāyatana* ‘the sphere of nothingness’, reflection on emptiness, and *animitta cetosamādhi* ‘signless concentration of the mind’ respectively. The Sutta goes on to explain that these *cetovimuttis* can be considered different in meaning and different in terminology (*nānatthā c' eva nānābyañjanā ca* insofar as the mental phenomena involved in the various *cetovimutti* types are concerned, but they can be considered identical in meaning only different in terminology (*ekatthā, byañjanam eva nānan ti*) in so far as they share the common characteristic of the eradication of *rāga, dosa* and *moha* at their highest level.

The different types shall be taken up for discussion one by one in collaboration with other relevant textual data.

Adukkhamasukhāya Cetovimutti

The fourth *jhāna* which comprises the *adukkhamasukhāya cetovimutti* has the positive characteristics of *upekkhā-sati-pārisuddhi* ‘perfect equanimity and mindfulness’. During this state of meditation the mind is inwardly settled, calmed, focussed and concentrated (*ajjhattam eva cittam sañthapeti sannisādeti ekodikaroti samādahati*—M III 111). When it is thus concentrated it is described as pure, excellent, blemishless, free from defilements, supple, efficient, steadfast and firm (*evam samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgane vigatupakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye thite ānejjappatte*—D I 76). It is compared to burnished gold which is pliable and ready to be fashioned into any intricate design (M III 243). Its efficiency and pliability are such that it could be diverted with ease for the realisation of higher forms of knowledge (*abhiññā*) through extra-sensory faculties (D I 77, etc.). The *Jhānasanyutta* (S V 308) maintains

that a monk who has developed the four *jhānas* is prone towards *nibbāna*, is inclined and bent towards *nibbāna* just as the river Ganges is prone towards the east. The *Pañcattayasutta* (M II 237) points out that it is even possible for the adept to be mistaken at this stage to have attained *nibbāna*.

The fourth is the lowest of the *jhānas* to be designated a *cetovimutti*, and none of the first three is so described anywhere. At this level of meditation respiration is also said to stop, and that means the cessation of all physical activity (*catutthajjhānasamāpannassa assāsapassā niruddhā honti*—D III 266; *aśāsapassasa kayasankharo*—M I 301). Another noteworthy observation is that it is the *adukkhamasukha* aspect of the fourth *jhāna* which has been termed *cetovimutti*. *Adukkha-m-asukha* means the absence of pain and pleasure, and this state has been achieved by emptying the mind of its affective contents of pleasure, pain, elation and dejection (*sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassa-domanassānam atthaṅgamā*...D I 75). Unencumbered by physical activity, having transcended the dichotomy of pleasure and pain, the mind has arrived at complete hedonistic neutrality. This is quite a significant achievement in the process of mental culture, for, it is reactions by way of pleasure and pain which distort the realistic perception of sense data (...*phassapaccayā vedanā, yam vedeti tan sañjānāti*..M I 111). This freedom of the mind from the affective principle, which generates translucent clarity of vision leading to realisation of truth and consequent emancipation is designated *adukkhamasukha cetovimutti* ‘liberation of the mind through hedonistic neutrality’.

Further it should be noted that, by the time of the fourth *jhāna*, in addition to *vacīsaṅkhāra*⁹ ‘verbal activity’ and *kāyasāṅkhāra* ‘physical activity’ which have ceased to operate, the mind is emptied of some of the *cittasaṅkhāra* ‘mental activity’, as well. It is said that *saññā* ‘ideation’ and *vedanā* ‘feeling’ form part of *cittasaṅkhāra* (M I 301). As the *sukha* and *dukkha* *vedanā* elements of the *cittasaṅkhāra* are eliminated, this is the first *jhāna* experience at which some of the mental activity is arrested, and the stage is therefore meaningfully called *adukkhamasukha cetovimutti*—the first level of mental freedom.

Appamāṇā Cetovimutti

The four *appamāṇā cetovimutti* ‘infinite liberation of the mind’ comprise the four *brahmavihārā* ‘sublime states’. They are *mettā cetovimutti*, *karuṇā cetovimutti*, *muditā cetovimutti* and *upekkhā cetovimutti*, ‘liberation

⁹ *vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro*—M I 301, *vitakka* and *vicāra* cease during the second *jhāna*, D I 74.

of the mind through benevolence, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity' respectively. *Aṅguttaranikāya* (V 299) gives the following lucid description of a monk engaged in *mettābrahmavihāra* 'the sublime state of benevolence':- A noble disciple who has given up covetousness and ill-will remains unconfused, alert and mindful, suffusing with his benevolent mind first one quarter, then the second, third and fourth, then upwards, downwards and across, in every way, everywhere, the entire world. Radiating thoughts of benevolence in great abundance, with great intensity, without any reservations he dwells in peace and amity. He knows thus: 'Formerly my mind was limited and undeveloped, now it is limitless and well-developed. No activity imposing limitations is left behind in it, and no such activity lingers there.'¹⁰

Such is the description of a mind liberated through benevolence (*mettā cetovimutti*) and the adept similarly develops *karunā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā cetovimutti* as well.

The state of this limitless well developed mind is further clarified with a simile in the *Subhasutta* (M II 208=S IV 322=D I 251). It is just like a strong conch-shell-blower who makes himself heard far and wide without difficulty, and petty actions which impose limitations find no place in a mind so liberated. Perhaps what is meant by this simile is that, just as petty small noises get drowned by the all-pervading sound of a conch-shell, petty emotions such as attachment and aversion associated with sense data find no foothold in a well developed mind suffused with infinite benevolence (S IV 120). Further *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha* are said to be traits which impose limitations (*rāgo pamāṇakaraṇo*, *doso pamāṇakaraṇo*, *moho pamāṇakaraṇo*—M I 298), for they keep the mind confined to a small world circumscribed by sense data (*parittacetaso*—M I 267). The mind radiating *mettā*, *karunā*, etc. is liberated from the cramping confines of sense objects (*appamāṇa cetaso viharati*—M I 270; S IV 120; A V 299 etc).

The *Bojjhaigasamyutta* (S V 118-121) records an important discourse on the nature of *brahmavihāras* from the Buddhist point of view, in reply to a question asked by the heretics on the difference between Buddhist and non-Buddhist practice of *brahmavihāras*. The Buddha elucidates (a) the method of developing *brahmavihāra*, (b) the attitudes to be entertained during the course of meditation, (c) the highest achievements associated with them, and (d) the final results, and fearlessly proclaims that no human or divine being outside the pale of Buddhism is capable of understanding the sublime states in this manner. The discourse on *mettābrahmavihāra*

10. *Yam kho pana kiñci pamāṇakatañ c kammam, na tam tatrāvassissati, na tam tatrāvatiñhatiti*—A V 299.

is as follows:- "A monk, accompanied by benevolence develops the seven factors leading to Enlightenment (*sambojjhaṅga*), dwelling in seclusion, free from passion, bent on the cessation (of suffering), and having relinquishment as its culmination (*vossaggapariñāmīm*). During the course of this meditation it is possible for the adept to entertain the following attitudes at will: (i) to be conscious of the loathsomeness of what is not loathsome, (ii) to be conscious of the agreeable nature of what is loathsome, (iii) to be conscious of the loathsomeness of what is loathsome and what is agreeable, (iv) to be conscious of the agreeable nature of both the loathsome and the agreeable, or (v) regard everything with equanimity being mindful and alert. He could also abide having attained the *subhavimokkha* 'deliverance called the beautiful'. *Mettācetovimutti* has the *subhavimokkha* as the highest achievement (*subhavimokkha*). If the adept has not realised a higher state of liberation, he has gained only mundane wisdom."¹¹

Similarly *karunācetovimutti*, *muditācetovimutti* and *upekkhācetovimutti* could be developed in conjunction with the seven *bojjhaṅgas*, entertaining the same attitudes towards agreeable and loathsome sense data. They have *ākāśānañcāyatana* 'sphere of infinite space', *viññānañcāyatana* 'sphere of infinite consciousness' and *ākiñcaññāyatana* 'sphere of nothingness' respectively as their highest achievement. In the absence of further spiritual progress the knowledge they have gained still remains within the mundane sphere.

An important observation regarding this method of developing the four *appamāṇā cetovimutti* is that these are strictly considered as means to an end and not the end itself. Once the psychological maturity desired through these exercises is attained, the exercises themselves have to be relinquished (*vosaggapariñāmīm*), for however advanced, they still remain world-bound. The non-Buddhist attitude was evidently to regard these sublime states as final salvation. The concurrent development of the factors of Enlightenment is extremely important and functional. A monk whose mind is freed from the circumscribed world of sense data, is now expected to develop great presence of mind (*sati*), a spirit of investigation into the truth (*dhammavicaya*), energetic application (*viriya*), joy (*pīti*, i.e. interest in his spiritual exercise), tranquillity (*passaddhi*, physical and mental relaxation), concentration of mental energies (*saṃādhi*) and philosophical neutrality (*upekkhā*)¹². Thus a monk is expected to work for Enlightenment inspired by the love of truth, propelled by unwavering determination, but cautioned by philosophical impartiality.

11. SA III 172. *Idha-paññassāti...lokiyapaññassāti attho.*

12. Here *upekkhā* cannot mean emotional neutrality, as *upekkhāsambojjhaṅga* is to be developed concurrently with *upekkhābrahmavihāra*.

The *Anuruddhasutta* (M III 146) refers to *mahaggatā cetovimutti* in addition to *appamāṇā cetovimutti*. *Mahaggatā cetovimutti* literally means 'liberation of the mind grown great'. Differentiating the two types of *cetovimutti*, the *Sutta* explains that *appamāṇā cetovimutti* is the limitless development of *mettā*, *karuṇā*, etc., while *mahaggatā cetovimutti* is the intense development of these qualities enveloping a limited area big or small.

By the development of *appamāṇā cetovimutti* the mind is purged of evil emotions. It no longer harbours emotions of attachment and aversion towards sense data (*piyarūpe rūpe na sārajjati*, *appiyarūpe rūpe na byāpajjati*—M I 270). Freedom from emotions is gained by the sublimation of emotions, *vyāpāda* 'malice' is replaced by *mettā*, *vihesā* 'violent dispositions' by *karuṇā*, *arati* 'envy' by *muditā* and *rāga* 'sensuality' by *upekkhā* (D III 247-9; M I 424; A III 290-292, etc.). The *Kakacūpama-sutta* (M I 129) illustrates the ideal of the replacement of *vyāpāda* by *mettā*. Even if the limbs are sawn into pieces, the monk with self-control and emotional maturity entertains no evil thoughts towards the tormentors. The experience of Nandamātā recorded in *Ānguttaranikāya* (IV 65-67) is another example of the nature of this emotional freedom. She has developed meditation up to the fourth *jhāna* and destroyed the five *orambhāgiya samyojanas* 'fetters of degradation'. She explains that she watched her one and only son being tormented, without experiencing any change in her emotions. Again the apparition of her dead husband who was very near and dear to her earlier, made no change whatsoever in her heart. Though the word *cetovimutti* is not used in this context, it is quite likely that she has gained emotional liberation through the fourth *jhāna* which replaced *rāga* by *upekkhā*, and by the elimination of *vyāpāda* resulting from the destruction of *orambhāgiya samyojanas*.

As emotions are intimately connected with sexuality it would be appropriate to inquire into the Buddhist ideas regarding the emotional attraction between the sexes. The *Ānguttaranikāya* (IV 57-8) gives the following explanation:- 'A woman ponders over the femininity in herself, ponders over her feminine behaviour, attire, ways, impulses, voice and charm. She gets impassioned (with femininity) and finds delight therein. Thus impassioned and delighted she ponders on masculinity outside, and ponders over masculine behaviour, attire, ways, impulses, voice and charm. She gets impassioned and delighted therein. Being thus impassioned and delighted she wishes for external union and longs for the pleasure and joy resulting from such union. Being in love with her own sex (femininity) she goes into union with men. Thus she has not gone beyond her own femininity.' The case is the same with the male. With this explanation

it becomes quite clear that self-love plays a basic role in sensuality. The same is emphasised by the words of Mallikā that none is dearer than one's own self.¹³ When equanimity is developed to perfection all forms of self-conceit disappear and one is able to rise above sexuality, and *rāga* 'sensuality' loses its very foundations. *Mettā* is often described in terms of mother-love. It is admonished that infinite *mettā* should be cultivated towards all beings without exception, like a mother who protects her one and only son even at the cost of her life.¹⁴ Such *mettā* replaces *dosa/vyāpāda/paṭigha*, aggressiveness in general which in a broad sense is considered a masculine trait.¹⁵ It can be maintained that an adept with emotional freedom is a human being who has transcended sexual differences and replaced emotions usually associated with sexuality by sublime human emotions. When compared with the *puthujjana*, an adept with *appamāṇā cetovimutti* is a noble human being who has gained liberation from *raga/lobha* and *dosa* which are two of the three root causes of all *dukkha*.

Ākiñcaññā Cetovimutti

The *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti* 'liberation of the mind through meditation on nothingness' comprises *ākiñcaññāyatana* 'the sphere of nothingness' which is the seventh stage of meditation (M I 297). This is realised by the purified mental faculty, unencumbered by the five sense faculties, when it is directed towards nothingness (*Nissatthena pāñcōhi indriyehi parisuddhena manoviññānena n'atthi kiñcīti ākiñcaññāyatanaṁ-neyyan ti*—M I 293). According to the *Āneñjasappāyasutta* (M II 263-4) it is possible for the adept who has developed the *ākiñcaññāyatana* to entertain the following three attitudes:- (a) the cessation of all ideations is peaceful and pleasant, (b) this (personality) is devoid of a soul or anything in the nature of a soul, (c) I am not anywhere, of anyone, in any place, nor is there anything of mine anywhere, nor attachment in anything (*Nāham kvacani, kassaci, kiñcanatasmīm, na ca mama kvacani, kisminci kiñcanam n'atthīti*). Despite this advancement, at the dissolution of the body, if nothing further has been attained, his evolving consciousness (*saṃvattanikam viññānam*) is said to be reborn in the sphere of nothingness. A question arises as to why, after developing *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti*, the adept cannot realise *akuppā cetovimutti* 'inviolable or permanent emancipation of the mind.' Though this is not directly answered, an inference could be made

13. *N'atthi koc' añño attanā piyataro*—S I 75.

14. *Mātā yathā niyām puttam
āyusā ekaputtam anurakkhe
evam pi sabbabhūtesu
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam
mettañ ca sabbalokasmin
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam*

—Sn. verses 149-50.

15. L. M. Terman, *Sex and Personality*, New York & London, 1936, p. 389.

from what follows in the *Sutta*. Ānanda inquires from the Buddha whether a monk who has developed *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* 'the sphere of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation' would attain *parinibbāna* if he develops *upekkhā* 'equanimity' after reflecting that: "(this state) would not (continue to) be, it would not (continue to) be mine, it will not become (stable?) and it will not become mine. I give up whatever there is and whatever there has been." (*no c'assa, no ca me siyā, na bhavissati, na me bhavissati, yad atthi yam bhūtam tam pajahāmi*—M II 264). The Buddha replies that the possibility is there that he may or may not attain *parinibbāna*. The reason is that if he takes delight, if he welcomes and stands overwhelmed by the equanimity so developed, his consciousness would find support there, and that means there is fuel for existence. When there is fuel for existence one does not attain *parinibbāna* (. . . *tam nissitam hoti viññānam tad upādānam saupādāno na parinibbāyati*). Though clinging to *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* is said to be the noblest form of clinging (*upādānasettham*) that too has to be got rid of for final emancipation. Perhaps *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti* is not transformed into *akuppā cetovimutti* for the same reason.

Ākiñcaññāyatana is the meditational level at which the mind is emptied of its thought content by concentrating on nothingness. This is an important achievement in the psychological investigation into the nature and function of the mind. The nature of the river-bed of the mind cannot be understood in the presence of the ceaselessly gushing stream of thought activity. As the mind is functioning concentrating on the absence or vacuity of thought contents, this level of meditation is designated *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti* 'liberation of the mind through nothingness'. A series of similes in the *Bojjharigasamyutta* (S V 121-124) illustrate the nature of the mind, the inability to view it realistically when it is incessantly reacting to sense data, and the necessity of bailing out the contents to understand its true nature. Just as water that is coloured, boiling, moss-covered, turbulent or turbid, cannot reflect shadows accurately, so a mind overwhelmed with sensuality, aggressiveness, lethargy, agitation or scepticism respectively cannot function with realistic comprehension. The water must be purified of its foreign matter and it should be rendered calm for it to be a good reflector. Similarly the mind too should be purged of its contaminants for efficient functioning. The *ākiñcaññā cetovimutti* is so called because the mind is liberated from its thought contents.

Suññatā Cetovimutti

Suññatā cetovimutti 'liberation of the mind through meditation on emptiness' is described in terms of the reflection that 'this (personality)

is devoid of a soul or anything in the nature of a soul' (*suññam idam attena vā attaniyena vā*).

Animitta Cetovimutti

The last of the *cetovimutti*s enumerated in the *Mahāvedallasutta* is *animitta cetovimutti* which comprises the *animittā cetosamādhi* 'signless mental concentration'. The *Sutta* itself states that *akuppā cetovimutti* is the highest as far as these *animitta cetovimutti*s are concerned. The *Cūlasuññatāsutta* (M III 108) maintains that *animittā cetosamādhi* is conditioned by causes and characterised by thought activity. What is conditioned by causes and characterised by thought activity is impermanent and is liable to cease. The *Moggallāna Samyutta* (S IV 269) warns that great vigilance should be exercised to maintain the signless state of meditation as the danger is ever present of consciousness having recourse to a sign (*nimittā-nusārī viññānam hoti*). Though *animitta* meditation is regarded as the means of warding off unskilful evil thoughts (A I 82), it is also possible for one who has developed this meditation to come under the grip of *rāga* again (A III 397). If a king's army camps in a forest, the sound of crickets may cease in that area during that period, but this does not mean that the sound of crickets is banished from the forest for good. Similarly lust can well up again even if a monk has advanced so far as the signless meditation, as in the case of Citta Hatthīsāraputta. Despite this impermanent nature, it is described in the *Asaṅkhata Samyutta* as the path to *nibbāna* (S IV 360). When *animittā cetovimutti* is fully mastered it is said to be impossible for consciousness to have recourse to a sign again (A III 292). A monk who has developed this *saṃādhi* can win the purpose of recluseship if he dwells in suitable lodgings, associating with noble companions, controlling his sense faculties (A IV 78). The most important step which transforms *animittā cetovimutti* into *akuppā cetovimutti* seems to be the eradication of the ego-notion (A III 292).

Animittā cetovimutti seems to be the liberation of the mind from objects of thought. In the *ākiñcaññāyatana* concentration was fixed on nothingness, and nothingness was the *nimitta*, the object of concentration. In the *animittā cetovimutti* the mind is liberated even from this object of concentration. It seems to be a state of pure objectless consciousness with great insight and intellectual clarity.¹⁶

When all eight types of *cetovimutti* mentioned in the *Mahāvedallasutta* are taken into consideration, *suññatā cetovimutti* stands out conspicuous among the others as it is the only *cetovimutti* type of which *akuppā cetovimutti* is not specified as the highest. *Suññatā cetovimutti* is said to com-

16. MA IV 153 explains *animittasamādhi* as *vipassanācittasamādhi*.

prise reflection on the non-existence of an ego or anything in the nature of an ego in the human personality, and it is relevant to recall that this is the most crucial and indispensable intellectual realisation for final emancipation. Therefore it is possible to theorise that *suññatā cetovimutti* might also be *akuppā cetovimutti*. However, it remains a puzzle as to why the *Mahāvedallasutta* and also the *Cittasamīyutta* (S IV 296) which appear to enumerate the various *cetovimutti* types in their ascending order, assigns the penultimate position to *suññatā cetovimutti* while *animittā cetovimutti* is placed last. The *Cūlasuññatāsutta* (M III 109), on the other hand, lists *parisuddham param' uttaram suññataṁ* 'the absolutely pure and unique state of emptiness' as the highest attainment. According to *Mahāsuññatāsutta* (M III 111) the Buddha attains to a state of internal emptiness by not paying attention to all signs (*sabbanimittānam amanasikārā ajjhattam suññatam upasampajja viharitum*). It should be recalled that *animittā cetovimutti* too is developed by paying no attention to all signs (*sabbanimittānam amanasikāro*—M I 296). Therefore both *suññatā cetovimutti* and *animitta cetovimutti* share the common characteristic of not paying attention to signs. However, *suññatācetovimutti* seems to be the superior of the two because (a) it comprises the most subtle realisation of soullessness (*suññam idam attena vā attaniyena vā*—M I 297), (b) it is never said to be conditioned as a product of thought activity (*ibid*; S IV 296), and (c) it is not a state or a type of which *akuppā cetovimutti* is said to be the highest (*ibid*). On the other hand *animittā cetovimutti* is specifically said to be conditioned and a product of thought activity, therefore impermanent and liable to change (M III 108). Therefore it seems plausible to surmise that *suññatā cetovimutti* belongs to the order of *akuppā cetovimutti* while all other forms of *cetovimutti* mentioned in the *Mahāvedallasutta* are only stages in the process leading to liberation and they have to be stabilised by means of intellectual introspection (*vipassanā*).

Vipassanā

Having considered the significance of *cetovimutti* it is now appropriate to take *paññāvimutti* into consideration. Just as *cetovimutti* is derived from *samatha* 'tranquillity' produced by the concentration of mental energies, *paññāvimutti* is said to be the result of *vipassanā*. Therefore it would be most helpful if an attempt is made to learn what comprises *vipassanā*. The word *vipassanā* comes from *vi+paś* to see, and it means seeing through and beyond superficial appearance. It is usually translated as insight or introspection.

The pure spotless eye of truth which is said to dawn on a disciple when he is first introduced into the real nature of things, is described in terms

of the deep awareness that whatever has the nature of arising also has the inherent nature of passing away (*virajam vitamalam dhammacakkhum udapādi, yaṁ kiñci samudayadhammam sabbam tañ nirodhadhamman ti*—Vin I 11, 16, etc.). It is this insight into the never-ceasing rise and fall of phenomena, the coming into being and the passing away of all phenomena which go to form the life unit called man, which paves the way to emancipation (*pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu udayabbayānupassī viharati, iti rūpam, iti rūpassa samudayo, iti rūpassa atthaṅgamo, iti vedanā . . . iti saññā . . . iti saṅkhārā . . . iti viññāṇam . . . atthaṅgamo ti*—A IV 153, D III 223, etc.). An untutored worldly man too might see the growth, decay and disintegration of the physical body and be disenchanted with it. But he can never adopt the same attitude towards what is called the mind (*citta, mano* or *viññāṇa*), because, he is so used to cherishing and grasping it as his own self. In reality, the mind changes with far greater velocity than the body, and it may have been more sensible, the Buddha says, if the body were clung to as the self as it appears to remain the same even for a couple of years, rather than the mind which changes from moment to moment. The well-informed noble disciple regards the entire psycho-physical unit called man and all his sense experiences in terms of causality. All pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sense experiences are causally produced, when causes are removed they cease to exist. It is the insight into the causal origination and cessation of all phenomena which paves the way to emancipation (*vipassanāmaggo bodhāya yad idam nāmarūpanirodhā viññāṇanirodhō . . . D II 34; also S II 95-7*). He who sees causality sees the truth, he who sees the truth sees causality (*yo paṭiccasamuppādām passati so dhammām passati, yo dhammām passati so paṭiccasomuppādām passati*—M I 190-1). Because of the nature of coming into being and passing away of all things in the world (*lokassa ḥatvā udayabbayañ ca*—S I 46), the human being as well as the entire world of his sense experience is impermanent (*anicca*), what is impermanent is necessarily unsatisfactory (*dukkha*) and what is impermanent and unsatisfactory should not be identified as one's self (*anatta*). Insight into this *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta* nature of things leads one to emancipation (S III 1, 21, etc., etc.). If one dwells reflecting on the pleasures of life (*assādānupassanā*) one gets more and more steeped in lust and all accompanying misery and anxiety. It is like adding fuel to an already blazing bonfire (S II 85). But if one dwells reflecting on the evil consequences of sense pleasures (*ādīnavānupassī*), *tañhā* 'thirst/craving' ceases and paves the way to the end of suffering. Therefore the adept is constantly urged to train himself to reflect on impermanence, passionlessness, cessation and relinquishment (M I 425).

These are the perspectives and attitudes which comprise *vipassanā*. The basic truth which has to be intuitively discovered and seen with the

inner eye, is the rising-and-falling-nature of all phenomena in accordance with causal laws. The average man sees permanency in continuity and divides things into the three tenses of past, present and future, and regards them as existing always through the course of time. But *vipassanā*—the new perspective of constant change—shows that what is credited with permanency and clung to with ego-centric possessiveness, is, in reality, nothing but a mere phantom. Viewed through this mirror of truth, the psycho-physical unit of man shows itself to be utterly empty,¹⁷ and devoid of any soul or anything in the nature of a soul (*suññam idam attena vā attaniyena vā*—M II 263).

This newly-found deep insight into the real nature of things has a profound effect on the adept and brings about a radical change in his attitude and outlook. On the one hand, a great revulsion, a deep sense of disgust (*nibbidā*) towards all sense experience arises in him. Just as it is natural for one who partakes of food to answer the calls of nature, it is equally natural for one who sees the loathsomeness, the impermanence and the rising-and-falling-nature of the sense objects, sensory experience and the five aggregates of clinging respectively, to experience a deep sense of disgust towards all of them (A III 32).¹⁸ Being disgusted, he detaches himself from all clings and his mind gets liberated (*Evaṁ passam ariyasavako rūpasmim pi nibbindati...nibbindam virajjati, virāgā vimuccati* ...S III 21, etc., etc.).

On the other hand, great joy, a deep sense of satisfaction arises in him that he has at long last seen the real nature of things which was so abstruse and difficult to see, and which remained illusive for so long a time.

*Suññagāram paviṭṭhassa santacittassa bhikkhuno
amānusī ratī hoti sammā dhammam vipassato
Yato yato sammasati khandhānam udayabbayam
labhati pītipāmojjam amataṁ tam vijānatam*—Dhp. vv. 373-4.

'Superhuman joy arises in a monk who has entered a lonely hut with a tranquil mind, when he sees with insight the real nature of things. The more he reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates and understands that state of deathlessness, the more joy and delight arise in him.'

*Pañcaṅgikena turiyena na rati hoti tādisī
yathā ekaggacittassa sammā dhammam vipassato*—
—Theragāthā, verse 398.

17. *Dhammādāsam gahetvā hāñadassanapattiyyā
paccavekkhiy imam kāyam tucchaṁ santarabāhiram*—Theragāthā, verse 395.
18. *...Pañcasu upādnakkhandhesu udayabbayānupassino viharato upādāne
paṭikkūlyatā sañjhāti, eso tassa nissando ti*—A III 32.

'Orchestral music of five instruments cannot evoke such pleasure as that experienced by a monk with one-pointedness of mind, seeing the real nature of things.'

The *Thera*-and *Therīgāthā* abound in triumphant joyful exclamations that the veil of ignorance is at last torn asunder.

*Pītisukhena ca kāyam pharitvā vihariṇi tadā
sattamiyā pāde pasāresin tamokkhandham padāliya*

—Therīgāthā, verse 174.

'I dwelt with a body suffused with blissful joy and on the seventh day after the destruction of ignorance I stretched my legs.'

So delightful is insight and realisation of truth!

Types of Adepts

The *Kiṭāgirisutta* (M I 477; also M I 439) classifies and defines seven types of adepts according to their attainments. They are as follows:-

- (a) Adepts who are described as *ubhatobhāgavimutta* have gained physical experience of the peaceful deliverances (*santā vimokkhā*) which transcend material form and which belong to the non-material sphere; and they have their obsessions destroyed, having seen them with wisdom.
- (b) Adepts who are *paññāvimutta* 'emancipated through wisdom' do not have such physical experience of the peaceful deliverances, but have the obsessions destroyed with intuitive wisdom.
- (c) Those who are described as *kāyasakkhi* 'having physical testimony' have fully experienced the peaceful deliverances, with only partial eradication of obsessions.
- (d) Adepts who are *dīṭṭhipatta* 'gained vision' have no experience of the deliverances, but have partial destruction of obsessions.
- (e) Adepts who are described as *saddhāvimutta* 'released through faith' experience no *vimokkha*, but possess partial destruction of obsessions and firmly-rooted genuine faith in the Buddha.
- (f) Adepts who are *Dhammānusārī* 'Dhamma followers' have neither *vimokkha* nor destruction of obsessions, but they have genuine intelligent appreciation of the Dhamma and the five controlling faculties of *saddhā* 'faith', *viriya* 'energy', *sati* 'mindfulness', *sañcāri* 'concentration' and *paññā* 'wisdom'.
- (g) *Saddhānusārī* 'faith-followers' have no *vimokkha*, no eradication of obsessions, but are endowed with genuine faith in the Buddha, and the five controlling faculties.

These seven types are taken up for discussion in their reverse order for convenience of elucidation. The last two classes comprise only disciples who have not made any special spiritual progress and are not of any interest for the present topic. The preceding three types, *kāyasakkhi*, *dīṭṭhipattā* and *saddhāvimutta*, according to *Ānguttaranikāya* (A I 120), may comprise noble disciples belonging to the *sotāpatti*, *sakadāgāmi* or *anāgāmi* levels, as well as those who have embarked on the attainment of arahantship. Therefore it is not possible to state categorically which of them is superior. But it is observed that *kāyasakkhi* have the controlling faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*) best developed, the *dīṭṭhipattā* have the controlling faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*) best developed, while *saddhāvimutta* have the controlling faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*) best developed (A I 118-9). According to the *Indriya-saṇyutta* (S V 203) the complete and balanced development of the five controlling faculties results in *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, while partial development results in the attainment of *sotapatti*, *sakadāgāmi* or *anāgāmi* levels in accordance with the degree of development (S V 201). Differences in the development of controlling faculties (*indriyavemattatā*) give rise to differences in results (*phalavemattatā*), which in turn differentiates personality types (*phalavemattatā puggalavemattatā*—S V 201). The *Laṭukikopamasutta* too seems to classify personality types on the same criteria (M I 453). It is interesting to note that in the *Mahāmālūkyasutta* (M I 437) the Buddha is asked why some monks are *cetovimuttino* and some are *paññāvimuttino*, and the answer is that this is due to *indriyavemattatā*.

Indriyavemattatā

It seems appropriate here to focus some attention on a few discourses on the five controlling faculties. While the complete and balanced development of all faculties is repeatedly said to result in the attainment of final emancipation, *paññā* is looked upon as the single faculty the sole development of which leads to the same supreme goal. It is explained that, with the maturity of *paññā*, other faculties follow suit, even if no special attempt is made to develop them (S V 222). Again, the parallel development of *paññā* and *ariyā vimutti* (explained in the *Sutta* itself as *samādhindriya*—S V 223), the combined development of *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā* (S V 224), as well as the combined development of *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are also said to culminate in arahantship. As *paññā* remains the constant common denominator in all combinations, it is unquestionably the most important of all the faculties (*paññindriyam aggaṇi akkhāyati yad idam bodhāya*—S V 237-9). Except *paññā*, the one-sided development of no other single faculty is regarded as fruitful. Over-enthusiastic Soṇa Kovilisa was advised to tone down his faculty

of *viriya* (Vin I 184) while Vakkali was rebuked for excessive *saddhā* (*kin te iminā pūtikāyena dīṭṭhena*—S III 120), as both had their respective over-developed virtues blocking their spiritual progress. The indiscreet development of *saṃādhi* without a specific goal in view is considered fruitless, as far as final emancipation is concerned. Such exercise is even compared to the aimless wandering of a foolish mountain cow who ventures into strange pastures out of curiosity without any common sense or bearing (A IV 418). The realistic understanding of the various levels of meditation, together with their limitations, bliss and cessation is a necessary condition for emancipation (A III 417-8). *Jhānas* have great instrumental value (*ānisamīsa*), but they can be a hindrance for emancipation (*ādīnava*) if considered as possessing intrinsic value (A IV 438-48). Therefore each *jhānic* accomplishment is considered an obstacle (*sambādha*) to be got rid of, in favour of the attainment of successive levels and the final goal of emancipation (A IV 449-51). All this evidence displays the fact that *samādhindriya* alone is inadequate without the direction of *paññindriya*. The simile of the untrained horse and the thoroughbred seems to illustrate the non-Buddhist and Buddhist attitudes towards meditation (A V 325-6). The untrained horse thinks of the fodder itself while feeding, whereas the thoroughbred ponders on his service to the master. Similarly the untutored ascetic bases his thoughts on the *jhāna* he has developed (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṁ nissāya jhāyati*). But the noble disciple, on the other hand, observes and objectively understands the subtle mental processes involved in the meditational levels (*bhadrasa purisājānyassa...nevasaññānāsaññāyatane nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*-perception [involved] in the sphere of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation becomes clear to the noble high-born man. A V 326). According to the *Mahāmālūkyasutta* (M I 435) the adept has to intuitively see (*samanupassati*) all phenomena belonging to the psycho-physical unit of the five aggregates, associated with the various meditational levels in terms of their true nature, namely that they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, unhealthy, alien, subject to disintegration, empty and soulless.¹⁹ Having understood the true nature he withdraws his mind from those phenomena and inclines towards the deathless state; he then tries to establish emotional freedom (*taṇhakkhayo virāgo*) and the cessation of this on-going process of life (*nirodha*). Thus it becomes quite clear that *samādhindriya* alone is quite insufficient for emancipation, it has to be geared and steered towards the goal by the

19. ...paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja viharati. So yad eva tattha hoti rūpagatam vedanāgatam saññāgatam saṅkharagatam viññānagatam, te dhamme aniccatto dukkhato rogato gandato sallato aghato ābhādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati—M. I. 435.

direction-giving *paññindriya*. In short it is *paññā* which gives stability and co-ordination to all other controlling faculties (S V 228).

The role of *saddhā* as a controlling faculty has been clearly explained by *Sāriputta* in the *Indriyasamyutta* (S V 225-6). Genuine faith in the Buddha and his teachings would lead a disciple on and on with ceaseless application for the acquisition of proficiency in mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. The compelling power of faith brings him ultimately to a position where he can physically experience and intuitively see everything which he originally only believed in (*kāyena phusitvā viharati, paññāya ca ativijja passati*). In the *Kītāgirisutta* (M I 480-1) the Buddha explains that for a disciple with faith, the teaching is a source of nourishment and strength (*rumhāniyam satthu sāsanam hoti ojavantam*). Such a disciple strives with undaunted courage to attain that which has to be won with human strength and valour. Such a one would either attain profound knowledge here and now, or become a non-returner.

Sati ‘mindfulness’ as a controlling faculty too has to be properly channelled by *paññā*, for the danger of coming to wrong conclusions by the untutored development of *sati* is ever present. For example, all erroneous views regarding eternalism and annihilationism, according to the *Brahmajālasutta* (D I 17f, II 32), are the results of misinterpreting retrocognition (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) which is a highly developed form of *sati*.

From this discussion on the five *indriyas* it becomes quite clear that *paññā* on account of its supremacy, and *saddha* on account of its compelling emotional force, could lead an adept to *vimutti*. Thus *indriya vennattā* or the differences in the development of controlling faculties have given rise to different classifications such as *paññāvimutta* and *saddhāvimutta*, wisdom-based and faith-based arahants respectively. It was already shown in the earlier part of this essay that *cetovimutti* is based on *saṃādhi*, i.e. *saṃādhindriya*.

Ubhatobhāgavimutti and Paññāvimutti

Of the seven types of adepts described in the *Kītāgirisutta* the first two, namely the *ubhatobhāgavimuttā* and *paññāvimuttā* are undoubtedly arahants. In addition to the definitions provided in the *Sutta* itself, *Ānguttaranikāya* (A IV 452-3) sheds considerable light on these two types. According to this discourse, the arahant with *ubhatobhāgavimutti* is capable of attaining and abiding by any or all the *jhānas* from the first to the *saññāvedayitanirodha* ‘the cessation of ideation and all that is felt’, physically experiencing them to their full capacity, and understanding

them with wisdom (...*pañhamāñ jhānam upasampajja viharati, yathā yathā ca tad āyatanaṁ, tathā tathā nañ kāyena phusitvā viharati, paññāya ca nañ pajānāti*). He has also seen the obsessions with wisdom and eradicated them. The arahant who is *paññāvimutta*, on the other hand, is incapable of the physical experience of the *jhānas* to their full capacity, but is able to attain and abide by any or all of them from the first to *saññāvedayitanirodha*; he understands their nature with wisdom and has seen and eradicated the obsessions with wisdom.

Now the feature which distinguishes the two types of arahants, according to this passage, is the physical experience of the *jhānas* to their full capacity. It is therefore appropriate to inquire into what is meant by this statement: *Yathā yathā ca tad āyatanaṁ tathā tathā nañ kāyena phusitvā viharati*. Literally it means whatever be the nature of that faculty/sphere, in accordance with that nature he experiences with the body. It is relevant to recall that *Ānguttaranikāya* (A II 183) also maintains that the eight *vimokkhas* should be realised or experienced by the body (*attha vimokkhā bhikkhave kāyena sacchikaraṇyā*). The involvement of the corporeal body in the process of meditation is quite obvious as one of the aims of meditation is also to bring about *kāyapassaddhi*, complete physical relaxation. The *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D I 74-6) amply illustrates the physical experience of the first four *jhānas* with four beautiful similes. During the first three *jhānas* the body is filled, saturated and suffused with *vivekajapītisukha* ‘joy and happiness born of seclusion from sense pleasures’, *saṃadhipītisukha* ‘joy and happiness born of concentration’, and *nippitikasukha* ‘joy-less happiness’, like water in a well-kneaded lump of wet bathing powder, a pond filled to the brim with cool spring water and a lotus fully immersed in water respectively. No part of the body remains unaffected by these experiences, as by water the objects of the three similes. During the fourth *jhāna* the entire body is pervaded by the absolutely pure and bright mind, and just like a man who has covered himself from head to foot with a white cloth, no part of the body remains unaffected by the *jhānic* experience. Though the extent to which physical experience involved in the *arūpa* ‘non-material *jhānas* is not obvious, the last of the *jhānas*, *saññāvedayitanirodha* implies that there is some extremely subtle degree of physical experience left even during the penultimate stage of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation. Thus the expression *kāyena phusitvā viharati* seems to mean full physical experience of the various meditational levels.

The *Mahānidānasutta* (D II 71) seems to furnish evidence regarding the mastery of these attainments. According to this, a monk who is *ubhatobhāgavimutta* can attain the eight deliverances (*attha vimokkhe*) in

the progressive order, regressive order, and in both progressive and regressive orders. He can attain wherever he wishes, whatever he wishes, for any length of time he wishes. Similarly he can rise from them also at will. He has destroyed the obsessions, and having won *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* he abides in that obsession-free state. The full command of the meditational levels irrespective of place, time, duration and order is the speciality of the arahant with *ubhatobhāgavimutti*. In fact this is no exclusive speciality of such arahants, as *kayasakkhi* too have the same proficiency, and pre-Buddhist sages too may have had such skills. The *paññāvimutta* arahant, on the other hand, can attain all meditational levels but does not command such proficiency and mastery (A IV 452-3). However, according to the *Mahānidānasutta* (D II 70) he realistically understands the seven stations of consciousness and the two spheres of unconscious beings and neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation, in terms of their arising, passing away, pleasures, perils and escape, without clinging to any of them he is liberated (*yato...bhikkhu imāsañ ca sattannam viññānañthitūnam imesañ ca dyinnam āyatanāñ samudayañ ca atthangamañ ca assādañ ca ādinavañ ca nissaraṇañ ca yathābhūtañ viditvā anupādā vimutto hoti, ayam vuccati bhikkhu paññāvimutto—D II 70*). While proficiency in the attainment of *jhānas* thus remains an optional skill as far as the realisation of *āsavakkhaya* is concerned, the realistic and intelligent understanding of each meditational level is considered indispensable (*paññāya ca nam pajānāti*). All phenomena belonging to the five *khandhas* associated with the various meditational levels, have to be understood according to their true nature, i.e. as impermanent (*aniccato*), unsatisfactory (*dukkhato*), unhealthy (*rogato*, *gaṇḍato*, etc.), alien (*parato*), subject to decay (*palokato*), empty (*suññato*), and substanceless (*anattato*) (M I 435; A IV 422f, A V 34; also A III 417, etc). According to the *Mahāmālunkyasutta* and several other texts cited so far a monk is able to attain arahantship from the *samatha* basis of any of the *jhānas* from the first to the ninth *saññāvedayitanirodha* state, provided he understands, in short, the impermanent, conditional, changeable and substanceless nature of all or whatever *jhāna* he has already developed (M I 350-2). Once this is intuitively understood the mind gets emancipated from all emotional and cognitive obsessions.

The *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (S II 121-128) sheds more light on the question of *paññāvimutti*. Susīma puts a series of questions to a group of monks who had just declared their attainment of supreme knowledge (*aññā*) in the presence of the Buddha.²⁰ The new arahants reply that they have

20. When *aññā* is declared the Buddha knows whether the declaration is factual or not—A V 156. If the declaration is the result of over-estimation, the Buddha preaches the doctrine—M II 105. Here in Susīma's episode the Buddha has accepted the declaration of *aññā* as factual.

no miraculous powers, no divine ear, no ability to read others' minds, no knowledge of previous lives, no divine eye, no physical experience of the bliss of non-material state of deliverance (*ye te santā vimokkhā atikkamma rūpe ārūppā te kāyena phusitvā viharathāti? No hetam āvuso*). But they maintain that they are freed through knowledge (*paññāvimuttā*) whether Susīma can understand it or not.

Baffled by this reply Susīma requested the Buddha to clarify the position. The Buddha replied that the knowledge of causality (*dhammatthitūñā*, lit. knowledge regarding the existence of things)²¹ arises first and then the knowledge of *nibbāna*. On request the Buddha explained further that the realisation of the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of the five *khandhas* makes one completely detach oneself from the *khandhas*. This detachment, this passionlessness brings about emancipation, and knowledge regarding his emancipation arises in him who is thus emancipated. Then the Buddha went on to show that for one who has understood the true nature of the *khandhas* and realised causality, superhuman faculties such as miraculous powers, divine ear, thought-reading, retrocognition, clairvoyance and the physical experience *vimokkhas* hardly have any value or attraction. Thus by way of explaining *paññāvimutti* to Susīma, the Buddha has delivered a discourse leading to emancipation without any reference to the five higher faculties (*pañcabhiññā*) or non-material states of deliverance (*arūpa vimokkha*).

But according to the *Nidāna Saṃyutta* (S II 117-8), Nārada has gained correct knowledge of *paticcasamuppada* without depending on *saddhā* 'faith', *ruci* 'partiality', *anussava* 'traditional authority', *ākāraparivitakka* 'deductive reasoning', or *diṭṭhinijjhānakkhanti* 'congruency with already accepted views'. Though he has correctly seen the causal process with right understanding as it really is, he still does not claim to have attained arahantship (*Bhavanirodho nibbānan ti kho me āvuso yathābhūtañ sammāpaññāya sudiṭṭham, na c' amhi arahāñ khīnāsavo*). He likens himself to a thirsty man who has found water in a deep well in a desert, but without means of cooling himself. It appears that he has mastered theoretical knowledge without cultivating mental tranquillity which should normally accompany such knowledge.

This passage reminds one of a discourse in the *Ānguttaranikaya* (A V 99) according to which it is possible to gain *adhipaññā dhammavipassanā* 'insight into the nature of things with superior wisdom' without *ajjhatta cetosamatha* 'internal mental tranquillity'. Such a one is advised to establish himself on the supreme wisdom he has acquired and strive for mental tranquillity. Thus *samatha*—the actual cultivation of tranquillity—

21. *dhammatthitā*=*idappaccayatā*—S II 25.

is indispensable for the attainment of *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*. The *Sekhasutta* (M I 358) divides the entire course of monastic training into two parts, namely *carana* 'conduct' and *vijā* 'knowledge'. The former comprises *sīla* 'moral behaviour', *indriyesu guttadvāratā* 'restraint of sense faculties', *bhojane mattaññutā* 'moderation with regard to food', *jāgariyam anuyuttatā* 'alert awareness', *satta saddhamma* 'seven noble qualities such as *hiri* etc., and mastery of the first four *jhānas*. *Vijā*, on the other hand, comprises *pubbenivāsānussatiñāna* retrocognition, *dibba-cakkhu* clairvoyance and *āsavakkayañāna* knowledge of the destruction of obsessions. A noteworthy point is that the ability to attain the four *jhānas* at will with untroubled ease is also put under the category of *carana*. According to *Ānguttaranikāya* (A II 163) it is an adept endowed with noble conduct who can see reality (*caranasampanno yathābhūtam jānati passati*), and in the same *Sutta* Sāriputta scoffs at the idea that *vijā* alone could put an end to suffering. This means that the four *jhānas* form an essential basis for emancipation.

With this background if Susīma's episode is recapitulated, attention is drawn to the fact that the monks with *paññāvimutti* disclaimed only the five *abhiññas* and proficiency in the *arūpa* *jhānas*. It could therefore be inferred that they had mastered the first four *jhānas* in addition to *āsavakkayañāna*. The mastery of *āsavakkayañāna* immediately after the fourth *jhāna* is explained in the *Chabbisodhanasutta* (M III 36) as well, without however, any reference to *paññāvimutti*. In the case of Nārada (S II 117-8) it appears that he was a monk who had first developed *adhipaññādhammavipassanā* (mentioned as a possibility in A V 99)—thus had seen water in a deep well—but lacked *ajhatta cetosamatha* which was essential for further spiritual progress—thus was unable to cool himself with the water he had seen. Without completing the actual cultivation of discipline belonging to the *carana* category which culminates in the mastery of the four *jhānas* which engender purity of mental phenomena and perfect physical well-being (*catunnamjhānānam abhicetasikānam ditihadhammasukhavihārānam nikāmalabhī hoti*—M I 358), he could not have attained arahantship. *Ānguttaranikāya* (A II 157) recognises the possibility of spiritual progress even when mental tranquillity is preceded by insight and Nārada seems to belong to this type (*bhikkhu vipassanāpubbaṅgamam samathañ bhāveti, tassa vipassanāpubbaṅgamam samathañ bhāvayato maggo sañjāyati*).

The next important point which merits consideration is whether *paññāvimutti* could be attained without *cetovimutti*, for *ubhatobhāgavimutti* is sometimes taken to mean the realisation of both *paññāvimutti* and *cetovimutti*.²² Then, an arahant who claims to have attained only *paññāvimutti* cannot be expected to have gained *cetovimutti* as well.

22. Rune Johansson, *The Psychology of Nirvana*, op. cit., p. 90.

But this view which seems to be superficially plausible cannot be accepted as quite accurate for several reasons. *Cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* are mentioned together in numerous places in the Pali Canon without any reference to *ubhatobhāgavimutti* or the eight *vimokkhas* which is the speciality of arahants with this two-fold emancipation. But of course it should not be forgotten that the definition of *ubhatobhāgavimutti* contained in the *Mahānidānasutta* (D II 71), whilst emphasising the physical experience of the eight *vimokkhas*, does mention the attainment of both *paññāvimutti* and *cetovimutti*, while in the definition of *paññāvimutti* in the same *Sutta* no reference is made to *cetovimutti*. *Ānguttaranikāya* (A III 84), on the other hand, which gives a number of epithets applicable to a monk who has attained both *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, does not cite *ubhatobhāgavimutta* which could have found a fitting place there had such usage been acceptable. The epithets which appear there are only descriptive of the eradication of ignorance, rebirth, craving, five fetters of degradation and egoism, and there is no mention of any special distinction because of the realisation of both *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*. Moreover, *Ānguttaranikāya* (A II 87) contains definitions of two types of arahants called *samanapuṇḍarīka* 'white-lotus-like-ascetic', and *samanapaduma* 'red-lotus-like-ascetic', and the feature which differentiates them is the absence and the presence of the physical experience of the eight *vimokkhas* respectively. Now, it is this same factor which distinguishes the *paññāvimutta* arahants from *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahants, and *samanapuṇḍarīka* and *samanapaduma* could very well be new terms to designate the same dyad. The important information furnished by this passage is that both types of arahants are credited with *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*. If the identification of *samanapuṇḍarīka* with *paññāvimutta* and *samanapaduma* with *ubhatobhāgavimutta* is accepted as correct, *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* cannot be recognised as the two-fold *vimutti* types which comprise *ubhatobhāgavimutti*.

The different types of *cetovimutti* discussed earlier in this essay showed that the mind was successively relieved of its contents through a systematic process of meditation, and the notable achievements were designated *cetovimutti*. In the *Mahāvedallasutta* (M I 298) it was stated that all these *cetovimutti* types have *akuppā cetovimutti* as the highest achievement. This meant that none of the *cetovimutti* levels (possibly except *suññatā cetovimutti*) was stable and permanent. They could be stabilised only by the intellectual understanding of the working of the mind even during these meditational levels. When this is clear, the causal and soulless nature of the mind is driven home with such clarity and force that the mind gets detached from its anchors and attains supreme inviolable freedom. This seems to be what is meant by the statement *pahitatto*

samāno kāyena c'eva paramāni saccāni sacchikaroti paññāya ca naññāativijjha passati (M I 480). Though temporary bliss of a very high order is realised with full physical experience, so much so that the state is called *cetovimutti*, its nature has to be understood with intellectual penetration for final inviolable emancipation.

The *Mahāvedallasutta* (M I 298) further clarifies that, at the highest level, all *cetovimutti* types are equal in the sense that they are all devoid of sensuality, ill-will and ignorance (*suññā rāgena suññā dosena suññā mohena*). This has to be necessarily so because all āsavā 'obsessions' are also eradicated. In some of the stock phrases which express the attainment of arahantship the word *cetovimutti* is not used, instead its implications are spelt out in greater detail—*kāmāsavā pi cittam vimuccati bhavāsavā pi cittam vimuccati avijjāsavā pi cittam vimuccati* (D I 84; A I 165, etc.). This freedom from emotional (*kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava*) and cognitive (*avijjāsava*, sometimes *dīṭṭhāsava* is also given) obsessions is certainly superior to the *cetovimutti* realised through meditational levels. It is this emancipation from emotional and cognitive obsessions which is expressed by statements such as *rāgavirāgā cetovimutti*, *avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti* (A I 61). This type of *cetovimutti* is common to all arahants and it is called *akuppā cetovimutti*. Therefore the factor which distinguishes an arahant with *ubhatobhāgavimutti* from one with *paññāvimutti* is proficiency in the eight *vimokkhas* or the non-material meditational levels. Therefore it is wrong to assume that the two-fold *vimutti* types which comprise *ubhatobhāgavimutti* are *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*.

Though the compound *ubhatobhāgavimutta* is generally translated as 'freed in both ways' it does not seem to be an accurate rendering. The word *bhāga* means 'part/portion/share', but the Pali-English Dictionary published by the Pali Text Society takes *bhāga* in this compound to mean 'way' or 'respect' figuratively. This figurative usage however is not attested in any other compound listed in the Dictionary. The accurate literal translation would be 'freed in both parts'. When proficiency in the eight *vimokkhas* or the *arūpajhānas* is accepted as the criterion which differentiates *ubhatobhāgavimutti* from *paññāvimutti*, and these *vimokkhas* are expressly stated to be realised by the body—*aṭṭha vimokkhā kāyena sacchikaraṇīyā* (A II 183), one of the two *bhāgas* contained in *ubhatobhāgavimutti* seems to be the *rūpakāya*—the physical part, the other *bhāga* being of course *citta* (*kāmāsavā pi cittam vimuccati* etc.) i.e. *nāmakāya*—the *psychical* part.²³ Thus *ubhatobhāgavimutti* means freedom from both parts, i.e. body and mind. This conclusion is further substantiated by the fact that the *brahma* worlds which correspond to the *arūpajhānas*

23. evam muni nāmakāya vimutto—Sn. verse 1074.

are *arūpabrahmalokas*, non-material sublime modes of existences where the physical aspect of the being is regarded as non-existent. The arahant with *ubhatobhāgavimutti* is one who could lead an existence characteristic of any of the *arūpa brahma* worlds wherever he wishes, whenever he wishes, for any length of time he wishes, while his corporeal body still continues to exist. This is exactly the traditional commentarial explanation as well—*ubhatobhāgavimutto ti dvīhi bhāgehi vimutto, arūpasamāpattiya rūpakāyato vimutto, maggena nāmakāyato vimutto ti*—DA II 514; also AA IV 207). Therefore *ubhatobhāgavimutti* means freedom from the entire psycho-physical unit—through the attainment of non-material meditational levels freedom from the material body is secured; through the development of the Noble Path freedom from the psychical body is established.

Types of Arahants

The *Vinaya Cullavagga* (Vin II 161) contains the following enumeration of saints in their ascending order: *sotāpanna* 'stream-enterer', *sakadāgāmi* 'once-returner', *anāgāmi* 'non-returner', *arahā* 'worthy one', *tevijā* 'worthy one with three-fold higher knowledge', and *chaṭṭabhiññā* 'worthy one with six-fold higher knowledge'. Of these, the last three types have attained final emancipation while the *anāgāmi* is said to attain *parinibbāna* in a *brahma* world without returning to this world.²⁴

The *Vaṅgīsa Samyutta* (S I 191) subdivides the *arahā* group into *ubhatobhāgavimuttā* and *paññāvimuttā*. Thus there are four types of arahants and their important attainments can be summarised as follows:-

Chaṭṭabhiññā

— Four *jhānas* or more as *samatha* basis. Six-fold higher knowledge, namely *iddhividha* 'psychic powers', *dibbasota* 'divine ear', *paracittavijānānañāṇa* 'thought-reading', *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* 'retrocognition or recollection of former births', *dibbacakkhu* 'divine eye', *āsavakkhayāñāṇa* 'knowledge of the destruction of obsessions' (M I 34; D III 281; A I 255, 258, III 17,280, IV 421, etc.).

Tevijā

— Four *jhānas* or more as *samatha* basis. Three-fold higher knowledge, namely retrocognition, divine eye and knowledge of the destruction of obsessions (M I 22,497, etc.).

24. A II 160—An adept who has developed *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* does not return if he has eliminated the five fetters of degradation (*orambhāgīyāni samyojanāni*).

- Ubhatobhāgavimutta* — Physical experience and full mastery of eight *vimokkhas* or nine *jhānas*. Knowledge of the destruction of obsessions (M I 160,174, 204,209, etc.).
- Paññāvimutta* — Any or all of the first four *jhānas* as *samatha* basis. Knowledge of the destruction of obsessions (M III 36).

While the positive attainments of an arahant are summarised above, the *Pāsādikasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* (D III 133) enumerates nine deeds which an arahant is incapable of committing. It is just impossible that an arahant would kill, steal, indulge in sex, utter falsehood, enjoy household life or fall into error on account of partiality, ill-will, ignorance or fear. As the bases of unwholesome physical, verbal and mental activities (*akusalamūlā*—*lobha, dosa, moha*) and all emotional and cognitive obsessions (*kāmāsavā bhavāsavā diṭṭhāsavā avijjāsavā*) which are the mainsprings of worldly activity have been eradicated without remainder, it is logically impossible that an arahant would commit any of these deeds.

Moreover, by the sublimation of emotions an arahant loses all psychological characteristics associated with sexes. Sexual attraction becomes meaningless and impossible for him because not only self-love which is recognised as the foundation of sex attraction (A IV 57-8) but also the very idea of self—*asmī-māna*—has been uprooted. It is categorically stated that even physiological sexual functions become extinct with the attainment of arahantship *aṭṭhānam etam anavakāso yam arahato asuci moceyyāti*—Vin I 295). To be born human means to find oneself identified with one or the other of the sexes. To realise freedom from birth seems to be the attainment of freedom from the limitations imposed by sexuality as well. The words of Somā Therī²⁵ recorded in the *Bhikkhunī Samyutta* provide further testimony to establish that arahants transcend sexuality (S I 129).

Regarding sense perception of an arahant it is said that many sense objects may come within the range of an arahant's sense faculties, but they do not obsess his mind. He stands unconfused with perfect clarity of vision and his mind remains unmoved like a firmly-planted monolith (Vin I 184-5, A IV 404). Feelings (*vedanā*), ideations (*saññā*) and thoughts (*vitakkā*) arise in him with his full awareness, they exist and pass away also with his full awareness (*tathāgatassa vidiṭā vedanā uppajjanti vidiṭā*

25. *Itthibhāvo kim kayirā cittamhi susamāhite
ñānamhi vattamānamhi samnā dhammaṇi vipassato*

*Yassa nūna siyā evam itthāham puriso tī vā
kiñci vā pana asmīti tam Māro vattum arahatīti.*

*upaṭṭhahanti...M III 124). His mind knows no restrictions or limitations (vimariyādākatena cetasā viharati—S II 173, III 30, A V 151f.), as it has gained infinite freedom (appamānacetaso—M I 270). The nature of this emancipated mind stands in strong contrast to the worldly mind which quivers and flutters like a fish thrown on dry land (*Dhp.* verse 34). An arahant is described as diamond-minded (*vajirūpamacitto*, A I 124).*